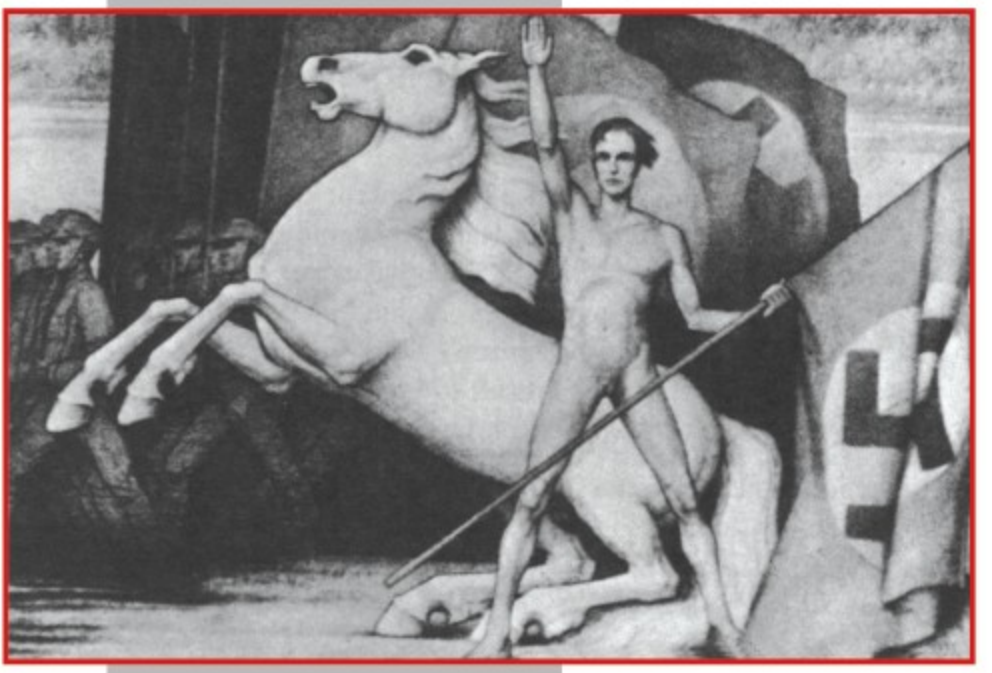
HEIDEGGER'S CRISIS

PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS IN NAZI GERMANY



HANS SLUGA

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Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany

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Preface

Philosophy and politics make uneasy bedfellows. As far back as Plato, their relation has been complex and troubled, sometimes intimate yet often estranged, occasionally familiar though generally ruled by mutual suspicions. Philosophers may be drawn at times to the study of politics and may even embroil themselves in the political process in the name of their own philosophy, but more often they shun political disputes and dismiss them as un- or antiphilosophical. Politicians, in turn, may intermittently use philosophical concepts to legitimize their endeavors and may at other times seek counsel, but they just as often ignore philosophers, now and then denounce them as dangerous, and at times try to silence them with threats of violence and death.

If philosophy is simply understood as a search for truth and politics as the pursuit of power, the two appear to have little in common. In reality, however, both are concerned with the production, use, and control of truth, with generating, channeling, and manipulating streams of power—though admittedly in very different ways—and from this comes their closeness and their conflict. Philosophy and politics are, in fact, inextricably tied together, but their relationship is also precarious and unstable. The history of philosophy, from Plato to Marx, is full of examples of how the interaction may go wrong. If that interaction is to be at all productive, it appears that at least two conditions must be met. The first is that the uncertain relationship between philosophy and politics, and the even more complex and uncertain relation of truth and power,

should be constantly kept in sight. The second is that we treat both philosophy and politics as organic forms that evolve over time and that we grasp their relation, therefore, as historical in character, not as determined once and for all. It follows that philosophers are not entitled to that timeless stand from which they occasionally enunciate the "objective" validity of this or that system of governance. Nor are politicians entitled to appeal to philosophy as a neutral authority that can provide them with "objective" legitimation. Thus much of what goes by the name of political philosophy must be scuttled, because it is based on an unrealistic view of the relation of philosophy to politics. What we need in this field is a "Copernican revolution" in which both philosophers and politicians come to understand that their interactions are inevitably shaped by their ongoing, historical relation.

My book tries to explore these issues by examining the role that philosophy played in Nazi Germany. True to the historicist turn I claim to be necessary in our thinking about the relation of philosophy to politics, I will devote considerable time to describing the web of interaction between philosophy and politics in the Nazi period and in the years leading up to it. I believe that the historical facts I describe have some interest in themselves and that, apart from those relating to the case of Martin Heidegger, they are generally not as well known as they ought to be. I should emphasize, however, that my examination is intended throughout to be problem-oriented rather than narrative, even where I look at the historical facts in some detail. For that reason I direct my attention to a few moments and episodes that highlight the problematic character of the relation of politics and philosophy. I make no excuse for having left out this or that figure, this or that text, this or that event.

My account begins with Heidegger's entry into politics in 1933. It is generally agreed that the event marks a crucial moment in Heidegger's life. I want to show that it also defines a turning point in the relation of German philosophy as a whole to the politics of its time. These developments were accompanied for Heidegger and his colleagues by an acute sense of uncertainty. They believed themselves to be living at a moment of world-historical crisis, and this profound conviction motivated their political activism. My intention is to embed the story of Heidegger's personal crisis in an

account of the crisis that enveloped German philosophy in general. Consideration of this philosophical context takes me back to Fichte and Nietzsche. Next I turn to the period between the First World War and the year 1933; only then will I be ready to talk about Heidegger and the Nazi period. At the center of the book stand two chapters that analyze public addresses delivered by German philosophers in 1933. My discussion of the period between 1933 and 1945 will, by comparison, be condensed, and even shorter will be my remarks about the historical aftermath.

The exposition is systematically held together by the assumption that the philosophers I discuss negotiated their political engagement by means of a quadrilateral of concepts. In the first chapter I argue that the notions of crisis, nation, leadership, and order had the peculiar quality of being at once philosophical and political concepts and could thus serve to bridge the gap between discourse and action. Though it is not difficult to see that these four notions have a political function, it is less clear why they should also have been considered philosophical concepts. The central chapters of the book are meant to explore precisely that question. In chapters 2 and 3 the philosophers' use of the idea of crisis is discussed; in chapters 4 and 5, the idea of nation; in chapters 6 and 7, leadership; finally, in chapters 8 and 9, order. Chapter 10 is a coda that details certain events of the post-Nazi period and draws some general conclusions from the themes of the book.

I argue in these final pages that historical events should make us rethink the whole question of philosophy's relation to politics. Philosophers, in my view, are not qualified to lay down authoritative standards of political action. Whenever they have tried their hand at this, they have either described useless utopias or given dangerous instructions. It might be more attractive to think of them as playing a critical role. But political critique is productive only if it is tempered by common sense and practical experience. Philosophical critics of politics, on the other hand, proceed all too often from supposedly absolute truths, and what they say then proves generally unhelpful and sometimes even destructive. Insofar as philosophy has any task to perform in politics, it is to map out new possibilities. By confronting actual political conditions with alternatives, it can help to undermine the belief that these conditions are

inevitable. If the German philosophers of the 1930s had engaged in such reflection, they would not have surrendered so readily to the false certainties of Nazism.

This book originated in the discussions of an interdisciplinary faculty group that met regularly at Berkeley in 1987. Heidegger's Nazi past had once again become a topic of debate, and Paul de Man's Nazi entanglement had just made the news. We talked in our group about these men and their unfortunate political alignment, and it was for the purpose of those discussions that I began to write down what I knew about the relations between German philosophy and National Socialism. Those first notes might not have developed into a book had it not been for the interest and encouragement of Leo Löwenthal, Martin Jay, Jean-Luc Nancy, Hubert Dreyfus, and the other participants in our meetings. Looking back, I realize that the book with its intersecting concern with historical, political, and philosophical matters still reflects the interdisciplinary character of its point of origin.

In working on this material over the last five years I have incurred a number of significant personal debts. I owe thanks in particular to my friends and colleagues Hubert Dreyfus, Paul Feyerabend, and Bernard Williams, who read and commented on various parts of the manuscript. Since I began this undertaking in earnest, I have had the opportunity to speak about the material in a number of places and to discuss ideas with students in my seminars. Work on this book was greatly advanced by the opportunity to present facets of it in 1990 as Visiting Gustav Bergmann and Ida Beam Professor at the University of Iowa. I am indebted to my friends Weng Choy Lee and Ehsan Ahmed for their valuable comments and suggestions. My thanks also go to Wayne Martin, an invaluable research assistant. I am grateful finally for the opportunity to complete the manuscript during a sabbatical leave from the University of California at Berkeley, with the help of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

But, then, what is philosophy today—philosophical activity, I mean—if it is not the critical work that thought brings to bear on itself? In what does it consist, if not in the endeavor to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known?

—Michel Foucault

1

Heidegger's Moment of Decision

Martin Heidegger's inauguration as rector of Freiburg University on May 27, 1933, took place four months after Hitler came to power. The historical circumstances of the occasion, its orchestrated solemnity, and Heidegger's own carefully chosen words in his address mark it as one of those noteworthy moments when philosophy and politics suddenly appear to intersect. In the great hall at Freiburg, a compact seemed to be struck between the two: Heidegger, the philosopher, was throwing his support to the new regime, and the regime was ready to celebrate the philosopher as one of its own.

It is especially important to get a sense of the occasion, since it was largely staged by Heidegger himself and is likely to reveal the private intentions behind his sudden political activism. Heidegger's politics in 1933 and, indeed, that of all the German philosophers is for us today symbolically captured in the moment of his succession to the rectorate at Freiburg. Heidegger arranged it that way. It was he who chose to express his commitment not in the form of a treatise, a philosophical discourse, but as an "inauguration," an act of augury and divination, a reading of omens, a moment of decision and destiny.

Sharply at 11 o'clock in the morning, Heidegger led a solemn procession of professors in academic robes into the great hall of the university, to the strains of Brahms's Academic Overture. The hall was decorated with the usual academic banners, supplemented on this occasion by an array of Nazi flags, and filled with representatives of the regional government, city and church authorities, and an unusually large crowd of students. The new Nazi minister of

education and culture came from Karlsruhe for the occasion. The archbishop of Freiburg, Heidegger's benefactor since schooldays and a man seeking his own accommodation with the Nazis, was visibly present. So were the mayor of Freiburg and various party officials and military men.[1]

There was by now little doubt about the direction in which the country was moving. When Hindenburg, the aged president, had asked Hitler on January 30 to form a new government, it was clear that the end of the Weimar Republic had come, even though officially the transfer of power took place within the rules of the republican constitution. The radical intentions of the National Socialists had, in any case, become quickly clear in the four succeeding months. In February the Nazis engineered a fire in the parliament building and used the resulting uproar to obtain emergency powers, to make mass arrests of political opponents, and to crack down on the Communists, who were the greatest threat to their rule. In March they managed to deprive parliament of its last vestige of influence and dissolved the federal structure of the republic. In April they organized a campaign against Jewish businesses and passed a law ordering the dismissal of Jewish government officials. Since universities were government institutions, many academics lost their positions as a result of the new decrees, including some twenty German philosophy professors, among them the neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer, the phenomenologist Moritz Geiger, the logical positivist Hans Reichenbach, the philosophical anthropologist Helmuth Plessner, the psychologist William Stern, and the leaders of the Frankfurt school of sociology, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. Others, such as the philosopher of religion Paul Tillich, the historian of philosophy Ernst von Aster, and the philosopher of biology Hans Driesch were laid off at the same time for political reasons.[2] Heidegger and the others assembled in the great hall could thus be in no doubt that they were in the midst of a revolution and that their actions would be seen as support for the political transformation sought by the new regime. The Freiburg student newspaper correctly identified Heidegger's succession to the rectorate as part of the Nazi authorities' effort to eliminate the political opposition. "The faculty has shown that it is willing to collaborate in the work of the national and social revolution," it had commented a few weeks earlier at the time of Heidegger's actual election to the office.[3]

On May 1, Labor Day, Heidegger had sent out the first signal of his determined support for the new government, by joining the Nazi party in a public ceremony. "We know that Heidegger with his high sense of responsibility, with his attentive care for the fate and future of the German people has stood in the heart of our magnificent movement [even before he joined the party]," the local Nazi newspaper wrote two days later. "We know also that he never denied his German outlook and that for years he has effectively supported the party of Adolf Hitler in its heavy struggle for existence and power, that he has always been ready to make sacrifices for the holy cause of Germany, and that no National Socialist has ever knocked in vain on his door."[4]

A few days later Heidegger had his first chance to speak publicly of his intentions as rector and of the role he conceived for himself as a philosopher in the new state. May 4 was the first day of classes for the summer semester and, when Heidegger entered the largest lecture room in the university to begin his course, "The Basic Problems of Philosophy," he was greeted by a packed and breathlessly expectant house. The professor told his audience that German academic youth was now engaged in a great awakening:

> It is determined to find discipline and education, to make itself ready and strong for a political and spiritual leadership conferred on it in behalf of coming generations. The question is whether or not we want to create a spiritual world. If we cannot do so, some kind of savagery or other will come over us and we will reach an end as a historical people.[5]

The words were a rehearsal for how Heidegger would explain to a larger and more official audience on May 27 why he, the author of the celebrated *Being and Time,* the man his students called "the secret king" of German philosophy, had thrown his lot in with the new regime.

The inaugural ceremony began with a review of the preceding year by the outgoing rector, Josef Sauer, a professor of Catholic theology who had agreed to Heidegger's succession to the rectorate in the hope that he would protect the university from undue political interference. Sauer was soon to be disappointed and by August, in his diary, was calling Heidegger a fool who had brought about the downfall of universities.[6] At Heidegger's inauguration Sauer spoke

in the most serious tones of the completed year as "a tough struggle against symptoms of decay and decline." He wished his successor luck for the thorny tasks ahead and then passed on to him the chain of office. Now it was Heidegger's turn to deliver his address, "The Self-Assertion of the German University."[7]

One of his colleagues later complained that Heidegger's speech had given the impression that "he was working entirely on the leadership principle. He was obviously considering himself the born philosopher and spiritual leader of the new movement and the only great and outstanding thinker since Heraclitus."[8] Heidegger did indeed begin his address with an assertion of spiritual leadership. He boldly claimed that Germany was now in its greatest need and that nothing less than a world-historical crisis was looming. This crisis could be resolved only if Germans recognized and fulfilled their unique historical mission. That mission demanded more than a revamping of old institutions. Deep reflection was necessary, a return to the deepest forces of human existence, and the recognition that all science and understanding was ultimately grounded in philosophy. Only in this way could a new, valid order be founded. Heidegger thus conjured up the picture of a university and a Germany revitalized through philosophy. Philosophy and politics were indeed to be one at this turn in German history. Without mentioning either Hitler or National Socialism by name, Heidegger in fact identified himself and his own philosophy with the new political powers.

His address was followed by the singing of the German anthem and a declaration of loyalty by a representative of the students to the new head of the university. The student declared:

> Adolf Hitler has become the new leader of the nation. His flags are flying today over Germany and announce to the world the achievements of the German worker and the victory of his movement, of which we are a part and the future. From these facts follow our tasks whose fulfillment the Führer and the people demand from us and which we have to justify before history and before Germany's future.[9]

And with these words the assembly rose to sing the "Horst-Wessel Lied," the anthem of the Nazi party, arms raised in the Nazi salute, concluding the occasion with repeated shouts of "Sieg Heil!"[10]

Three Critical Lessons

Heidegger's political engagement raises troubling questions about the connection between his philosophical thought and his political commitment. All attempts to settle them, however, have produced ambivalent results.

First of all, the debate has so far been conducted in a factional spirit. Heidegger's critics have used the historical record to tear at the fabric of his philosophy, and his defenders have sought to insulate the philosophy (in whole or in part) from his unfortunate political engagement. While the first group is inclined to argue that his philosophy is "political from beginning to end"[11] and that his politics are "a logical outgrowth of his philosophy,"[12] the second group has naturally tended to minimize the links between the two. The motivations of Heidegger's defenders are, of course, obvious. Those of his detractors, on the other hand, are diverse in character and include not only an aversion to Heidegger's thought and style, a hostility to existential or "continental" philosophy, and a hidden intention to promote another philosophical agenda, but even a distaste for philosophy as a whole.[13] Whatever the motivations on either side, the resulting debate has proven intense and generally less illuminating than one might wish. For the problem of all factionalism is that it already knows the answers to the questions it asks.[14] In contrast, it seems appropriate to subject Heidegger's work and deeds to a questioning that does not already presume to know its answers, that is not afraid to leave questions open, and that can claim for itself the title of a philosophical investigation.

The discussion surrounding Heidegger's politics in 1933 is also marred by useless moralizing. Some interpreters seem mainly concerned with freeing Heidegger from moral guilt, while others are busy calculating his exact degree of culpability. On reflection it should be clear that moral judgment on historical facts and persons is an exceedingly cheap commodity. History is not a moral institution, the past does not repeat itself, and what is gone remains untouched by ethical judgment. The only significant function of moral judgments, it has been said wisely, is to direct future actions; to use them retrospectively is an idle, ineffective, and ultimately self-serving maneuver. We are, in any case, sufficiently far from the time and context of Heidegger's life to look at the events with colder

and hence more discriminating eyes. Then we can see that the most valuable lessons to be learned are obscured by too much attention to the moral dimension.[15]

There is yet a third problem with the way the issue of Heidegger's politics has been handled. It lies in the individualizing and psychologizing direction of the debate. Interpreters speak as if Heidegger's political engagement were primarily a problem of character and biography. They isolate his case and ignore the fact that it raises questions of a more general and more pressing kind: the general interaction between philosophy and politics. The emphasis on the individual person goes hand in hand with the inclination to treat the whole issue in psychological terms. From this perspective it appears as if the only worthwhile question is that of the psychological mechanisms behind Heidegger's actions. Such a procedure often rests on an untested belief in the unity of persons: "it is, then, no accident that Heidegger the philosopher of Being became Heidegger the Nazi, since Heidegger the philosopher and Heidegger the political activist are one and the same person."[16] Against this deterministic tendency, one might hold that there are other, far more significant questions to ask about the conceptual connection between philosophy and politics.

Nothing said so far is meant to deny that there are difficult questions in the Heidegger case. On the contrary, Heidegger's actions raise very specific questions about the linkage of philosophy and politics. But those questions cannot be answered adequately if we continue in the tracks laid out so far. Partisan bickering, anxious moralizing, strenuous interpretation of texts, and doubtful assumptions about the necessary unity of thought and person are of no use in this discussion. What is needed instead is a readiness to weigh the historical facts in a dispassionate manner, to bracket the tendency to pass judgment, to look not for hidden meanings but for manifest relations and structures, to acknowledge the possibility of fissures, boundaries, and disconnections in human living and thinking as well as distinctive linkages and relations.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL FIELD

In order to gain some kind of perspective, it is important to remember that Heidegger was by no means the only German philosopher

who allied himself to the Nazis in the name of a personal philosophy. Several others also assumed official functions in 1933. Ernst Krieck was made rector at the University of Frankfurt (and a year later rector at Heidelberg). Hans Heyse became rector at the University of Königsberg. Alfred Baeumler was appointed to a newly created chair in philosophy and political pedagogy at the University of Berlin and joined Alfred Rosenberg's ideological office for the Nazi Party. Others made a special point of identifying themselves with the new system in public speeches and demonstrations. The largest of these was the congress of the German Philosophical Society held at Magdeburg in October 1933, where Felix Krueger, Bruno Bauch, and Nicolai Hartmann spoke of their eagerness to participate in the new order.

Like most other academics, German philosophers had generally kept their distance from the Nazis before 1933. Out of roughly 180 philosophers holding appointments at German universities, a slim dozen were members of the Nazi party at the beginning of 1933. One of those was Hermann Schwarz at Greifswald, who joined the party as early as 1923, and another was Ernst Krieck, who joined in 1932. Others (such as Bruno Bauch and Max Wundt) were longtime sympathizers with the Nazi cause, even though they never joined the party. A substantial number became party members only in the first three months after Hitler's rise to power, among them men, like Heidegger, who had previously stood aside from the political process but were now swept along by the wave of general enthusiasm. There were also those who joined the party for personal, opportunistic reasons. Arnold Gehlen, for instance, managed to advance his career so effectively that at the age of twenty-nine he obtained a chair at the University of Frankfurt (the one from which Paul Tillich had just been removed). All in all, about thirty German philosophers joined the Nazi party in 1933; they were joined in subsequent years by forty others. By 1940 almost half of Germany's philosophers were members of the Nazi party.[17]

In order to escape the endless play of readings and counterreadings that has plagued the discussion of Heidegger's politics, it is useful to consider the other German philosophers who mobilized themselves, in some way or other, on behalf of the Nazis in 1933. It is, indeed, one of the peculiarities of the recent debate on the links between German philosophy and National Socialism that it

has focused so much on the Heidegger case. That may be simply because Heidegger is the most prominent German philosopher of the period and hence more visible than the others. But this restricted focus commits us unwittingly to a conception of the history of philosophy which—in tune with Heidegger's own views—identifies it only with the "great" philosophers. For many purposes, that may be appropriate. Still there are contexts where such a limited perspective gives rise to serious misjudgments. The views of even the greatest thinkers cannot be fully understood in isolation. In order to know the performative function of their statements, in order to know whether those statements were mere trivialities, pieces of common sense, expressions of agreement, or deliberate provocations, in order to know whether they were meant straightforwardly or ironically, in order to know with what force they were uttered, how they were understood at the time, what role they played in the contemporary debate—for all this we need to know the discursive setting in which the statements were made.

Thus, to determine reliably how Heidegger's philosophical thought and his political engagement are connected, it is essential to consider what other links between philosophy and politics existed at the time. The particular embodiment of Heidegger's action becomes understandable only when we see it against the field of options in which it occurred. Knowledge of the philosophical context, first of all, makes it clear that Heidegger's action was not unique among German philosophers. We discover that other philosophers were involved for a longer time; that others were involved more deeply; that, unlike Heidegger, others had worked on philosophical ideas during the Weimar period that clearly foreshadowed the new political ideology; and that others, unlike Heidegger, were willing after 1933 to adjust their philosophical thinking to political exigencies. Knowledge of this context also shows that some claims made in defense of Heidegger are irrelevant. For instance, it has been said that Heidegger was no Nazi because he was repeatedly attacked by others for not being a real National Socialist. Yet such charges were regularly being made by all the philosophical factions, and Heidegger was no exception.

All these considerations may be considered external to the question of whether there exists a necessary link between Heidegger's philosophy and his politics. This, it might be said, is the crucial con-

cern because Heidegger's philosophy, unlike that of his contemporaries, is still alive. Even with respect to this question, however, it remains important to understand the historical context. By considering that context we come to see not only that other philosophers committed themselves to the Nazi cause, but that they did so for a number of different and mutually incompatible philosophical reasons. This, first of all, undermines the idea that there was a specific link between Heidegger's particular philosophy and National Socialism. Hence many analyses of the Heidegger case fall short. It has been maintained that the linkage between Heidegger's philosophy and his politics on behalf of the Nazis lay in his "decisionism," the refusal to countenance transhistorical norms and values. It turns out that some of Heidegger's colleagues committed themselves to National Socialism specifically in the name of their belief in such values. Heidegger's politics have also been blamed on his "irrationalism," his repeated attacks on the western notion of reason. But knowledge of the historical context shows again that this is an inadequate explanation, since other philosophers committed themselves to National Socialism specifically in the name of reason.

It is important, then, to have a fuller picture of the philosophical field in Germany in 1933, if we want to achieve a realistic assessment of the Heidegger case. This is all the more urgent since Pierre Bourdieu has based an influential analysis of Heidegger on a view of the philosophical context which, on closer inspection, proves to be deeply problematic.

Bourdieu argues that, in the environment in which Heidegger operated, all legitimacy emanated from Kant and that the dominant social positions were held by the neo-Kantians. Heidegger played, on Bourdieu's account, the role of philosophical rebel. The revolution he undertook involved a distinctively new reading of the authoritative Kantian texts, in which he substituted his own metaphysical and ontological interpretation for the epistemological reading advanced by the neo-Kantians. Thereby he attacked "the foundations of the authority of his opponents: the exclusive right to the Kantian heritage."[18] But in Bourdieu's eyes this attack also had a political dimension. He sees the neo-Kantians as heirs to the European humanism of the Enlightenment, with Heidegger in a philosophical position that lacked academic legitimacy—that of the conservative revolution. For Bourdieu it is, in any case, clear that

the ideologues of the conservative revolution "without doubt contributed more to the deep-lying thematic and problematic of Heidegger than all the philosophical literature which served him in the transformation of an existential mood into an existential ontology" (p. 43).

Bourdieu thus offers us an enticingly simple picture of the link between Heidegger's philosophy and his politics. Yet the philosophical field in which Heidegger operated was not, in fact, ruled by neo-Kantianism; neo-Kantianism cannot be identified at large with the tradition of enlightened humanism; and Heidegger's "rebellion" cannot be said to have forced him to embrace a conservative ideology. Bourdieu is wrong on all three counts. By the time Heidegger appeared on the scene, neo-Kantianism was already in full retreat, challenged by diverse philosophical movements. In addition, neo-Kantianism itself had a "neo-conservative" wing that eventually supported the Nazis. Finally, the philosophical challenge to neo-Kantianism came not only from the right but also, as in logical positivism, from the left. In rebelling against neo-Kantianism, Heidegger was in no way compelled toward the right.

Weimar philosophy was actually characterized by the uneasy coexistence of a plethora of philosophical movements. In this respect philosophy in Germany resembled the politics of the period, which was also marked by a large number of movements and parties. Before that, from the beginning of the Bismarck empire to its end, the neo-Kantians dominated academic philosophy in Germany and thereby gave the impression of a unified field. The last descendants of the neo-Kantians who were active during the Weimar Republic found themselves, in contrast, competing for influence and positions with phenomenologists and existentialists, with philosophers of life and philosophical anthropologists, with realists and positivists, with neo-scholastic Aristotelians and Marxists.

This change was not as abrupt as it may seem at first glance. Even in their heyday the neo-Kantians were divided into opposing groups. Neo-Kantianism had, in reality, blanketed both idealists and realists, dogmatists and pragmatists, humanistically inclined and science-oriented philosophers, political conservatives and socialists. In addition, many of the new schools that gained influence in the Weimar Republic had their roots in the same period in which neo-Kantianism originated. As the neo-Kantians were raising their

cry "Back to Kant!" Nietzsche was making his genealogical study of the will to power; Frege was constructing his new logic and applying it to the analysis of philosophical problems; Dilthey was spelling out his historical hermeneutics; Husserl was forging his descriptive phenomenology; and Mach was undertaking his positivist program. The characteristic movements of Weimar philosophy all had their roots in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In contrast to the neo-Kantians, they had not been very visible in the universities, and so it seemed that pre-Weimar philosophy was united behind a single conception of philosophy.

The appearance of these various movements only spotlights an essential characteristic of all philosophical thinking: it is always at odds with itself. Even within a single mind or within a single philosophical text, thoughts run in different directions. There is always the battle that thinking must carry out for itself in order to restrain, to rope in, to hamper, or to let go of certain ideas. Even within philosophical periods that seem single-minded and unified in doctrine, there are divisions, forces that pull thoughts in different and opposing directions. Philosophy is essentially a discourse of dissent, of battling voices.

But the most fundamental division that split German philosophy in the Weimar Republic, and in the imperial period preceding it, cannot be characterized in terms of the different schools. It was a division, instead, between what we may call philosophical conservatives and philosophical radicals, between those who saw their philosophizing as the recovery of a great past and those who saw it as a renewal. That split came out of the peculiar history of modern German philosophy, which had developed in two great spurts separated by half a century and by radical changes in setting. The first great epoch of German philosophy extended from the publication of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781 to the death of Hegel in 1831; it was the epoch of German idealism, a time of unbroken confidence in the powers of philosophy, when science could still be considered subsidiary to philosophical speculation and when there was no German state. The second great epoch of German philosophy began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and was still going on in the 1930s. In the intervening half century, German philosophy had suffered a disastrous collapse, the natural sciences had encroached into the old territory of philosophy, and Germany

had emerged as a unified modern state. What developed in the second epoch of German philosophy was a movement deeply divided in its understanding of itself. There were those who saw the new turn as promising a recovery of earlier traditions—they wanted to go back to Kant, Fichte, or Hegel and resume philosophical thinking in that spirit. These conservative thinkers were opposed by those who considered a radical new beginning necessary. Nietzsche's genealogy, Dilthey's hermeneutics, logical analysis, phenomenology, and positivist empiricism were all attempts at radical renewal. The neo-Kantians, who formed the largest group in this melange of opinions, were in turn divided between those who simply wanted to go back to Kant and those who wanted to go beyond him.

Both the philosophical conservatives and the philosophical radicals had to redefine their undertakings in relation to the expanding sciences, on the one hand, and to the changing political field on the other. Often they sought to keep their work neutral with respect to scientific and political questions. At other times they saw themselves as engaged in a specifically "scientific" or specifically "political" kind of philosophizing. Some understood their philosophy as the foundation of a worldview, an encompassing perspective on human concerns that would include science and politics. As new scientific ideas and disciplines emerged in the period after 1870, along with new political structures, the philosophers found themselves forced to redefine their own enterprise. The emergence of such disciplines as psychology and sociology, and of such theories as Einstein's relativity, caused considerable anxiety. At the same time, political developments appeared to take the ground away. Bismarck's political pragmatism seemed for many philosophers the harbinger of a politics in which economic interests would predominate and ideas would have a small place. The democracy of the Weimar Republic appealed to the political passions and convictions of the masses, but not to the considered arguments of the philosophers. Communism promised the implementation of a philosophy, but at the price of abandoning philosophical questioning. National Socialism offered the prospect of philosophy integrated into a single, national worldview. These were daunting prospects, and the philosophers, both conservatives and radicals, responded to them with a great deal of uncertainty.

The divisions that existed within German philosophy and, in par-

ticular, the split between conservatives and radicals did not disappear in 1933. On the contrary, they were even sharpened by the lack of unity in what the Nazis called their worldview and by their insistence, at the same time, that this worldview had to be unified. Thus the struggles among German philosophers were intensified, since their divisions now came to take on a political coloring.

When in 1943 the Nazi historian Gerhard Lehmann reviewed the course of German philosophy during the first half of the century, he lamented the decay that had led to so many philosophical opinions and schools. He ascribed the situation to "a process of spiritual dissolution in the last decades before the war," resulting in an array of weak and fruitless movements marked by

> the exaggeration and formlessness that is characteristic of everything false. The philosopher wants to be everything at once: prophet, healer, savior, scholar, politician. Schools of wisdom are founded, philosophical sects of Christian, Buddhist, theosophical observation, which find a gullible public. An abysmal intellectualism foams in glistening bubbles and accelerates the ideological disintegration of the nation.[19]

In a similar tone Walter Del-Negro, another Nazi historian, wrote in 1942 that in the pre-Nazi period philosophy had "lost any connection to the tasks of the nation." The result was

> a hopeless chaos of incompatible opinions, which became altogether a cause for derision. Often it was a matter of pure decadence, often decidedly of mere fashion . . . As a whole, then, there were all the symptoms of a deep crisis, which fits very well into the general cultural dissolution of the time.[20]

The Nazi revolution, Lehmann and Del-Negro were forced to admit, had made only a small difference in this situation. Marxist and positivist forms of philosophizing were prohibited. Other philosophical schools suffered because some of their prominent representatives happened to be Jews—as was true for the phenomenologists. But for the most part the bloodletting extended across schools, and so the previous diversity of philosophical opinions remained essentially intact after 1933.

Although Nazi authors like Lehmann and Del-Negro deplored such chaotic conditions, no official attempt was ever made to insti-

tute a single Nazi philosophy. Even toward the end of the war Hitler himself justified the existing diversity: "I am not of the opinion that freedom of inquiry should be granted only in the area of the natural sciences. It must really also extend into the humanities. And here philosophy stands entirely in the foreground. For it is in essence only a continuation of natural science."[21] This attitude, of course, differed sharply from the one he had taken toward the arts, where his personal preferences had fostered a policy of strict conformity.

There were two major reasons for the relatively tolerant Nazi attitude toward philosophy. First of all, the different philosophical schools were willing to put themselves at the service of the regime. This they did without hesitation. Among the neo-Kantians there were those who had long resented the dominance of Jewish thinkers and who now advanced their own version as the guiding philosophy of the new system. Objective-value theorists argued that only a commitment to their ideas could ground the notion of racial inferiority. Traditional idealists foresaw a revival of the great German tradition, of Meister Eckhart, Fichte, Hegel, and other great figures of the past. Organological holists maintained that the Nazi ideology would have to incorporate a holistic conception of life and society. Psychological characterologists, biologistic realists, and philosophical anthropologists fought over which of them could most effectively explicate the notions of race and folk. The Nietzscheans represented yet another faction. Werner Rings, whom Heidegger had suspended from academic teaching because of "un-German behavior," wrote bitterly: "Yes, the Kantians now struck hard and with assurance, the Fichteans gave free reign to their fanaticism of the will, the philosophers of nature conjured up the demonic forces of old Germanic pantheism, the Nietzscheans outdid Zarathustra, and the philosophers of existence torpedoed the existence of un-German Germans."[22]

If the diversity of philosophical schools, movements, and ideas was one characteristic of the field both before and after 1933, the other was the struggle between them—a struggle that started well before 1933 but was transformed and intensified by the political events of that year. The new regime conceived the world in categories of unity and totality and strove to impose on it a unified sweeping vision. Though its claim to a coherent worldview was mere pretension, and a profound misunderstanding of the disorganized

nature of human thinking, the claim politicized the struggle between the different schools: the question of who was philosophically right became burdened with the demand for political correctness. This meant not simply that the regime would keep an eye on the disputes of the philosophers but also—more dangerously—that philosophers themselves could now mobilize the resources of the political system to defend and advance their own private goals. The real danger was, in other words, not that the politicians made use of philosophy but that the philosophers could make use of politics.

This was, indeed, the situation between 1933 and 1945. Philosophers now promoted their ideas as the appropriate foundation of the Nazi worldview even where, like Heidegger, they had previously made little effort to link their thought to the political domain. They also publicly castigated the ideas of other philosophers as inappropriate to the Nazi view of the world or as incompatible with it, as Heidegger did with the philosophy of value or as Oskar Becker did with Heidegger's philosophy. In addition, philosophers mobilized the resources of Rosenberg's ideological office and the National Socialist Federation of University Teachers to secure the academic appointments of their allies and to thwart those of opponents. They sought out and maintained good relations with party officials, secretly asked for the investigation of philosophical enemies (as Erich Jaensch did with Heidegger), tried to prevent the publication of certain philosophical writings and to promote others. They recommended their students and friends as good nationalists and antisemites and denounced their philosophically opponents as associates and students of Jews (as Heidegger did with Eduard Baumgarten).

In the political dispute between philosophical conservatives and radicals, the former now characteristically drew on Fichte's writings to bolster their cause, whereas the radicals appealed most often to Nietzsche's work. Of the two sides, the conservatives proved more organized since they had their own association in the German Philosophical Society founded by Bruno Bauch in 1917. The philosophical radicals had nothing equivalent. Their alliance was made up informally at first by an understanding between Baeumler, Krieck, and Heidegger, on the one hand, and between Heidegger and Heyse, on the other. In addition we must count Oskar Becker, Hans Georg Gadamer, and the students and associates of all these men

on the radical side. Because it lacked an organization, however, this alliance proved somewhat more brittle. If the radicals managed nevertheless to maintain some influence throughout the Nazi period, it was undoubtedly because they had more philosophical talent on their side and Baeumler in Berlin could effectively counteract the machinations of the conservatives through his official connections.

In order to explain how philosophers could come to the same political conclusions by way of such different theoretical premises, we may consider two accounts. The first holds that all the philosophers subscribed to the same political cause, but interpreted it in very different ways. They all subscribed to "National Socialism," but understood various things by that name and so were able to reconcile their political commitment and their varying philosophical assumptions. According to the second account, the different philosophers could take on the same political commitment because they shared certain important theoretical assumptions, despite the outward appearance of conflict. There is something to be said for both accounts. It is true, on the one hand, that National Socialism never had a unified political ideology and that its so-called worldview consisted of an amalgam of diverse ideas and attitudes. It is, on the other hand, also true that the German philosophers of the 1930s shared a well-defined intellectual space and that they were therefore likely to have shared certain fundamental assumptions. Fortunately, the two accounts are not mutually exclusive; combined, they may offer a more promising and richer explanation of the historical facts than either one could by itself. It may well turn out that the German philosophers in 1933 shared certain ideas that pulled in the same political direction, and it may also turn out that their divergent assumptions made them interpret that shared engagement in different ways. It is, in any event, this more complex explanation that I propose to explore in the following chapters.

THE POLITICAL SETTING

Despite their professional disagreements, the German philosophers of the 1930s all shared the same institutional, social, and political environment. Hence we should ask first of all what the political field looked like in 1933, what assumptions the philosophers made

about it, and what common conclusions they reached about the need for political action. What we call "political" covers, of course, diverse and irregular ground. Politics relates in manifold ways to history, economics, geography, psychology, technology, ideology, and philosophy. Politics is often verbal or symbolic in character, but equally often it is not discursive. Speech is central to politics, as are rituals, formalized acts, flags and uniforms, but so too are brute events of economic collapse, wars, bloodshed, murder. Politics can be focused on the past, the present, or the future. It can be concerned with actions, events, and structures. Whenever we talk about the politics of a particular historical moment, then, we must first determine what understanding of the political obtained at the time.

This also holds true with respect to the German politics of the 1930s. We need to ask how the participants in the process, politicians, citizens, professionals and academics, philosophers and nonphilosophers, conceptualized the field in which they were operating. We should of course expect some overlapping in certain fundamental respects with other and older understandings of the political, but what concerns us most here is the distinctiveness of that place and time. Four aspects of the German political field of the 1930s stand out, and together they form a special quadrilateral concerning the nature of political time, political space, political agency, and political structure.

Politics as a concern with action and the present. There are understandings of the political—as in Aristotle's *Politics*—in which traditions, institutions, and constitutions appear as the center of politics. During stable periods it may indeed be plausible to conceive of politics primarily in terms of institutions, but this will not do in times of upheaval—as in Germany between 1918 and 1945—when all political structures are in question. Politics is then reduced to its most elementary level: political action. From such a perspective, political institutions are reduced to secondary importance. They are considered political only in the sense that they are treated as the products of action and as devices for generating action.

In Germany of the 1930s, political action did become the grounding concept of the political, and this led in turn to an emphasis on *will*—whatever generates action, such as determination, perseverance, force, and struggle. When politics is preoccupied with the idea

of action, it is also characteristically focused on the present moment, since only then is action possible. Political agents do of course look back in time. They may be determined to learn from the past. They may want to bring back one or another condition. They may also look forward to the future, make plans, anticipate likely and possible future events. But they are neither historians nor prophets. Past and future matter to them only as guides for current action.

In its extreme form, this conception of the present also comes to mean a single decisive moment, a moment of transformation in which an old order is to be shed so that an entirely new one can be formed. This indeed was the view that predominated in Germany in the 1930s. Politics as a whole came to be seen in terms of the decisive moment, a unique crisis that could be resolved only through the most determined and radical action.

Politics as a concern with place and group. The German political field of 1933 was characterized not only by a specific conception of time but also by one of space. All politics is of course local in the sense that political institutions must exist somewhere and that political actions, like all other actions, must be carried out in a particular place. These institutions and actions are, moreover, generally meant to benefit a specific local condition. They are meant to obtain, hold, and enhance the locale of a certain group of people. That much is suggested by the connection of the word "politics" to Greek *polis* as the place of the political.

What varies over time, however, is how this political place is defined. German politics of the 1930s defined its place as unique and central. This notion grew out of a naively Eurocentric picture that the Germans of the period shared with other western nations. Their Eurocentrism included a picture of Europe that stretched both east and west with the Germans in the natural position of the central nation—central, first of all, in Europe itself and then, because of Europe's unique position, central to the world as a whole. The political excesses of the Nazi period were, in a sense, one result of a Eurocentrism that the Germans shared with their neighbors. Excesses were also justified by another idea that dominated German politics of the 1930s: the country's political space was being threatened by decay from inside and pressure from outside. These feelings were no doubt a direct reflection of the loss of the First World War and the subsequent political and economic turmoil. But they were

accentuated by the conviction that the Germans were being deprived of their space by political pressure from all sides. (*Volk ohne Raum,* the title of a popular novel of the period, gave vivid expression to this claustrophobic feeling.) The sense of threat was magnified by the additional belief that not only Germany but the whole of Europe was under threat from non-European states and races. Hence the Nazis could easily convince themselves that their political actions were being conducted not simply for Germany alone but on behalf of the whole European continent. German National Socialism was also—and this we should not forget—an extreme form of Europeanism.

When we speak of a politics built on a specific understanding of space, we generally assume at the same time that this space is defined as that of a particular people. Political space is characteristically taken to be the homeland of a people in the sense that it is either the place in their actual possession, the site of their presumed origin, or a place they aspire to. Political discourse may describe the people associated with such a space in a number of different ways. It may talk of them as a group united by current needs and interests; as a group of common descent; or as one held together by shared aspirations and hopes. The group may be seen as a linguistic, cultural, or economic community; as a family, tribe, or race; as one body pursuing future happiness. All these forms of description flow together in the common concept of "nation." For the Nazis too the nation was the focus of all their political thinking; they were above all nationalists who sought to pursue the interests of the German nation and to enhance Germany as their place of residence.

The modern concept of a nation is, however, notoriously difficult to pin down, since it relies on a multitude of criteria that do not necessarily coincide. A group currently sharing a language, a culture, and a religion need not at the same time be one with a common descent. Those who share a common descent need not have the same economic or cultural aspirations. Past, present, and future do not necessarily group people along the same lines. What is more, all social groupings simplify the network of overlapping relationships that constitute actual human life. These difficulties are particularly evident when one starts to speak of the German nation. The political grouping of the Germans into a single nation was not something that could be taken for granted as a historical fact, but

required elaboration and justification. This had been a problem since the beginning of German nationalism in the early nineteenth century, and a number of fundamental questions were asked again and again after those years. What made the Germans into a distinctive nation? Was it their history? Their culture? Their language? Their philosophy? Were the Austrians really German? Were the Catholics in the west and south German? Were the German Jews German? Were the Alsatians German? Over time philosophers, politicians, and others concerned with such questions repeatedly tried to define the German identity. Some did so in terms of shared language and culture; others attempted it in terms of the geopolitical position of the Germans; yet others sought it in common descent. The search for "the German identity" has been a fundamental concern of German politics over the last two hundred years. It is in this context that we must consider the Nazi attempt to resolve the question once and for all in the "scientific" terms of racial biology. Racism can no doubt serve a variety of political functions. In the context of Germany in the 1930s, it predominantly served the function of shoring up the definition of German identity, thereby defining the space in which German politics saw itself functioning.

What stands out in these efforts is the fact that the definition of the political group and its space was conceived in terms of a sharp boundary and a complete opposition. German politics of the 1930s (and not only that of the Nazis) was essentially antagonistic in character. When he tried to define the essential nature of the political, Carl Schmitt could therefore quite plausibly maintain that politics was based on the distinction between friend and enemy. As a general description this may be insufficient, but as a characterization of the political understanding prevailing at the time, Schmitt's description seems accurate. It is this antagonistic understanding of political difference that fueled the struggles between the Nazi's and the Communists, that determined the course of the antisemitic persecutions, and that eventually dictated Germany's military stance up to the end of the war.

Politics as a concern with rank. There is a certain naive, though well-meaning, view of politics which holds that "ideally" political interactions occur between equal partners. But political action, like all social interaction, always must involve a gradient between the agent and those affected by the agent. That gradient need not be the

source of a constant social ranking, since subjects may take turns in acting and being acted upon. Yet there also exist natural inequalities in physical strength, mental abilities, and skills as well as various forms of social differentiations that make it easier for some subjects to be active social agents than for others. All agents are, moreover, subject to the life cycle and will at times be too young, too old, or too infirm to initiate social action. Further, effective group action calls for efforts of coordination and centralization in the making and executing of plans. All these factors would seem to generate a natural pressure toward the differentiation of rank in human societies.

These natural facts can lead to quite different political responses, however. Political action can be directed toward the reinforcement of such rankings or toward their dissolution. It can aim at preserving a particular rank or at replacing it. The German political field in the 1930s is characterized, first of all, by the fact that the established order of social ranking was undergoing rapid transformation as a result of social, economic, and intellectual changes in the country. These had to affect the German philosophers. Because of shifts within the body of human knowledge, their intellectual standing was being called into question even as the social standing of the universities as a whole was becoming more insecure. Social insecurity as well as a struggle to preserve existing ranks or attain new ones were inevitable.

Still the time was also one in which social gradation as such was under suspicion. These tendencies were manifested, for instance, both in the political struggles of the Communist movement and in the disaffected anarchism of the youth movement. The opposition to social ranking led to two different types of valuation that stood in a curious tension, for it generated, on the one hand, a new valuation of the free individual and, on the other, of the *Volk* as a community of equals. This peculiar double focus, in turn, generated a new understanding of political organization no longer based on the assumption of a multilayered social hierarchy with established social rulers at the apex, but on a direct association of the Volk with a great political leader. The common gradations of society were thus rejected and replaced by the idea of a direct messianic leadership in which the chosen individual stands in immediate relation to the people. The right to leadership then followed not from the facts of

a social hierarchy that placed some subjects in the role of political agents, but from the moral and intellectual qualities of the leader himself and from his direct link to the people as a whole. This implied also that such leadership could not be conferred on the individual through democratic elections but had to derive directly from the qualities of the leader himself and from his relation to those he led.

Politics as a concern with legitimation. Political action always involves a choice of priorities wherein one course of action is considered more urgent or more desirable than another. The making of such choices demands some ordering of preferences, and since the priorities adopted are never self-evident, there is always a need for justification. This arises, in particular, when the adopted course of action is challenged. Political action, insofar as it calls for large-scale social coordination, needs to be regular and predictable in order to be effective, and insofar as this regularity is achieved by means of social rules (laws, regulations, habits, customs), it can in turn be challenged. The same kind of demand for justification arises finally with respect to the structures through which political action is channeled. Every such structure is the realization of one possible pattern out of others and hence demands justification.

Politics is therefore always a process of self-legitimation in which particular priorities for action and particular social structures must be justified. There is, of course, a form of pragmatic politics that sets out to justify its choices in the most immediately utilitarian terms. But, more characteristically, the process of self-legitimation reaches beyond such considerations and goes beyond the political sphere itself, since politics itself seems in question. Political agents are then forced to look beyond their own political concerns and to draw on some other authority, on myth, religion, science, history, or philosophy, to account for a legitimacy they cannot supply from their own domain.

Moreover, the social conditions of the time in Germany encouraged the idea, shared by most of the political parties, that the main problem of German politics was to restore and maintain an order that was threatened by a decay and chaos of metaphysical dimensions. There existed a pervasive belief that it would not be enough to shore up the system by means of a purely temporal order. Instead, a permanent and true political order had to be discovered.

This immediately raised the question of where a model was to be found. Politics could, on this understanding, not be a practical coping with the exigencies of the moment; it had to be derived from an order more purely grounded than mere human institutions.

In Germany of the 1930s, therefore, the demand for the legitimation of political choices was perhaps stronger than it might have been elsewhere. The political field was characterized by a intense struggle over how legitimation was to be achieved. National Socialism generally claimed that politics was self-sustaining and that all legitimation had to come out of the political field itself. This doctrine relied, however, on the incorporation of a system of general beliefs into the political field, of a "worldview." The move inevitably raised the further question of how the worldview itself could be legitimated, and hence the question of the grounding of the political domain presented itself once again in a new form. In the German cultural context, where philosophy still occupied a place of distinction, this meant that philosophical terms were needed to explicate and justify the Nazi worldview and the politics built around it.

Politics and Philosophers

It remains to determine what kinds of interaction were made possible by the nature of the philosophical and political fields in Germany in the 1930s. For that we need to ask what concepts served to bridge the usual gap between philosophical thinking and political engagement. I argue that there were four major concepts: crisis, nation or race, leadership, and order. The place of these four concepts in the structure of the German political field has already been indicated. Now the task must be to see what functions they performed in the philosophical reasoning of the period and how they may have facilitated the political engagement of German philosophers in the name of their philosophizing.

It may be useful at this point to return to Heidegger's university inauguration and to consider how he himself justified the step into politics in his address. What he said that day he repeated in somewhat different words over the next two years, particularly in his lectures on metaphysics in 1935. Heidegger's remarks on these various occasions will indeed confirm that the notions of crisis, nation,

leadership, and order played a central mediating role between philosophy and politics for at least one philosopher of the period. The conjecture that these are the crucial concepts for understanding the interrelations of philosophy and politics in that time thereby becomes more plausible.

In his address Heidegger expressed a specific view of the nature of the present moment—a view that was at once political and philosophical and that could thus serve conveniently to define his actions. He said that right now "German destiny is in its most extreme distress" (p. 6).[23] That distress was, moreover, not confined to Germany but affected the west as a whole. The question was ultimately whether "the spiritual power of the West fails and its joints crack," whether "this moribund semblance of a culture caves in and drags all forces into confusion and lets them suffocate in madness" (p. 13). Heidegger came back to this theme once more in his 1935 lectures, when he spoke of an "onslaught of what we call the demonic" (p. 46)—an event characterized by a "dawning spiritlessness, the dissolution of spiritual energies, the rejection of all original inquiry into ultimate grounds" (p. 45).[24] There was now a danger of a "dreary technological frenzy" and "unrestricted organization" (p. 37), of a world that lacked the "depth from which the essential always comes to man" (p. 46). On both occasions he spoke of the need for a historical decision between "greatness and the acceptance of decline."

Linked to this first theme of crisis is a second one: that crisis takes its sharpest form in Germany. Hence, "the relentlessness of that spiritual mission that forces the German people into the shape of its history."[25] Two years later Heidegger was to tell his students that Germany had a unique position in the world: "Situated in the center, our nation incurs the severest pressure. It is the nation with the most neighbors and hence the most endangered" (p. 38).[26] Germany as the most central nation was also at the same time the most metaphysical and hence the most spiritual of all nations: "all true power and beauty of the body, all sureness and boldness in combat, all authenticity and inventiveness of the understanding, are grounded in the spirit, and they rise or fall only through the power or impotence of the spirit. The spirit is the sustaining, dominating principle, the first and the last, not merely an indispensable factor" (p. 47). Germany's historical spiritual mission was made evident by

the fact that German idealism had originally stood up to "the greatness, breadth, and originality of that spiritual world." But ultimately it was, once more, all of Europe that was exposed to the pressure of crisis. "This Europe, in its ruinous blindness forever on the point of cutting its own throat, lies today in a great pincers, squeezed between Russia on one side and America on the other." "From a metaphysical point of view," those two countries were in fact the same. Opposed as their systems seemed to be, their effect was ultimately indistinguishable (p. 37).

Heidegger linked the idea of the world-historical crisis and of the special German mission, in turn, to that of the need for spiritual leadership. He had begun his rectorial address with the bold assertion of what he called his "commitment to the *spiritual* leadership of this institution of higher learning." Later in the address he spoke more generally of professors as leaders of the students and even of the students as future leaders of Germany. But what he understood by spiritual leadership is not immediately evident from his words. It would not be altogether wrong to say that he was referring to "intellectual" leadership, were it not for the fact that he would have shunned that word and certainly did not want to be associated with the liberal intellectuals of the Weimar period. Instead he clearly wanted to link himself to the German idealists for whom spirit *(Geist)* had been a crucial notion.[27] It was, in any case, because of the supposed need for spiritual leadership that Heidegger saw himself called upon to take part in the German revolution.

In appropriating a central term from the political rhetoric of his time, however, Heidegger was also expressing an acceptance of the essentially undemocratic idea of messianic leadership that the Nazis had made their own. This is evident as well from the fact that he introduced this self-same principle of governance into the university, telling his students that the Führer, Adolf Hitler, alone should be their reality and law. Even after the war, in fact, Heidegger expressed antipathy to democratic forms of government.[28] But in emphasizing the adjective *geistig* in 1933 in his claim to *geistige Führung* Heidegger was also denying any claim to competition with the *political* leadership. Instead he was implying the need for two related and interdependent forms of leadership, the political and the spiritual. At least for the period of his political activism, he believed that the two types of leadership needed to be closely associated, and he

did approach Hitler directly in order to initiate a personal contact. But Hitler had another understanding of the leadership required at that moment and, as far as we know, never responded to Heidegger's approach.

Again in his rectorial address Heidegger said that "the will to the essence of the German university is the will to science, which in turn is the will to the historical spiritual mission of the German people as a people that knows itself in its state." The peculiar linkage of the essence of the German university, the idea of science, and the historical mission of the German people reflected his deepest convictions on the nature of the political crisis and its resolution. It was because he believed that the crisis was centered on the German university that he worked so strenuously for academic reform. And Heidegger thought that the failings of existing institutions were not merely organizational but demanded reflection on the very nature of science. The fundamental thing was to realize that "all science is philosophy, whether it knows and wills it or not." Since existing institutions failed to operate on that insight, they also failed to deal with the most urgent philosophical questioning.

Ignoring the great political and social concerns of the day and giving second place to the practical problems facing a new rector, Heidegger asserted boldly that the most pressing task now was for the university to engage in a process of self-examination. It was necessary to regain "the power of the *beginning* of our spiritual-historical existence" (p. 6) and to recapture the form of thinking practiced by the Greek philosophers. Theirs had in no way been impotent theorizing but the highest mode of human work, a "standing and questioning of one's ground in the midst of the constantly self-concealing totality of what is." Nietzsche, he said, had sharpened that questioning by confronting us "with the forsakenness of modern man" (p. 8). Questioning could no longer be considered preliminary, but was the highest form of knowledge. In this spirit, science and the university should address the "world-shaping powers of human historical existence, such as nature, history, language; people, custom, state; poetry, thought, faith; disease, madness, death; law, economy, technology" (p. 9).[29]

Heidegger was convinced that such a rethinking of origins would, in turn, lead to a rebuilding of the university, shattering its division into specialties, returning its thought to the political con-

cerns of the nation, linking study with the work of the hand. Science, when properly rooted in "people, custom, state," would preserve the people's earthbound strength:

> The primordial and full essence of science, whose realization is our task, provided we submit to the distant command of the beginning of our spiritual-historical existence, is only created by knowledge about the people that actively participates and by knowledge about the state's destiny that always keeps itself prepared, both at one with knowledge about the spiritual mission. (p. 11)

In 1935 Heidegger told his students in a similar vein that the Germans were returning to true understanding because nations, "in their greatest movements and traditions, are linked to being" (p. 37).[30] He added: "We *ask* the question: 'How does it stand with being?'. . . We are concerned . . . to restore man's historical existence—and that always includes our own future existence in the totality of history allotted to us—to the domain of being, which it was originally incumbent on man to open up for himself" (pp. 41–42). The primordial metaphysical question of the meaning of being was thus "one of the essential and fundamental conditions for an awakening of the spirit and hence for a primordial world of historical existence. It is indispensable if the peril of world darkening is to be forestalled and if our nation in the center of the Western world is to take on its historical mission" (p. 50). Political work was thus ultimately built on philosophical ground. Political structures were to be legitimized by the philosophical search for origins. "That is why we have related the question of being to the destiny of Europe, where the destiny of the earth is being decided—since our historical existence proves to be the center of Europe itself" (p. 42). Hence also the demand for a rethinking of the role of the German university, which "despite a certain amount of house cleaning" (p. 48) was still under the domination of a "reactionary interpretation of science." Here was the philosopher's calling. While he could "never *directly* supply the energies and create the opportunities and methods that bring about historical change" (p. 10), it was "the authentic function of philosophy to challenge historical existence." And this challenge

is one of the essential prerequisites for the birth of all greatness, and in speaking of greatness we are referring primarily to the works and destinies of nations. We can speak of historical destiny only where an authentic knowledge of things dominates man's existence. And it is philosophy that opens up the paths and perspectives of such knowledge.

2

Fichte, Nietzsche, and the Nazis

The first National Socialist philosopher, some argued around 1933, was neither Heidegger nor another of his contemporaries. It was Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the idealist, who was born in 1762 and died in 1814, three quarters of a century before Hitler's birth.

"It is in fact not unjustified to look at Fichte as the first great forerunner of National Socialism and even as a National Socialist," Ernst Bergmann, the Leipzig philosopher, said in 1932. It was clear to him that Fichte's combination of a strong national consciousness with equally strong social and socialist concerns

> produce the outline of a national socialist worldview, grown from the womb of German idealism—an outline which in certain respects does not yet reach the unity of the current movement, but which in others and particularly in its basic demands (the coalescing of the nation and the idea of racial improvement) completely agrees with it, and which in yet others, as for instance in its justification for the belief in Germany, even outruns it in fervor and boldness.[1]

His colleague Arnold Gehlen saw it similarly in 1935 when he said that Fichte had been "thrown into an age of revolution and the disturbance of all political, moral, and metaphysical convictions" and that, as a result, he had come to conclusions "that brought him close to that point at which we stand today." Fichte's political philosophy could only be described as a form of National Socialism.[2]

Such assessments may strike us as tendentious and misleading.

They certainly take little notice of Fichte's early enthusiasm for the French Revolution, his early adherence to the ideals of Freemasonry, the Enlightenment, and republican egalitarianism, or his late preoccupation with a new kind of Christianity. We might therefore conclude that, in aligning themselves with Fichte, men like Bergmann and Gehlen were merely seeking to give philosophical respectability to their own political stand in 1933, trying to lend authority to the particular philosophical tradition with which they identified themselves, above all trying to make Fichte acceptable in the new age.

In the attempt to justify their political system, the Nazis were willing to reach deep into the German past and to appropriate as much of it as they could. They would go back to ancient times to conjure up idealized pictures of Germanic valor, purity, and virtue, of tribes loyally attached to their leaders, of heroic, ruthless warriors. In *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* Alfred Rosenberg even went so far as to depict a mythical Atlantis as the origin of the Nazi view of the world. When they looked at the history of German philosophy, the Nazis had a similar tendency to appropriate it as fully as possible for their own purposes. In a 1941 collection of essays, *The German in German Philosophy,* Theodor Haering and his collaborators referred sweepingly to Albertus Magnus (whom they called Albert the German), Meister Eckhart, Nicolaus of Cusa, Paracelsus, Jacob Boehme, Johann Kepler, Leibniz, Kant, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche as philosophical forerunners of the Nazi system and as guides to the new "world-historical task" of the German people.

Still there were good reasons why Fichte should have had a special attraction for the Nazis. What appealed to them first of all, of course, was his nationalism, his elevation of Germanness to a metaphysical essence, and then his concern with the well-being of the whole nation, his nationally oriented form of socialism. Of even more significance to them, however, was probably the fact that Fichte saw himself as living at a moment of historical decision, at a unique turning point in human history. When they looked back at the century preceding them, the Nazis were drawn to philosophical and political thinkers who, like themselves, saw the period as one of chaos and decline, ripe for revolutionary change. So they paid little attention to the cautiously conservative politics of the bour-

geois Hegelians, who had dominated the German universities in the middle of the nineteenth century, and showed no interest at all in the reformist, evolutionary socialism of the neo-Kantians or the liberal progressivism of the scientific materialists.[3] They focused on Fichte, Nietzsche, and such lesser figures as Paul de Lagarde and Julius Langbehn, who shared their sense that the times had gone astray and that a radical reordering was imminent. In the winter of 1807 Fichte delivered his *Addresses to the German Nation* under political conditions that the Nazis could consider like their own. Where Fichte had been stirred to action by Prussia's losses to Napoleon, Hitler and his followers saw themselves motivated by Germany's loss of the First World War. Where he had fought against the ignominy of the battle of Jena, they saw themselves spurred on by the national shame of the treaty of Versailles.

For many of the German philosophers in 1933, in any case, Fichte was a natural point of reference. Among the prominent German philosophers of the past, very few had been politically active. No doubt they all had political opinions and some had even written on political philosophy, but actual engagement in politics was rare. Fichte alone became involved under conditions of a general upheaval similar to the one of 1933. It was natural, then, that German philosophers should turn back to Fichte in their search for historical models. As they stood up to declare their allegiance to the Nazis, they found in Fichte's *Addresses* a template. This was true even of philosophers who otherwise held no particular allegiance to German idealism, who identified themselves instead with the thinkers of the later epoch of German philosophy. Heidegger was one of these; he saw himself as a philosophical radical and innovator. His roots lay in Husserl's phenomenology and in Nietzsche's recasting of philosophy. Yet, at the moment of stepping into the political arena, he clearly modeled his rectorial address on Fichte's *Addresses*.[4]

Heidegger's use of the themes of crisis, nation, leadership, and order derived, in fact, directly from Fichte's *Addresses*. It was Fichte who first put this fourfold thematic together and made it his own bridge for crossing from philosophical speculation to political engagement. In tracing this back to Fichte, I am not simply saying that Fichte talked of politics in terms of these four notions. It might be said that others did the same, and by the 1930s these themes were

a commonplace of German politics. My point is rather that Fichte was the first philosopher for whom these four conjoined notions had both a philosophical and a political meaning, and that he could bequeath this to later German philosophers. Because of the hold these concepts had both in philosophy and in politics, they could subsequently serve again and again to bridge the gap between the philosophical and political realms.

In order to appreciate the fact that Fichte conceived of his *Addresses* from the start as both philosophical and political in character, and to understand why the *Addresses* could serve as models for later versions of philosophical politics, one must turn to the exact circumstances in which they were delivered. Fichte gave his lectures during the winter of 1807 in Berlin at a time of great political peril. French troops were occupying large parts of Germany. The German princes had been forced to sign a humiliating truce with the French emperor, and the Prussian king had withdrawn from his capital to Königsberg at the far eastern edge of his kingdom. Even as Fichte was speaking, Berlin was firmly in the hand of Napoleon's troops. Outside his lecture room at the academy, French drums would at times disrupt his delivery.[5] Fichte dared not call openly for military resistance against the French, though that was undoubtedly what he had in mind. The circumstances allowed political declarations at best only under the guise of philosophy. And so Fichte resorted to philosophical reflection on the spirit of German nationhood and spoke of the need for an educational program that would instill Germans with a sense of their nationality. But none of this was as important as the fact that he stood up at this particular moment to deliver his addresses. That relatively few people heard the lectures, or read them carefully when they later appeared in print, detracted in no way from their significance. Fichte's addresses were above all a symbolic act of defiance. This was how their author had conceived them, and also how they were understood by the general public. Fichte, the philosopher, had not simply made a political statement—he had performed a political act and had done so explicitly in the name of philosophy.

Fichte was not only taking risks with the French, who might have been provoked by an act of political resistance. He also had reason to fear the local Prussian authorities, who were afraid of disturbing the existing precarious balance of power and might have

resented his strident nationalist tone as a threat to the established system of princely rule. One listener at Fichte's lectures, in any case, felt that

> many a heart was trembling for the fearless man whose life and liberty hung on each of his words as on a thread, but who remained undisturbed in his undertaking by the warnings that reached him from many sides, by the concerns of the lower Prussian authorities who feared problems and reprisals from the French, and even by watching the intrusion of French observers.[6]

Fichte's political activism was no incidental matter. Of all the major German philosophers, he was the one most deeply motivated by political interests. He was concerned with political questions before he began to write on philosophy and always shifted forward and backward between philosophical and political preoccupations. The draft of a letter from 1795 (which may, however, not be genuine) even suggests that the first idea for his philosophical system came to him out of reflections on the French Revolution:

> My system is the first system of freedom. As that nation tears men from their external chains, my system liberates them from the constraints of the thing-in-itself . . . It came about through an inner struggle with myself and with all entrenched prejudices during the years in which they fought for their political freedom with their utmost power and it came about not without their help. Their valor gave me the inspiration and energy needed to grasp [this system]. The first hints and suggestions for my system came to me in writing about the revolution.[7]

That he should here credit the French for inspiring his philosophical system, when his later *Addresses to the German Nation* demand the total rejection of all French influence, is evidence of the volatility of Fichte's political opinions. Beginning with an admiration for the French revolution, he ended up as an enemy of all vestiges of Romanized culture and as an advocate of emerging German nationalism; beginning as a champion of individual liberty, he ended up preaching the benefits of corporate society. In the development of Fichte's political thinking, the year 1806 turned out to be decisive.

He was now working as a professor in the service of the Prussian king, and when war broke out with Napoleon's forces, he offered to be a political officer with the Prussian troops. He saw himself addressing the leaders of the army and even the common soldiers, instilling them with his own fervor, and had already outlined *Addresses to German Warriors* when the government turned him down. Later on, when the war resumed in 1813, he again approached the government with a similar offer; turned down once more, he joined the home defense force and, in spite of ill health, took a vigorous part in its exercises. Denied any actual service in the war, Fichte finally achieved his goal in a feverish hallucination. In 1813, struck down by an infection that was ravaging the injured soldiers his wife was taking care of, just before he died he saw himself in the last delirious moments as a soldier on the battlefield.

It was in the intervening period between the two military confrontations that Fichte delivered his *Addresses to the German Nation.* These were, in a sense, his political testament; of all his political writings, only the *Addresses* would be remembered later. The posthumous fame of the *Addresses* is certainly justified insofar as they spell out for the first time the terms in which German politics would actually be conducted a century later. By 1933 the themes of crisis, nation, leadership, and order had become common. But when Fichte spoke, the idea of crisis was still a new and untested political notion; the German nation existed only in imagination; there was no real challenge to the established order of social ranks; and the political order was not yet subject to radical questioning. We can now see that Fichte was astoundingly prescient in taking his fourfold thematic as fundamental to German politics. He anticipated a political condition that came into being only a century later, and he did so in terms that formed a bridge between the philosophical and political domains.

FICHTE'S *ADDRESSES*

The crisis of which Fichte spoke in his *Addresses* was first of all a philosophical event for him and then, in consequence, a political one. The *Addresses* of 1807 were in fact a sequel to another series of lectures, *The Fundamental Characteristics of the Present Age,* which Fichte had delivered three years earlier, before the military and po-

litical upheavals. In the earlier lectures Fichte was giving the kind of analysis that Foucault has identified as one of the characteristic undertakings of modern philosophy ever since Kant's essay "What Is Enlightenment?"[8] Fichte set out to produce a philosophical portrait of the present age, convinced that this should be possible "without regard to any experience and in a purely *a priori* manner."[9] He had in mind nothing less than the derivation of a complete plan of the world from a single unifying principle. The foundation of the whole structure was to be the assumption that the purpose of human life on earth is to organize each of its phases according to reason, and from this he hoped to derive the main stages of cultural and political evolution. The distinctive feature of Fichte's undertaking was that human history and its epochs were linked to the history of reason and were thus tied to the development of philosophical consciousness.

Fichte was convinced that his own age marked a decisive moment in the life of philosophy. Kant, he thought, had initiated an entirely new kind of philosophizing and he, Fichte, had been left the task of completing the Kantian revolution. All philosophy until then had been dogmatic in character, since it assumed a given and stable reality and saw itself as depicting an already constituted world. Fichte deduced from Kant's philosophy the idea that self-consciousness, the ego, was the core of reality and that the world was a projection of the ego's power. The first principle to be adopted by philosophy was therefore that "the ego posits itself." By speaking of self-positing, Fichte meant to indicate that this primordial self-consciousness was no cumbersome Cartesian substance, but a dynamic and active principle. Engaged in a process of self-realization, the ego posited first of all a non-ego—everything other than itself—and then by means of a series of dialectical steps both a finite empirical self and an empirical world. In such a manner Fichte thought the ego could construct and reconstruct both itself and the world.

Fully convinced that he was the first philosopher to recognize these facts and to see through the errors of dogmatic philosophizing, and certain that the history of humankind was in effect the history of reason, Fichte concluded that he himself was necessarily occupying a pivotal place in world history. Historical reality thus took on a climactic structure for him in which he, the subject of

these thoughts, occupied a singular position. He convinced himself, finally, that his own philosophy could be compared in its world-historical meaning only with the four Gospels and that his own role was similar to Christ's. Christ, however, had been only one prophet among many and the Christian age was only a first, and by no means consummating, epoch in world history; his own philosophy, on the other hand, constituted such a consummation and he himself was the spirit of truth, the paraclete, the third figure in the Trinity.[10]

Such speculations, this cataclysmic moment of philosophical truth, once again attained political meaning for Fichte when he undertook to address the German nation in 1807. His earlier speculations on the necessary sequence of historical periods, the consonance between philosophical and political history, and his own central place in the history of philosophy now came to be linked in his mind to the political circumstances in which he spoke. He saw himself at the apex of a crisis both philosophical and political in character. Accordingly Fichte began his *Addresses to the German Nation* with a reminder that he had previously spoken of human history in terms of a succession of great epochs. He had argued then, he told his listeners, that "our own age was set in . . . an epoch which had as the motive of all its vital activities and impulses mere material self-seeking" (p. 1).[11] That epoch had now come to a precipitous and unexpected end through the turmoil brought about by Napoleon's conquest of central Europe. Fichte said that he wanted to reveal to his audience "the new era which can and must directly follow the destruction of the kingdom of self-seeking by an alien power" (p. 2).

> The real destiny of the human race on earth . . . is in freedom to make itself what it really is originally. Now this making of itself deliberately, and according to rule, must have a beginning somewhere . . . Thereby a second great period . . . would appear in place of the first period . . . We are of the opinion that, in regard to time, this is the very time, and that now the race is exactly midway between the two great epochs of its life on earth. (p. 40)

Self-seeking had been the root of all corruption in the outgoing epoch, an age of sinfulness. "In every previous system of govern-

ment the interest of the individual in the community was linked to his interest in himself" (p. 7). In the new era individual interests would, by contrast, be subsumed under communal requirements. The idea of such a new age thus generated for Fichte that of a new consciousness, a social consciousness that was to be defined in turn as the consciousness of a nation. The idea of the existence of a singular crisis came thereby to be linked in his mind to that of a social and nationalist ethic.

Given that Germany was the place where the new philosophy had emerged and where political turmoil marked the end of the outgoing period of history, it was natural for Fichte to think that Germany had a special place in the resolution of the imminent crisis. The ethics that was to characterize the new age was thus bound to be the ethics of the German nation. The first task was "to save the existence and persistence of the German as such." As he told his audience, "If you go under, all humanity goes under with you, without hope for any future restoration" (p. 228). According to Fichte, the Germans were indeed the only ones left who had a living culture, since they were in a strict sense an authentic and ancient people. He considered it possible to prove from historical fact "the characteristics of the Germans as the primordial people *(Urvolk)* and as a people that has the right to call itself simply *the* people" (p. 92). Their most important characteristic was that they had "retained and developed the primordial language of the ancestral stock" (p. 47). Only one other language could be compared to German and that was Greek, which was "of equal rank, a language equally primordial" (p. 59). Other Germanic people, such as the French, had abandoned their original tongue and adopted a foreign, dead language. Their language had "movement only at the surface" but was "dead at the root" (p. 59). The French had Latinized themselves in language and Romanized themselves in culture, whereas the Germans like the Greeks had maintained a primordial language and culture. In terms of this contrast between the primordial, on the one hand, and the derived and dead, on the other, Fichte stylized the political conflict between Napoleon and the German princes. The military confrontation became nothing less than a metaphysical difference.

Since the Germans had a primordial language, Fichte also said, they were qualified to engage in a primordial thinking:

> Among the people with a living language mental culture influences life, whereas among a people of the opposite kind mental culture and life go their separate ways . . . When we speak of mental culture we are to understand thereby, first of all, philosophy, for it is philosophy which scientifically comprehends the eternal archetype *(Urbild)* of all spiritual life . . . For this science, and for all science based upon it, the claim is now made that it influences the life of a people who have a living language. (p. 63)

Hence: "True philosophy . . . is in a special sense German only—that is, primordial. Vice versa, a true German could philosophize in no other way but this" (p. 95).

It was not surprising for Fichte, then, that every time Germany was in its greatest need, the philosopher would be called on to help resolve the crisis. The political distress was ultimately a philosophical one, and what was needed each time to overcome it were statesmen "who have given themselves first of all an education by means of a thorough study of philosophy and science in general" (p. 167). Fichte was conscious of the rift that normally separates the philosophical from the political realm, acknowledging that "between the idea and the act of introducing it into every separate form of life there lies a great gulf." But he chided other thinkers for not attempting to bridge that gap. "Often you went on in the sphere of pure thought too unconcernedly," he told them, "without troubling yourselves about the actual world or trying to find out how the two might be brought into connection; you described your own world, and left the actual one too much alone, despising and scorning it" (p. 221). The business of linking the world of ideas and the actual world required both thinkers and men of action. "Instead of looking askance at each other across the gulf with deprecation, rather let each party be zealous to fill up the gulf from its side and so pave the way to union" (p. 222).

As the first man to see the need for this kind of spiritual leadership, Fichte believed himself specially called to take on that role for himself. "Perhaps someone may come forward from among you and ask me: 'What gives you alone of all German men and writers the special task, the vocation and the right to assemble us and to press your views upon us?'" The answer was that someone had to

take the first step to the goal of thorough reformation. "There must always be one who is first; then let him be first who can" (p. 214). Without explicitly referring to his own work, and yet clearly hinting at it, he stated: "Now, at last, by a philosophy that has become clear in itself, the mirror is being held up to this nation, in which it may recognize and form a clear conception of that which it hitherto became by nature without being distinctly conscious of it, and to which it is called by nature" (p. 107).

According to Fichte, the true philosophy needed to resolve the political crisis was one in which being was seen as something that arises; there had to be a belief in spirituality, its freedom and eternal development. The true philosophy would understand the being of both the self and the community as developmental and thus educational processes. Philosophy and politics were inextricably linked in any form of education. The universal law of man's nature is "that he must directly engage in mental activity" (p. 22). And that activity was, by necessity, always a process of education:

> It follows, then, that the means of salvation I promised to indicate consists in the fashioning of an entirely new self, which may have existed before perhaps in individuals as an exception, but never as a universal national self, and in the education of the nation . . . In a word, it is a total change of the existing system of education that I propose as the sole means of preserving the existence of the German nation. (pp. 10–11)

Or as he had said elsewhere: "Only that nation which has first practically solved the problem of the education of the perfect man, is going to solve that of the perfect state."[12]

In the *Addresses* Fichte went on to describe the outlines of this vital system of education. He said that all education had so far been concerned with forming the individual self, and all states had so far tried to accommodate individual interests. The new education would have to be concerned with the common interests of the nation. "By means of the new education we want to mold the Germans into a corporate body, which shall be stimulated and animated in all its individual members by a common interest." Individualism was to be extirpated. The new education would "surely and infallibly mold the real, vital impulses and actions of its pupils and determine them according to rules" (p. 16). It would

produce in pupils a "stable and unhesitating will according to a sure and infallible rule" (p. 18). As a result, the subject of this educational process would go forth at the proper time "as a fixed and unchangeable machine" (p. 31). Like Heidegger after him, Fichte foresaw that the new education would train not only the student's mental capacities: "learning and working shall be combined" (p. 154). He added: "The state which introduced universally the national education proposed by us . . . would need no special army at all, but would have in them [the new students] an army such as no age has yet seen" (p. 163). As Heidegger put it later, the training of students was to combine science, labor, and military service.

There was much talk in Fichte's *Addresses* of the need to model the order of the state on a higher, objective order. In their education pupils "should be stimulated to create an image of the social order of mankind as it ought to be" (p. 27). There was an all-embracing order for which the new students were supposed to develop a passionate love and yearning. It was, after all, only in terms of such an order that the Germans could be conceived as a primordial people. It was in terms of such an order that German philosophy could be conceived as primordial in its ability to grasp truth and to resolve Germany's political crisis. Fichte said that the old order had been only an apparent and false one, and the crisis of which he was speaking demanded not only a choice between two equivalent possibilities but between a false and a true order. All students ought to be animated by "a love of order exalted to the ideal," and to foster that love "legislation should consequently maintain a high standard of severity" (p. 28). For the student was in fact "a link in the eternal chain of spiritual life in a higher social order" (p. 32). Training had to include as well education in the "moral world-order" that only the true German philosophy could reveal.

Fichte's *Addresses*, in sum, rested squarely on the belief that a point of crisis had been reached in German history—a crisis that was at once political and philosophical, a crisis that concerned in particular the German people and the understanding they had of themselves, a crisis of leadership calling for the reestablishment of a true order. This crisis demanded above all the reeducation of the German people and, hence, the involvement of those educators par excellence, the philosophers. To these assumptions Fichte added his belief in the primordial character of the Germans and their lan-

guage, in the contrast between what was German and what was un-German, in the unique calling of the Germans to the business of philosophy and their affinity with the Greeks. He added his call for the discovery of the true philosophical order, the resolution of the crisis through a new system of education, the total education of students through service in science, practical labor, and the military. Joining all these ideas together into a single political-philosophical discourse, he anticipated the full array of themes on which philosophers like Heidegger would draw in their speeches of 1933, and in this sense at least, Fichte can truly be called a forerunner of what happened under the Nazis.

Nietzsche and the Crisis of Nihilism

It would be a mistake, nevertheless, to look at the political engagement of German philosophers in 1933 as a mere elaboration of the themes Fichte had defined more than a century earlier. By the time Heidegger and the others appeared on the scene, the philosophical and political fields had radically changed from what they had been in Fichte's time. Fichte was part of the first great epoch of German philosophy, but that was over by the middle of the nineteenth century and its assumptions were no longer taken for granted. New philosophical and antiphilosophical movements had sprung up and had come to influence within the universities. Fichte and his generation could only dream of a unified German state, but that state was in existence by 1871. The new German empire in its turn collapsed at the end of the First World War, and a democratic state arose that, unfortunately, remained politically and economically unstable, its institutions permanently in question.

These transformations inevitably affected the use that philosophers would make of the notions of crisis, nation, leadership, and order. In 1933 they still spoke of a unique historical crisis, but it had become starker, more desperate, and more far-reaching than it had been for Fichte. They still spoke of the distinctiveness of the German nation, but this nation was no longer a philosophical dream; it was a military, bureaucratic, and power-political reality. They still spoke of leadership, but traditional understandings of that role were undermined: philosophers could no longer be certain of their preeminence in the universities, and the threatening rise of a

military-industrial complex was changing the face of political leadership. The philosophers also spoke of order, but they could no longer assume any transcendent moral and metaphysical order. The idea of crisis that had served Fichte so well as the fundamental theme for political engagement still played that role for German philosophers in 1933. But that idea had been transformed in the meantime—largely by the radical intervention of Friedrich Nietzsche.

If some considered Fichte the preeminent philosopher of National Socialism, others made that same claim just as often for Nietzsche. There were some who assumed an almost complete identity between Nietzsche's thought and the Nazi worldview.[13] Others admitted the existence of certain differences but still believed that "only a conscious National Socialist can completely understand Nietzsche."[14] Nietzsche, they said, had been the philosopher of a political heroism that Hitler was actually living. When he saw German youth marching under the swastika, the philosopher Alfred Baeumler was reminded of no one as much as Nietzsche. "And when we call *'Heil Hitler!'* to this youth," he wrote exuberantly, "then we are greeting at the same time Friedrich Nietzsche with that call."[15] Such sentiments were also reflected in Nazi propaganda, which often depicted Nietzsche as the ultimate source of official ideology and the true philosopher of the movement. (This propagandistic use of Nietzsche will be discussed further in Chapter 8.) The readings and appreciations of Nietzsche varied, of course, with the readers and with their own understanding of National Socialism, and such variations were in turn made possible by the amorphous character of Nazi ideology. There were those Nazi readers who valued Nietzsche above all for what they took to be his commitment to some form of social Darwinism, for his affirmation of the body, struggle, and strong leaders. There were those who appreciated him for the ridicule he heaped on the nineteenth-century ideals of liberalism, mass democracy, progress, and feminism. Still others considered him most important as a critic of Judeo-Christian values and morality as a whole. But most weighty for his Nazi readers was the fact that Nietzsche had been a philosopher of crisis who anticipated the coming of a unique historical upheaval.

Nietzsche came to the idea of crisis not through Fichte but

through his colleague and friend, Jakob Burckhardt.[16] During the winter of 1870 in Basel he attended Burckhardt's lectures "On the Study of History" which described the historical powers of state, culture, and religion, their various interactions, and finally "the accelerations of the historical process" (p. 257) or what Burckhardt also called the "theory of storms" (p. 79).[17] Characterizing history as a play of competing and conflicting powers, repressed and released, Burckhardt said:

> According to its nature . . . the suppressed power can either lose or enhance its resilience in the process . . . Either it is suppressed, whereupon the ruling power, if it is a wise one, will find some remedy, or, unexpectedly to most people, a crisis in the whole state of things is produced. . . . The historical process is suddenly accelerated in terrifying fashion. Developments which otherwise take centuries seem to flit by like phantoms in months or weeks and are fulfilled. (p. 267)

Burckhardt recognized not only the destructive potential of such events. In praise of crises he told his audience: "Crises and even their accompanying fanaticisms are . . . to be regarded as genuine signs of vitality. The crisis itself is an expedient of nature, like a fever, and the fanaticisms are signs that there still exist for men things they prize more than life and property" (p. 289). Nietzsche found in such remarks a kindred spirit. Burckhardt, he discovered in private, was like himself an adept of Schopenhauer's philosophy, and what he had said about history and crises was conceived entirely in the dark spirit of Schopenhauerean metaphysics. Nietzsche concluded that he alone in the audience fully appreciated "the deep course of [Burckhardt's] thought with its peculiar twists and breaks."[18]

One of these surprising twists occurred at the end of the lectures, when Burckhardt suddenly turned to the present and characterized his own time as one of crisis. Swiss rather than German, historian rather than philosopher, Burckhardt spoke of that crisis as a world event, not a German one. It was precisely in this direction that Nietzsche was to develop his own understanding of the nature of the crisis. Fichte's emphasis had been on the Germans and dealt only marginally with humanity as a whole. For Nietzsche, the crisis became one involving "Europe" or "the west" and therefore,

from the Eurocentric perspective of his time, the world as a whole.

Even so, it took him some time to reach this new understanding of the scope of the crisis. In early writings such as *The Birth of Tragedy* his view of crisis was still within the bounds laid out in Fichte's *Addresses.* The crisis was still a thoroughly German event and was to be resolved through a rebirth of German culture in the spirit of the classical world and with the help of Schopenhauer's philosophy and Wagner's music. Since the end of the age of Greek tragedy, Nietzsche wrote in *The Birth of Tragedy,* humanity had lived in a false, "Socratic" and Alexandrian world, a world full of philosophical illusion. The spirit of Greek antiquity was to be reborn in Germany out of a renewed Dionysian consciousness. His book was thus marked by a nationalist pathos similar to that found in Fichte's *Addresses.* The rebirth of a tragic culture, Nietzsche went on, could occur only in Germany since "out of the Dionysian recesses of the German soul has sprung a power which has nothing in common with the presuppositions of Socratic culture" (sec. 17). In a single, grand movement the German spirit was finding its way back to its true identity. Once more reminiscent of Fichte, Nietzsche also wrote of the opposition between the German spirit and that of the French and of the affinity between Germans and Greeks: "For an unconscionably long time powerful forces from the outside have compelled the German spirit, which had vegetated in barbaric formlessness, to subserve their forms. But at long last the German spirit may stand before the other nations, free of the leading strings of Romanized culture—provided that it continues to be able to learn from that nation from whom to learn at all is a high and rare thing, the Greeks." In the fervor produced by the defeat of the French in the war of 1870–71 he wrote:

> We have a sufficiently high opinion of the pure and vigorous substance of the German spirit to entertain the hope that it will eliminate those elements grafted on it by force and remember its own true nature . . . Our victory in the last war might be taken as an encouraging sign, yet it is merely external . . . But no one should think that such battles can be fought without one's household gods, one's mythic roots, without a true "recovery" of all things German. (sec. 23)

Given such sentiments it comes as no surprise that Nietzsche also spoke enthusiastically in this period of the "masculine, earnest, deep-thinking, hard, and courageous German spirit."[19] The early Nietzsche could propose the mythic figure of Siegfried as a model for the new man he was waiting for; he could identify himself with Luther's German reformation; he could acclaim Schopenhauer as the teacher of a "heroic" form of life; under Wagner's dizzying spell he could even allow himself the occasional antisemitic outburst.[20]

Nazi readers found this aspect of Nietzsche attractive, and *The Birth of Tragedy* became a frequently cited text during the Nazi years. Here was a Nietzsche fully attuned to the metaphysical nationalism that Fichte had elaborated in his *Addresses.* For those Nazis who were primarily German nationalists, as well as for those who were particularly attached to Fichte and to whom it mattered that there should be a single unbroken line of thought leading up to 1933, this early phase was quite naturally of the greatest interest. Nietzsche's subsequent criticism of all things German, his identification with French culture, his antinationalism and his rejection of antisemitism, were suspect for such readers and difficult to handle.

At the same time, however, there were other Nazi readers of Nietzsche to whom his later thought was more important. Such readers could acknowledge the significance of *The Birth of Tragedy,* but they rightly insisted that Nietzsche's originality as a thinker was to be found elsewhere. In such texts as *Human, All Too Human* and *The Will to Power* they discovered a version of crisis that differed from Fichte's in several respects. The mature Nietzsche saw the crisis as a European event. Fichte had also acknowledged the world-historical character of the crisis, but it still was centered on Germany and was to be resolved through political action in Germany. Nietzsche spoke a radically different language. "For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe," he wrote in the preface to *The Will to Power,* and this could be overcome only through a new, great, and European form of politics.[21]

Nietzsche's broadened conception of crisis went hand in hand with a rejection of German nationalism and antisemitism. In *Human, All Too Human* he had already spoken of the need to abolish the old European nations and advocated the creation of a mixed race, a "European man," through a crossing and mixing of the dif-

ferent nationalities. He had, moreover, included the Jews in this prospect. Antisemitism, he argued, existed only within nation states: "As soon as it is no longer a question of the conserving of nations but of the production of the strongest possible European mixed race, the Jew will be just as usable and desirable as an ingredient of it as any other national residue." To this remark he appended a moving appreciation of the Jews that deserves to be quoted at length, since it reveals the true depth of the gulf that separates him from his later Nazi admirers:

> I should like to know how much must, in a total accounting, be forgiven a people who, not without us all being to blame, have had the most grief-laden history of any people and whom we have to thank for the noblest human being (Christ), the purest sage (Spinoza), the mightiest book and the most efficacious moral code in the world. Moreover: in the darkest periods of the Middle Ages, when the cloud banks of Asia had settled low over Europe, it was the Jewish freethinkers, scholars, and physicians who, under the harshest personal constraint, held firmly to the banner of enlightenment and intellectual independence and defended Europe against Asia; it is thanks not least to their efforts that a more natural, rational and in any event unmythical elucidation of the world could at last again obtain victory and the ring of culture that now unites us with the enlightenment of Graeco-Roman antiquity remain unbroken.[22]

On this need to overcome both nationalism and antisemitism, Nietzsche was not to change his views. In *The Will to Power* he still spoke of nationalism as "bovine" and a "boorish self-conceit" and argued that "the value and meaning of contemporary culture lie in mutual blending and fertilization." He could also still exclaim "what a blessing a Jew is among Germans."[23]

Nietzsche's antinationalism and rejection of antisemitism were not easy to digest, and so the Nazis either dismissed them as aberrations, explained them away as results of Nietzsche's disappointment with the Germany of his time, or more commonly just ignored them. But they did not ignore the conception of crisis that was the source of those sentiments. For some of Nietzsche's readers in the 1930s and, in particular, for his philosophical readers, that concep-

tion confirmed their own political engagement. By speaking of the crisis as a European event, as one affecting the west as a whole, Nietzsche had universalized the event, extended its scope, and thereby made it more philosophical in character.

Such a conception could please Nazi readers because National Socialism was not simply an old-fashioned German nationalism. It represented instead a new kind of Europeanism, for the Nazis not only saw Germany's place in Europe threatened but also Europe's place in the world. Such threats were coming from America and the Soviet Union, from Asia and Africa. They feared a Europe overwhelmed by outside forces, deprived of its dominions, endangered in its well-being, overrun by alien races. Their goal was not simply to save Germany but to save all of Europe. For that reason they reached out to countries like Great Britain, in the name of common interests. They sought to make alliances with like-minded groups and movements in other parts of Europe. There was, indeed, an internationalist side to National Socialism that took in many different national embodiments of its ideology, and there was, specifically, a European side to National Socialism that made the German form part of a larger European complex. It was precisely to this side of Nazi ideology that Nietzsche's widened sense of crisis could appeal.

Nietzsche not only universalized but also radicalized the conception of crisis, and that too was important for the way some of his later readers saw their own time. This sharpened sense of crisis had come to Nietzsche first of all from his discovery that God was dead; it was reinforced by his disenchantment with Schopenhauer's pessimism and Wagner's romanticism. As he considered his time, however, he found signs of impending crisis wherever he looked. In *The Will to Power* he listed its symptoms: "Vice–the addiction to vice; sickness–sickliness; crime–criminality; celibacy–sterility; hystericism–weakness of the will; alcoholism; pessimism; anarchism; libertinism (also of the spirit). The slanderers, underminers, doubters, destroyers" (sec. 43). And in another place: "the state of nomads (civil servants, etc.): without home. Black music . . . The anarchist. Contempt for man, nausea . . . Nordic unnaturalness. The need for alcohol: the 'distress' of the workers. Philosophical nihilism" (sec. 59).

In *Ecce Homo* he singled out Christianity as the force that had

produced the crisis. The very idea of God was now the "counter-concept of life"; the belief in a beyond was an invention "designed to devaluate the only world there is"; the notion of soul was a means for despising the body; the thought of sin was an instrument of torture. Above all he attacked the Christian morality of selflessness: "What defines me, what sets me apart from the whole rest of humanity, is that I *uncovered* Christian morality" (sec. 7). That uncovering was in itself "an event without parallel, a real catastrophe. He that is enlightened about that . . . breaks the history of mankind in two. One lives before him, or one lives after him" (sec. 8). Christian morality, traditional morality, morality as a whole, were his enemies, since they were nothing but "the idiosyncrasy of decadents, with the ulterior motive of revenging oneself against life." The leaders of humanity, the teachers and theologians, were all decadents, and the moment was approaching for a revaluation of all values to return things to their natural condition. This required a type of man who "conceives reality *as it is*, being strong enough to do so; this type is not estranged or removed from reality itself and exemplifies all that is terrible and questionable in it" (sec. 5). Such denunciations had great appeal to those of Nietzsche's Nazi readers who saw in Christianity their major and most dangerous enemy.

Yet Nietzsche thought of Christianity as only part of a larger nihilism that he considered to have been the fate of the west since Plato. This nihilism set up the ideal of another world and thereby devalued this world. It did so in the form of Plato's belief that the temporal world was a mere shadow of the true firmament of ideas, and it did so too in Christianity's message of a transcendent God, of sin and salvation. The nihilistic denigration of the real world was unstable, however, and bound to reveal itself eventually in all its stark reality. Nietzsche was sure that European nihilism was finally showing itself in its true, threatening form. It was stepping out of the shadow in which it had been hidden and was knocking at the door: "Whence comes this uncanniest of all guests?" (sec. 1).[24] It was even necessary to welcome this unexpected guest, to help him bring down whatever systems had constituted western thought so far. Nihilism as the destruction of values had to be brought to its climax. If something was ready to fall, one should push it; then room could be made for new and truer values that would accept

the earth, the body, reality itself. In defining the character of the crisis in such terms, Nietzsche gave it an even wider breadth. Nihilism had been part of western culture for two thousand years. Its rise to the surface had taken many generations and was by no means complete. The creation of a new culture, the revaluation of values, would be a long and complex process. The crisis of nihilism was an event that stretched over centuries and in the end contained nothing less than the history of man.

It was with this vision in mind that Nietzsche could speak at the end of his productive life so apocalyptically of "a crisis without equal on earth, the most profound collision of conscience, a decision that was conjured up *against* everything that had been believed, demanded, hallowed so far."[25] Borrowing the thunder of the biblical prophets he wrote:

> For when truth enters into a fight with the lies of millennia, we shall have upheavals, a convulsion of earthquakes, a moving of mountains and valleys the like of which has never been dreamed of. The concept of politics will have merged entirely with a war of spirits; all power structures of the old society will have been exploded—all of them are based on lies: there will be wars the like of which have never yet been seen on earth. (sec. 1)

Fichte versus Nietzsche

Although Fichte and Nietzsche were not the only German philosophers invoked as spiritual guides and forerunners of the Nazi revolution, they did occupy special places in the National Socialist pantheon of philosophical ancestors.

That two such different thinkers should be invoked as sources of one ideology is surely surprising. Fichte and Nietzsche belonged to two very different and in many ways antagonistic periods of German philosophy; they thought of the nature, power, and goal of philosophical inquiry in radically different terms; they differed in their political, aesthetic, and cultural sensibilities and attitudes; their styles of thinking and writing were far apart; their formative life experiences and life histories had almost nothing in common. For all his early radicalism, Fichte was part of the established order,

whereas Nietzsche was an outsider and appealed from the start mostly to other outsiders.

On further reflection, however, it does become clear that Fichte and Nietzsche shared a certain limited common ground, which made it possible for the Nazis to put them side by side in their pantheon. They shared, first of all, the belief that the traditional philosophical distinction between theory and practice could not be upheld. They both saw themselves not simply as thinkers and philosophers but as men of action. Both were eager to bring down an old order, and they saw themselves as prophets of crisis. Where Fichte had spoken of humankind at the exact, decisive midpoint of its life on earth, Nietzsche responded by invoking the idea of a crisis without equal on earth. To the Nazis who were operating in a political field that emphasized the idea of action, revolutionary change, the conflict between an old and a new order, who in short believed themselves to be facing a unique world crisis, Fichte and Nietzsche may well have seemed compatible. They too were suspicious of the old divisions between theory and practice; they too believed that one should philosophize with a hammer. The differences that separated Fichte from Nietzsche may, for that reason, have seemed minor.

This line of explanation is incomplete, however. The fact that two such distinct philosophers could be styled the first National Socialists and the philosophical forerunners of the ideology is also evidence of the deep disunity in the Nazi worldview. It reveals how little agreement there was among the National Socialists themselves about the contours of their system. Their worldview contained traditionalist and radical elements, idealistic and naturalistic strains, German and folkish ideas as well as those of an internationalist, fascistic flavor. It was these differences that permitted the appeal to thinkers as different as Fichte and Nietzsche. Both had of course emphasized the need for a critical transformation, but they spoke of the causes, the course, and the resolution of the crisis in dissimilar terms. For Fichte the ultimate cause of the crisis had been the belief that there exists a given world apart from the intellectual acts of an originating consciousness. Nietzsche, on the other hand, had no faith in such a consciousness and taught the need to accept the hardness of the world. Fichte looked at the crisis from a narrowly German standpoint, whereas Nietzsche's perspective was world-

historical. Fichte saw the crisis resolved in acknowledgment of a transcendental order; Nietzsche recognized no such order.

When the philosophers who involved themselves politically in the Nazi period referred to these two great figures from the past, they initially tried to paper over the differences. Heidegger, who at the time saw the present moment essentially in Nietzschean terms, could still construct his rectorial address on the model of Fichte's *Addresses*. Bruno Bauch, who saw himself in the Fichtean tradition, could weave positive references to Nietzsche into his public statements. These efforts at reconciliation were particularly evident in 1933, but they remained largely ineffective and were unable to overcome the existing divisions of German philosophy into conservative and radical.

For that reason the names of Fichte and Nietzsche became rallying points of two groupings of German philosophers. These groups formed more or less organized fronts in the struggle for domination and influence that was triggered off by the Nazi rise to power. The struggle was not simply over the specific ideas advanced by Fichte and Nietzsche, but in effect a confrontation between two different philosophical traditions. On the one side stood those who identified with the first epoch of German philosophy, extending from Kant to Hegel, and on the other were those who looked to the second epoch, beginning in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In the context of the 1930s this disagreement also came to be defined as a struggle over the notion of value. While the Fichteans and traditionalists generally held that there existed a realm of objective values, the Nietzschean radicals insisted that such a doctrine represented a nihilistic denial of this world. But the two fronts were by no means homogeneous, since each of them in turn represented a variety of standpoints. Within the front of the traditionalists, we can on closer inspection discover different assessments and readings of Fichte, and in the front of the radicals different readings of Nietzsche. There were, for instance, some traditionalists who emphasized Fichte's idealism as his most important doctrine, while others considered his activist ethics or his philosophically grounded nationalism most relevant to the new situation. On the other side, some praised Nietzsche mainly as the herald of the will to power; others saw him predominantly as a critic of established values, and yet others as an advocate of an elitist conception of society.

Because the names of Fichte and Nietzsche came to represent two sides in a philosophical struggle which was never resolved during the Nazi period, neither of the two men could become the unanimously accepted philosopher of National Socialism. Their names came to stand for a struggle within German philosophy about the relative merits of the two great epochs within the historical tradition. Since everything important was being politicized in 1933, that struggle also took on an intensified, political form. When the German philosophers got into politics, it was not only because they had discovered a sudden enthusiasm for political matters, but also because they felt compelled to protect their own understanding of philosophy and the philosophical tradition. Their involvement was motivated not only by political instincts but by philosophical disagreements over issues that had long been embattled.

3

The Politics of Crisis

It was in the early part of the First World War, while the hope for a quick military success was still very much alive in Germany, while strong German armies seemed successful everywhere, while German intellectuals were mapping out grandiose plans for a victorious Germany, that Rudolf Pannwitz published his contrary book on the crisis of European culture. Given the circumstances, he found it necessary to remind his readers of the "immense crisis of man himself which has been forgotten again so conveniently since Nietzsche."[1]

That sense of crisis had never been quite forgotten. Throughout the Bismarck years, there was lingering dissatisfaction with the political and cultural conditions of the time, but the feeling of unease mostly affected those on the fringes of society. It was certainly one of the mainsprings of the new modernist sensibility that sought to transform art and society. It was revealed as well in the burgeoning youth movement. The malaise even affected conservative circles.[2] The conservative critics of the new German Reich found it difficult to reconcile themselves to the rapid social changes that accompanied the country's belated industrialization, to accept the questioning of old attachments and institutions that came with the growth of urban society and an industrial proletariat determined to achieve emancipation, to experience the corrosion of religious values and the emergence of an array of new scientific, economic, political, aesthetic, and moral ideals.[3] Uncertainty was felt also by those to whom the old institutions and values were entrusted.

Among them were the university professors—specifically the humanists who saw themselves beleaguered by strange academic disciplines. The shifts in the structure, organization, and administration of human knowledge, evident to all those engaged in university life, contributed immeasurably to that crisis of self-understanding to which the whole of German philosophy in its second epoch was trying to respond.[4]

This stream of dissatisfaction remained for the most part hidden as long as the ground was firm under Bismarck's empire, but when it finally gave way, the sense of crisis became suddenly overpowering. What had formerly preoccupied only a few intellectuals became a central issue for the general public. Still it needed more than historical events to create the feeling that this was a major and perhaps unique kind of crisis. It was Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* more than any other piece of writing that supplied the Germans with the terms in which to interpret their experience. Spengler had in fact conceived his work and even its title before the First World War, but when the book appeared in 1919 it miraculously fitted the prevailing mood of anxiety.

Spengler's guiding metaphor was simple. Cultures, he said, were organic forms and hence had natural and inevitable stages of development, from birth and maturity to decay and death. Spengler tried to make that claim plausible by comparing a number of the world's great cultures. For all the assembled evidence, his picture of the growth and decline of cultures was not derived from empirical observation. It was rather one of those *a prioris* with which humans try to make sense of the flow of historical facts—it was, indeed, an ancient, discarded, and resurrected conception of the structure of time. Spengler dressed it up with fashionable touches from Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence and managed to fill it with color by the imaginative sweeps of his verbal brush. In spite of his insistence otherwise, Spengler's eye was primarily fixed on western culture. The comparative facts, he was sure, would supply for the first time a precise chart of the course of that culture and its guiding principles. They would also provide for those who knew how to handle them the tools for a quite astonishing undertaking: a prognostic history of the west. In this effort Spengler linked his belief in a cyclical universe to that of a world in imminent crisis. Western culture had reached its final stage, old age. This was the

age of "civilization," the most rigid, mechanistic, and artificial phase in the life of a culture; politically it meant an age of the masses and the rule of great Napoleonic figures.[5]

Spengler depicted his own time as "years of decision," a period of unheard-of crisis:

> For we live in an enormous time. It is the greatest which the culture of the West has ever experienced and which it will ever experience—equal to that which the ancient world experienced between Cannae and Actium—equal to the one from which the names of Hannibal, Scipio, Gracchus, Marius, Sulla, and Caesar still shine for us. The world war was for us only the first lightning and thunder from the cloud passing across our century heavy with destiny. The form of the world is being recreated today from the ground up.[6]

He ridiculed those who thought the current political, economic, and cultural disturbances would soon vanish and insisted on calling the time a "catastrophe of unimaginable magnitude," one of the great historical turning points. "Everything has begun to slide. Now only that man counts who is willing to dare, who has the courage to see things as they are and to take them as such" (p. 35). An old barbarism was on the verge once again now that culture had come to an end and civilization had begun—a pugnacious, healthy enjoyment of personal power that despised all rational thought and lived according to an instinct buried in the European soul. In this incipient struggle over Europe, Germany would form the center. "Here, perhaps already in this century, final decisions await man," Spengler concluded. "He whose sword gains victory is bound to become master of the world. There lie the dice of the enormous game. Who dares to throw them?" (p. 212).

Though Spengler liked to think of himself as both a serious historian and a serious philosopher, he was in reality a publicizer of ideas who had at his command a wealth of forceful images and incisive formulations. Because of the brilliance of his language and the power of his convictions, Spengler managed to make an immediate impact in postwar Germany. Germans of all cultural levels felt that Spengler's words helped to explain the political and cultural dilemmas in which they found themselves. Indeed, he provided them with the language of crisis that was to play a decisive role in the

political and public rhetoric of the period. For all its persuasive power, Spengler's work was also deeply suspect. That was true especially for those academics who were wary of its generalizations. Heidegger, for instance, appears to have been largely negative about Spengler's philosophy of history, and yet it seems that at the same time Spengler confirmed for him that sense of world-historical crisis later invoked in the rectorial address.[7]

THE CRISIS OF THE WEST

By 1933, as Spengler was speaking of the impending decision over who was to be master of the world, Hitler and his followers had already decided to make themselves the masters and were ready to throw the dice. It was part of its self-image that National Socialism conceived of itself not simply as a political party competing with the other parties of the Weimar Republic but as a revolutionary movement destined to change the whole of German existence and with it the destiny of Europe and the world. As Alfred Rosenberg, the party's chief ideologist, put it at one point, an "organic rebirth" of Europe "will come about only through the recognition of the great crisis."[8]

In this, as in certain other respects, the Nazi movement had quietly modeled itself on the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and on the party of Lenin and Stalin.[9] It is indeed likely that the Nazis took the idea of an imminent world-historical crisis in part from the Marxists. Marx himself inherited it from Hegel and transformed it into the doctrine of capitalist downfall and the inevitability of a workers' revolution. There were those in the Nazi movement who saw the historical process similarly as the coming of a workers' revolution; they differed from the Marxists only in that they linked this belief to German nationalism. Although National Socialism in the end abandoned much of its socialist heritage, it always retained the picture of itself as a revolutionary movement operating at a singular moment in history, and thus it also retained the idea of crisis as a basic element in its ideology.

The sense of political crisis on which the Nazis built their program had come about as a result of the unexpected loss of the war by the imperial German forces and their allies in 1918. Almost to the last moment, the Germans believed in the likelihood of ultimate

victory. When defeat came, many were convinced that it had to be the result of political betrayal; that quite erroneous belief was to poison the political atmosphere for years to come. The military collapse was followed immediately by the abdication of the emperor, to whom many Germans still felt loyal, and the declaration of a republic. But the republican state found it immensely difficult to find acceptance from its citizens because of the humiliating peace treaty it had to sign and a crushing burden of reparations. From the very start, the system seemed on the edge of catastrophe. Economic and political turmoil, riots, assassinations, and attempted coups followed each other in never-ending sequence.

In spite of the many threats to its existence, the Weimar Republic finally gained some stability in 1923. The sense of recovery soon dissolved, however, in the great depression that began in October 1929. The institutions of the republican system in Germany fell into quick and accelerating decline. The political consensus between parties that had carried the republican state—always an uneasy consensus—became more and more elusive. Governments were rapidly formed and dissolved. The ever-growing armies of the unemployed, the ever-widening gulf between rich and poor, the ever-accelerating hectic life of the cities, all created a sense of cultural and social collapse that left many Germans disaffected and ready to align themselves with the extreme left or the extreme right. Given the circumstances it is understandable that most Germans believed themselves to be involved in a major historical upheaval.

Hitler's movement shared this sense of crisis and was quick to exploit it for its own advantage. But still not everyone could agree on the nature of this crisis, where it came from or where it was going. The writings of various Nazi authors display a large spectrum of analyses. Some saw their movement primarily as a response to conditions brought on by the loss of the world war; in their eyes the crisis was above all a political and economic event and temporally narrow since its extent coincided with the period of Weimar. Other Nazis located the beginning of the crisis at the time of the French Revolution. They were convinced that everything that had come from that revolution needed to be reversed. Still others dated the beginning of the crisis to the rise of Christianity, its invasion into northern Europe, in the subjection of the Germanic tribes to an alien Mediterranean culture. Finally, there were those who under-

stood the crisis in terms of an apocalyptic struggle in which the Nordic, Germanic, Aryan race was pitched everywhere in battle with an insidious enemy. These different attitudes are clearly evident in the writings of Hitler and Rosenberg.

For Hitler the crisis to which he appealed in his speeches and writings was for the most part defined in fairly narrow, political terms. What motivated him politically were, as he said over and over again, the experiences of the First World War. Hitler spent his youth bemoaning the fact that he had been born into an age of stability, asking why he could not have lived a hundred years earlier. In *Mein Kampf* he wrote: "I was often filled with annoying thoughts because, as it appeared, of the belated entrance of my journey into this world, and I looked upon this period of 'quiet and order' that awaited me as an unmerited mean trick of Fate" (p. 205).[10] This mood of despondency was transformed when the world war broke out. "To me personally those hours appeared like the redemption from the annoying moods of my youth . . . A struggle for freedom had broken out, greater than the world had ever seen before; because, once Fate had begun its course, the conviction began to dawn on the great masses that this time the question involved . . . the existence or non-existence of the German nation" (p. 210). Though he acknowledged the depth of the political crisis, he remained convinced that it was strictly circumscribed in time. In 1933, after he had come to power, he boldly declared the whole revolutionary process to be completed, to the annoyance of those of his followers who saw it in much larger and more apocalyptic terms. In order to separate himself from the radicals, Hitler publicly chided Spengler for his pessimism and insisted that the decline of the west had been a characteristic only of the Weimar years and and that one could now speak confidently once more of the rise of the west.

Alfred Rosenberg saw things in a very different light. For him the crisis extended deep into the past and had yet to be completed. More than political, it affected all aspects of human life. In the *Myth of the Twentieth Century* he wrote:

> Today an epoch begins in which world history must be rewritten. The old images of the human past are faded; the outlines of the actors seem blurred and their inner motivation falsely

> depicted, while the collective essence (of the human past) has been almost completely misunderstood. A life-feeling, both young and yet known in ancient times, is pressing towards articulation; a *Weltanschauung* is being born, and strengthened through will, is beginning to struggle with older forms, hallowed usages and accepted substances. (p. 35)[11]

He went on to say that entirely new values needed to be created in this struggle as well as a new myth that could shape politics, art, and the religion of the future. That myth, which Rosenberg elaborated at length, characterized history as a struggle not between political or economic foes, nor even between different systems of belief, but as a confrontation between race and race. He described history as the story of the inhabitants of a mythical Atlantis. When their island sank into the ocean, the Nordic race spread over the world and created cultures and civilizations wherever it went. All human creativity was the work of this one race. Its productive powers were, however, continuously threatened by inferior races and, in particular, by contamination through Semitic blood. As the Nordic race, now spread across the globe, lost its purity, the cultures it had created inevitably declined. Only a new "blood consciousness" could restore creativity to the Nordic race. Expressing these fantasies in the most extravagant language, Rosenberg wrote: "Today a new belief is arising: the myth of the blood; the belief that the godly essence of man itself is to be defended through the blood; the belief which embodies the clearest knowledge that the Nordic race represents that *mysterium* which has overthrown and replaced the old sacraments" (p. 82). Looking at the present, Rosenberg was convinced that "in its mystical patterns a new cellular structure of the German Volk-soul is developing. Present and past are suddenly appearing in a new light, and as a result we have a new vision for the future" (pp. 33–34). History could now be seen as racial history: "The history of the blood religion is a great universal tale of the rise and fall of nations, their heroes and thinkers, their discoverers and artists" (p. 37). Those who served this idea, as Rosenberg was doing, would "be able to fulfill themselves as the founders of a new world-picture" (p. 34).[12] They would be undertaking "the task of our century: to create a new human type from a new life-myth." That task demanded at once courage and an exercise of will. "For

the dispirited will never master chaos, nor will cowards ever build a world . . . The new man of the approaching first German Reich will have but one answer for all doubts and questions: Alone, I will!"

But even Rosenberg could at times speak of the crisis in more specifically political terms. In his 1934 speech on "The Crisis and Construction of Europe," he spoke like Hitler of the world war as the decisive moment in the development of the crisis and as "a deep cut between two great epochs."[13] The war, he said then, had been a symbol of unhealthy conditions and signaled the collapse of an old world. All over Europe people had begun an examination of the forces that led to this decline. "Particularly in Germany there began a profound critique of all social assumptions and the whole order of life in our time" (p. 6). This critical assessment could not be measured by old scientific standards, since "it is of the essence of a great epochal turn that the old scientific faith collapses." What had emerged was a rejection of the universalism that had ruled European thought and politics. The idea of a Europe united, of a pan-European state, had lost its validity. "The point, the idea, the fact from which we must start today is the fact of the nation." Europe had to be understood through its various nations, particularly through France, Italy, Britain, and Germany. These four great nations, not necessarily in conflict, could be thought of as standing side by side, lending each other support, with France keeping control over Africa, Italy dominating the Mediterranean, Britain the rest of the non-European world, and Germany the eastern flank of Europe. Such thoughts were at some remove from the racial ravings that Rosenberg had put forth four years earlier. They showed that he could also, when he wanted to, think in terms of the necessary political forms of life for the twentieth century and of the reconstruction of Europe through a system of nations. With a glance back at the First World War, he could more soberly define the great crisis as a conflict between European nations that had failed to interpret their legitimate and inevitable interplay in the right terms.

CRISIS AS EXPERIENCE AND SYMBOL

All these statements and declarations, no matter how specific or political or fantastic, were haunted by the idea that the time was

one of great crisis. The notion served as common coinage that circulated through a large and diverse population, passing from hand to hand as a metaphor for the age. Drawn on by philosophers and politicians alike, it provided a shared language that allowed them to move easily back and forth between philosophical discourse and political rhetoric. To grasp the nature of philosophical politics in 1933, to understand the political engagement of philosophers like Heidegger, we should look more closely at the peculiarly dual role played by the idea of crisis.

In its original meaning, the word "crisis" implied decision and judgment (in the legal sense), hence a moment of choice between different and opposed possibilities. In subsequent medical usage, it came to designate the turning point in a disease that could portend either recovery or death. Finally it became shorthand for any decisive turning point in a process of instability and uncertainty. What is at stake in the current context is, of course, not the use of this concept to describe some historical episode, a completed sequence of events. Here I am speaking of situations in which humans characterize their own present circumstances as a time of crisis.

That we should talk in this manner is usually grounded in a distinctive experience of the moment. The experience is characteristically that of an acceleration, of a growing uncertainty, of an impending cataclysm, but those feelings are conjoined at once to others of a quite different valence. A true sense of crisis always contains an element of anticipation, an expectation of sudden transformation, a cutting loose from the confinements of the past, the sudden appearance of a new world. In the moment of crisis all the dreary shackles of the past seem to be falling away—there is a feeling of freedom, of possibilities never before anticipated. To experience one's time as a crisis is both terrifying and exhilarating.

Yet to experience the present as a moment of crisis, to single it out as distinctive, is not to say in what manner and for what reasons it is experienced as unique. Two people may share a sense of crisis and yet differ in what they see as coming apart in the process of destabilization, what they consider to be its causes and signals, what they foresee as its ultimate outcome, even what the point of origin was, how long the critical moment might last, or in what time spans one should measure its resolution.

The fact that a shared experience of crisis may still have many

interpretations might suggest that the experience and, indeed, even the notion of crisis must be of limited political and philosophical concern. In reality, however, the experience gains political and philosophical significance precisely because of its indeterminacy. Politics is a field in which indeterminate notions play a crucial role. Politics operates freely with *symbols*, devices and concepts open to multiple readings. Flags and emblems, gestures and rituals, persons and offices, architectural and verbal devices, can all serve such symbolic functions in the political field. They are generally more efficient in bringing and holding a group together than devices and concepts whose meaning is precisely characterized and sharply defined. Large groups of people can swear allegiance to the same flag even though and, indeed, precisely because they are free to interpret the flag and their action in many different ways. Because symbols are determinable rather than determinate, they permit allegiance without demanding a single interpretation. Symbols can, moreover, be reconciled with new readings and interpretations that may be necessitated by changing circumstances.

Not all forms of politics make equal use of symbolic devices. It is characteristic of modern democracies to minimize symbols and to insist on the determinacy of concepts, even though they cannot do so altogether. Other forms of governance, such as theocracies and monarchies, characteristically multiply the use of symbols. The fascist states of the 1930s drew deliberately and openly on such devices. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler freely acknowledged the significance of political symbolism, and he was himself the inventor of many of the Nazi symbols. When we speak of the symbolism with which National Socialism surrounded itself, we generally think in the first instance of the visible trappings of the regime, its uniforms, flags, and parades. But much of the Nazi symbolism was verbal, and among these verbalisms the notion of crisis played an indispensable role. When Hitler and his party stepped into the political arena in 1933, they found it divided into multiple factions. Probably no political organization could have moved so quickly from fringe status to total power under these conditions without making thorough use of symbolic devices and notions. Only by exploiting the indeterminacy of symbolism could Hitler gain the support of industrialists and workers, radicals and traditionalists, Christian believers and anti-Christian agitators. Given the general instability of the time,

all parties could agree that theirs was an age of crisis, even when their understanding of the exact nature of the crisis was fundamentally different. An indeterminate sense of crisis was sufficient to draw the groups together and to instill the belief that the time needed revolutionary change, that the most radical measures were called for, that old assumptions and restraints on the use of power had to be abandoned.

There were related notions to which the Nazis also appealed. First there was the social group whose welfare the Nazis claimed to be representing. To this belonged the concept of "Germany," "German," "Germanic," "Aryan," as well as the general notions of "nation" and "race." All these terms played, as we will see, an essentially symbolic role in Nazi politics. So did a series of notions related to the idea of leadership, which included in particular the term *Führer* itself. And so did, finally, a group of terms related to the idea of order.

Although the function of such symbolic notions is easy to see in the conditions obtaining in Germany after the First World War, it must be emphasized that the indeterminacy of symbols encourages at the same time a continuous process of interpretation and rereading. National Socialism has left a plethora of such interpretations. The official speeches, writings, art, and films of the period are full of them. The philosophers could well see a role here, since theirs is, at bottom, an interpretive craft. Even so, they might not have considered themselves called to that particular task if the notions of crisis, nation, leadership, and order had not already had philosophical significance for them. The symbolic notions that the Nazis employed had the peculiar feature that they could serve both as political rallying points in the way the regime intended and as broader philosophical concepts. Philosophers like Heidegger could respond to the political symbols of National Socialism precisely because those symbols carried prior philosophical meaning. Thus the political engagement of so many German philosophers in 1933 was not simply the result of individual decisions; the regime had constructed a symbolic environment amenable to such an engagement.

The philosophers were, of course, not in a position to offer a single, coherent, and authoritative interpretation of these symbols. They may have shared a common experience of crisis, but their hermeneutic readings of the experience differed with the philo-

sophical assumptions of their authors. What may have been one kind of experience and certainly was, politically speaking, one symbol became in their hands a set of distinctively different readings. The philosophers characteristically fell back on the conceptions of crisis that had been elaborated by Fichte and Nietzsche in the preceding century. Since these conceptions had differed in profound ways, the philosophical analyses of the idea of crisis offered in 1933 also divided along those lines. When Fichte and Nietzsche talked of their time as a decisive historical moment, when they spoke of the moment as the midpoint in history and as the great noon or hour of extreme distress, they had been referring to two different moments, even though they were generally taken to have been talking of the same historical period. But since they spoke in somewhat different historical contexts, there was some natural disagreement between them. Fichte took the events of the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars as indices, whereas Nietzsche referred to the political and social changes sweeping Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century. Those different signals were, at the same time, linked to a different understanding of the nature of the destabilization behind the critical moment. For Fichte the moment of crisis meant the disintegration of the previous dogmatic forms of philosophizing; for Nietzsche it was the moment at which the nihilism inherent in European culture was finally making itself visible. The two differed even in what they foresaw as the resolution of the crisis. On Fichte's account the next age was going to be one in which an active subjectivity would succeed in constructing once and for all a new world order. Nietzsche saw a revaluation of values as the creative act of a new man, an age of heroic politics, a world of dynamic change, and finally the overcoming of man himself.

THE PARADOX OF HISTORICAL CRISIS

The idea of a great and unique crisis could play its symbolic role in the Nazi system, of course, only because the Germans were ready to accept the idea as a symbol of their condition; they were predisposed to experience their time as a decisive moment. The existence of that experience is not in question. Yet there is something paradoxical about it, and to understand the sources and power of that

experience, to understand its philosophical origin and character, means to face, first of all, the paradox.

The notion of crisis, we may grant, is certainly an important and even indispensable diagnostic tool for historical analysis. At the same time, the notion is epistemically peculiar insofar as one can have only retrospective evidence that such-and-such a moment was a real crisis and that it was of such-and-such magnitude. It is only after the event that we can recognize a particular moment as the point at which the process of destabilization reached its climax and had to give way to something else. It is only afterward that we can properly say what decision was reached and of what significance it proved to be.

I have described the situation in terms of what we can *know* because it is always possible to *surmise* at any time that the present moment is one of crisis, that this crisis involves a decision concerning certain matters and that the event has certain historical significance. But this sort of anticipatory claim is at best conjectural. Those who are sure that the moment at which they are living is one of crisis believe something for which they can have no decisive evidence. What they perceive as a turning point may belong to a sequence of events that lacks any such turn. Or it may be that the actual turning point of the crisis (correctly identified as a crisis) has already passed or is still to come. Human judgment in such matters is notoriously unreliable. For historical turning points are not necessarily announced with trumpet blasts; they come just as often on cat's paws, quietly in the night.

The German sense of crisis in the 1930s was, however, in no way conjectural. Those who possessed it were certain that they were living at a moment of crisis and that it was both unique and of world-historical significance. How could they be so sure? Evidently they were entitled to speak of the times as a period of great upheaval, but what gave them the right to postulate profound discontinuity, and how could they assess the significance of the moment with such conviction? I am not trying to raise doubts here about the judgment of all those who felt themselves in the grip of a world-historical crisis. I am not calling them rash or short-sighted. My point is rather that the certainty of their judgment reveals that they were not making empirical claims about their time but that it was coming from other sources. Their conviction that Germany was in

a moment of extreme distress, that the exact midpoint of human history had been reached, that the time of the great noon had arrived, served them as regulative and interpretive notions. Their claim to certain knowledge, when such could in no way be had, reveals with stark obviousness that their conviction was constitutive of an understanding of time itself and of a whole picture of the world.[14]

The idea of crisis can play such a constitutive role because what we call human knowledge is above all a system of order and organization. Our understanding is not a mirror image of the world but a reworking of it by means of symbolic inventions. In experiencing the world we are like librarians trying to make a way among their books. There are too many to leave scattered about in piles. New books are arriving every day to be added to the others; the piles grow and so does the confusion. We need some system of order, but there are many ways in which the books might be arranged. We shift them this way and that until we finally discover an order that pleases us. The schemes of organization, the devices and systems we use to make sense of our experiences, are our own inventions, but for all that they do not come from nowhere. They are, just like the bookshelves, labels, and index cards in the library, derived from elements of the world and are part of it. We exploit some features of the world in order to deal with others. We use the spade to turn the soil.

We use, in particular, our experience of time and space—which are after all themselves features of the world—to organize that otherwise unmanageable flow of new experiences. Temporal and spatial notions serve us as interpretive schemata for understanding the world. I am not speaking here of Kant's idea that time and space are *a priori* notions; he failed to recognize that the temporal and spatial schemata we employ in our dealings with the world are not purely formal, that they are themselves delivered to us by the world. We acquire them by experience (for instance, by learning from others), and yet they serve at the same time as regulative schemata for organizing our grasp of reality and our dealings with others. If this is puzzling, it is no more so than the fact that the eyes with which we perceive the physical world are themselves part of it.[15] Those schemata are, moreover, not fixed once and for all, as Kant assumed, but are only *a priori* for us and for a particular historical moment.

Interpretive schemata of time and space are also needed for coping with the social and political world. Among these are the idea that the beginning of human life was a golden age and that everything since has been a decline, the idea that history turns in great cycles, and the idea that progress is inevitable. To think of human history as subject to discontinuities, to think specifically of the present as a unique cataclysmic moment, is but one more such scheme for interpreting the rush of historical detail. The German notion of crisis was, in other words, not an empirical idea waiting for confirmation but a regulative ideal, an *a priori* that structured the perception of the world for those who were in its grip. It determined their philosophical thinking as well as their political involvement.

THE HISTORY OF AN *A PRIORI*

I have spoken of the sense of crisis as an historical *a priori* because it constitutes a historically grown understanding of the world. Though such an understanding has its own history and its own causation, it is at the same time made possible because human experience has certain invariant and ahistorical characteristics. A sense of crisis, we can say, comes about only through an activation of potentialities that are already given in the structure of human subjectivity. The essential consideration here is that human experience always takes place in a present perceived as constantly changing, as suspended between past and future, and as constituting a break between them. While the past can be remembered and the future anticipated, neither memory nor anticipation can share in the life of the experienced present. The consciousness of crisis is possible precisely because of this present-directedness of human experience. Given that this is an invariant feature of our experience, it can exist at all times and in all cultures. The ever present potential is, however, activated only at those times and in those cultures that schematize their grasp of the world according to subjective experience.

There exist, specifically, three historical preconditions for the emergence of a modern sense of crisis. The first is the culture of modernity itself. Modernity is, in its essence, a directedness toward the present moment. But it is characterized not by a sharpened awareness of the present, but by the fact that it makes the idea of the uniqueness of the present moment a scheme for interpreting the world as a whole. As Foucault puts it: "Modernity is not a phe-

nomenon of sensitivity to the fleeting present, it is the will to 'heroize' the present."[16]

This directedness to the present defines not only a new understanding of the world, but also a new relation to the experiencing subject that is concerned with the world: a new relation between the subject and the world, in other words. An orientation to the present moment individualizes the subject and makes the world a field of current experience and action. Philosophically the consequence is an entirely new emphasis on the ego and a new estimation of conscious feeling and willing. Acting and willing now become the bearers of morality, as they do in Kant's categorical imperative. Epistemologically the self becomes the foundation of the world, as it does in Descartes' maxim. The world itself is thought to be construable out of current consciousness. In politics, the heroizing of the present encourages a new valuation of the political field itself. A new magic comes to rest on everything political in the modern period, whereas older values of transcendence and transfiguration loose their glamor. The directedness to the present signals, moreover, a new estimation of political action and of all views of the political that conceive it in terms of action.

The heroizing of the present that characterizes the modern experience is thus from the start both a philosophical and a political phenomenon. It also sets up a tension between them. For both, philosophical reflection and political action claim to be able to grasp and transform the world as a whole. From the beginning of the modern age, philosophy and politics exhibit the same directedness, but both are also locked in a competitive struggle. It is this complex pattern we must recognize if we are to understand the peculiar linkage between philosophical discourse and political rhetoric in Germany of the 1930s.

A second precondition of the modern sense of crisis is that the heroized present comes to be seen as discontinuous, as sharply separated from the past as well as the future, and that time as a whole is conceived as a sequence of moments in which past and future appear over and over again as disconnected. This is how European modernism from its beginning has understood the moment and its place in time. All history, all religion, all culture, all philosophy are conceived in terms of that discontinuity. They are now grasped through the concepts of reformation, renaissance, as revolutions

and ever-renewed beginnings in philosophical thinking. All politics too is thought of in terms of the idea of revolution, either positively or negatively.

But when does the emphasis on discontinuity and revolution engender the notion of political crisis? A sense of crisis is produced only when modern culture begins to lose confidence in its own powers, when the characteristic instability of the moment becomes cause for anxiety. It is therefore not surprising that the sense of crisis was unknown in the early modern era and that it meant nothing to the thinkers of the Enlightenment. Crisis gained its political meaning only at the end of the eighteenth century, just when modern achievements and promises were being questioned for the first time. It was, in fact, in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau—that great critic of modernity and counterfigure to the Enlightenment—that the notion of crisis attained its first significant political and historical application.[17] For Rousseau, at least, it was clear that the world was "approaching a state of crisis and an age of revolution."[18]

The crisis so announced became historically activated by the outbreak of revolutions in America and France and eventually in Germany. There it was manifested in different form, however, since historical circumstances did not encourage real political and social revolutions. Germany produced substitutes. Thinkers first turned their attention to the revolutionary events in France, hoping or fearing that these might spill over into Germany, and then they forged the entirely new idea of a spiritual crisis. In this transformation the German philosophers of the period were essential, for they convinced themselves that, in step with the French revolution, there had taken place in Germany an even more important event—not an event in political life but one in the hidden depths of philosophy. First, they said, there was Kant's "Copernican revolution," an event comparable to the destruction of the ancien régime in France, which brought the old rigid metaphysics to an end. It was followed by the appearance of new forms of philosophy through Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling, and this phase was similar to the promise held out by the French revolution for new forms of political association. The political turnabout abroad could thus be seen to have its complement and completion in a philosophical revolution in Germany.[19] Without necessarily employing the term "crisis" itself, the

German philosophers thereby introduced the idea of crisis into the heart of their own philosophizing. A regulative concept, which in the hands of Rousseau had been a political notion, was internalized in classical German philosophy and made into a philosophical principle. The concept of crisis became in consequence something that could play the dual role of political symbol and philosophical idea. It also made a convenient bridge on which later German philosophers could travel from philosophical reflection to political engagement.

A MOST DESTRUCTIVE HABIT OF THOUGHT

Germany certainly underwent a crisis in the first half of this century. But in retrospect we can see that it was merely a transitional event and not one that would leave the country radically transformed. For a moment it looked as if Germany was to throw off the assumptions and values of modernity, but the defeat of the Nazis in 1945 brought the easy return of liberal, capitalist, and bourgeois values. The old orders asserted themselves once more, first in the western part of Germany and more recently in East Germany. With the collapse of the Communist system, the German crisis that had begun with the First World War was finally over.

Given the course of German history in our century, it is understandable that those who lived through it were profoundly haunted by a sense of crisis. But in hindsight we can also see that their interpretation of the nature and course of the crisis was generally based on a misjudgment of the historical situation. In retrospect we can see that philosophers and politicians who assumed that they were facing a unique and apocalyptic event from which Germany and the west would emerge deeply changed were deceived about the dynamics of the crisis they were living through. This deception was not based on factual errors. It was due rather to the fact they were in the grip of a historical *a priori*. This *a priori* had led Fichte and Nietzsche earlier to assume that they could discern a unique historical turning point. It subsequently led Heidegger and his contemporaries to postulate such a turn in their own lifetime. But they had all been equally deceived.

Today we certainly have no reason to think that Fichte was living at the exact midpoint of human history. The Napoleonic wars that

disturbed him so much are for us distant events barely remembered. We realize that Fichte's fears over the power of the Napoleonic empire were grossly exaggerated, because the empire was in fact hollow at the core and doomed to disintegration. We also find it difficult to assume that Germany would have disappeared if Napoleon's rule had persisted for any length of time. Fichte underestimated the resilience of traditions, even when they are set upon and suppressed. We find it even more difficult to envisage that a Napoleonic ascendancy over Europe would have meant the end of all culture. We might even think that Germany and Europe could have profited from a prolonged dose of French civilization. Fichte's apocalyptic sense of a world-historical crisis in 1807 appears to us, in any case, as alien and unrealistic. Nothing in what we know corresponds to it.

Nietzsche's vision of the approaching crisis of nihilism has proved equally elusive. Christianity, whose imminent collapse he predicted, is still alive. God may be dead in the minds of the philosophers, but he still lives some kind of murky life in the hearts of millions of people. If nihilism is at the door, most people have failed to hear its knocking. The world has not experienced a general loss of values. Over the last seventy years even atheists have proved themselves capable of the most rigid moralizing. We have not come to conclude that, if God is dead, then everything is allowed.

Powerful as Nietzsche's announcement of a world-historical crisis was, it contains profound puzzles. If nihilism is, as he said, an illusion, why has it lasted for so long, and why should it be forced to come into the open at any particular moment? How could Nietzsche be sure that the uncanniest of guests was finally making an entrance and that all power structures within the culture were about to explode? Nihilism, as he described it, is not merely historical but a potential condition in all human thinking. Why should it be activated at certain times and passive at others?

The crisis of which Nietzsche spoke in *Ecce Homo* was in reality both more and less than a historical happening. What he announced right before his final collapse was above all a moment of crisis in his own consciousness. Historical events and psychological processes became intertwined in his personal history. The subjective experience of a cataclysmic present became the symbol of a world-historical process as well. In announcing a catastrophe of in-

credible proportions, Nietzsche was affirming more than the confrontation between Dionysus and Christ; in his breakdown he actually became both Dionysus and Christ and was torn apart by the struggle within him.[20]

Heidegger's belief in the imminence of a unique world crisis has proved no more reliable. Unlike him we no longer see the world from a restrictedly European perspective. We have become adjusted to living in a permanent danger zone where global annihilation is always a possibility and the old categories of religion, science, philosophy, classes, and traditions are far from self-evident. As a result, the German crisis of the 1930s can no longer seem like a world-shattering event. The upheavals the Germans experienced were no doubt calamitous, but do they for that reason mark the end of one great historical age and the beginning of another? Heidegger's dire account of the German condition in 1933 has thus proved thoroughly unreliable. What looked like a decisive moment of truth at the time to men like Heidegger and many others has turned out to be a mere flutter in an unexpectedly solid system. In their anxiety these men saw the end of the German people, of Europe, and of human culture as a whole—unless, that is, drastic steps were taken.

What falls with all this is the Nazis' belief that the time at which they were acting was a decisive historical moment. What falls is their justification for all the extreme measures they understook, all the cruelties and atrocities they committed or tolerated, all the death and destruction they sowed.

Three critical conclusions suggest themselves here. First, we need to ask whether historical developments are uniformly to be understood on the model of discontinuity. We need perhaps to free ourselves from the *a priori* conception of crisis and return that idea to its empirical niche. It is useful to consider once more what Jakob Burckhardt said about crisis. As a historian he took an extremely sober and cautious view. He admitted the usefulness of the concept for understanding specific historical constellations, and he thought that crises are both natural and recurring events in human history, but at the same time he held that great crises are rare. He did not, in particular, entertain the belief that there might be a singular, world crisis and was extremely suspicious of philosophers who postulated such an event. Nor was he specifically concerned with the possibility of an existing crisis and restricted his illustrations for the

most part to crises of the past. While he said at the end of his lectures that his own age might be in the middle of a crisis, he also expressed certainty that "it will always be impossible to assess the force and value of a crisis, and more especially its power of expansion at its outset."[21] Those who were living through a crisis, he said, were in no position to assess its true scope and character.

A second point is that historical crises are not sudden transformations brought about through heroic acts and efforts of will. This is how Heidegger and the Nazis saw their own time—but it is doubtful that any historical process can ever have the character of a sudden and total transformation. We need to reject here, in particular, the view that such crises are vast switches in gestalt. In his account of crises Burckhardt usefully made it clear that the processes occurring in a crisis have all the features of normal historical changes.

Third, the notion of *great* crisis that motivated Fichte, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Nazis is, to use Foucault's words, one of the most destructive habits of modern thought. The idea promises us an unconditional liberation from whatever we have found constraining in the past. It promises a moment of transformation and a world that is in no way like the old one. It loosens all moral and traditional bonds and projects the right to total freedom. Nietzsche wrote that "individuals and generations can now fix their eyes on tasks of a vastness that would have seemed madness to earlier ages, and a trifling with Heaven and Hell. We may experiment with ourselves! Yes, mankind has a right to do that."[22] He could not foresee that National Socialism would teach us a quick and ugly lesson concerning the perils of all such experimentation.[23]

The question is still why the idea of great crisis should have such power over us, as an experience, as a political symbol, and as the source of so many philosophical interpretations. In order to loosen its hold, we must come to understand why it is not up to us to measure time and to determine that we are at the exact midpoint in human history, or to calculate that now is the great noon. Societies will at times be in distress, but it is not up to us to say that any one moment is the hub of distress. What is required is the abandonment of a certain kind of thinking about historical time, of the *a priori* that structures our experience and conjures up before us the idea of a decisive moment. I began by saying that the sense of crisis is a product of a culture of subjectivity in which the structure of

individual experience is projected as the order of time itself. This is also the mark of modernity, and hence we are entitled to say that the thinkers of crisis, from Fichte through Nietzsche to Heidegger, are all essentially modern thinkers, even though they may have described themselves in other terms. Indeed, their conviction of having transcended modernity appears to us now as just one more expression of their assumption of a moment of transition, one more sign of an essentially modern belief in crisis.

What is needed is that those in politics think not in terms of revolutions and crises, grand decisions and sudden transformations, but in terms of patient explorations and continuous, partial shifts. "We have hit here," as Foucault puts it, "upon one of the most destructive habits of modern thought," the tendency to think of the present moment as the climax of history. He adds: "One must probably find the humility to admit that the time of one's own life is not the one-time, basic, revolutionary moment of history, from which everything begins and is completed."[24]

4

The German Mission

National Socialism originated out of the First World War. As a result of that war, Adolf Hitler decided to become a politician, joined the already existing minuscule National Socialist Workers' Party, and began to transform it into the spearhead of a revolutionary political movement. The Nazi party's immediate political aims were almost entirely defined in terms of the world war and its opposition to the peace treaty of Versailles. As far as their other goals were concerned, particularly their nationalism, racism, and antisemitism, they can no doubt be traced back beyond the period of the world war, but the syndrome of political ideas, aspirations, and purposes that we now identify with the name of National Socialism was unquestionably the product of that war.

The war also redefined the relation between philosophy and politics. From the start, the military confrontation called forth a wave of patriotic rhetoric from German philosophers. It also led to the formation of a number of societies that combined a predominantly conservative outlook in philosophy with a rabidly nationalistic agenda in politics. Most prominent among these were the Fichte Society of 1914 (Fichte Gesellschaft von 1914) and the German Philosophical Society (Deutsche Philosophische Gesellschaft). Both associations also undertook the publication of journals through which they spread their philosophical and political program. A number of other independent journals, such as *Der Panther* and *Deutschlands Erneuerung* (Germany's Renewal), pursued similar goals. These activities brought to prominence a new generation of

philosophers, such as Bruno Bauch and Felix Krueger, to whom extreme nationalism came just as naturally as their commitment to German idealism. The unhappy course of the war, followed by political and economic turmoil, brought these men support from a growing number of other intellectuals. Among them were some of the most distinguished members of the older generation, such as Heinrich Rickert, Gottlob Frege, and Wilhelm Wundt. With the First World War there thus emerged a philosophical movement that would prove to be a powerful political force in 1933.

The question that linked philosophy and politics in the thinking of these men was that of the German identity or, as they themselves put it, the question of the German mission in the world. This had first been raised at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when German nationalism made its appearance. The question of the definition of the German nation had always been a philosophical as well as a political matter. That is certainly how Fichte treated it in his *Addresses to the German Nation*, and it was to Fichte that the new generation of nationalistic philosophers looked back.

At the beginning of the First World War, an ideological as well as a military struggle broke out in which intellectuals from all the hostile nations participated. Patriotic excitement encouraged them all to describe the conflict, absurdly enough, as a struggle between irreconcilably different cultures. As proof of this difference they often held up the achievements of their own philosophical traditions and denigrated those of their enemies. In America, George Santayana denounced the egoism he found in German philosophy. In England, Nietzsche was reviled as the intellectual force behind German militarism. In France, Bergson and Boutroux pointed to the barbarism characteristic of German culture. In both Britain and America, the war accelerated the decline of idealism, dismissed as a German philosophy. Meanwhile, in Germany, the superficiality of French, English, and American philosophical thought was roundly criticized.

Nowhere did patriotic emotions run higher than in Germany, and nowhere did a previously apolitical intelligentsia engage itself more vigorously in nationalistic rhetoric.[1] Like their foreign counterparts, German philosophers did not exempt themselves from this activity. In books and pamphlets, public lectures and declarations, they helped to stir the patriotic fires of the moment by calling on

the resources of the philosophical past.[2] For some of them, the start of the war was nothing less than the final harvest, "the day of the German."[3] "We feel the morning wind of a new day not only for Germany, but for all humanity," Paul Natorp, the Neo-Kantian philosopher, could declare. "We feel," he also said, "like God's warriors against 'a world of devils'; like those who have now been given the task to fulfill all the great prophecies concerning mankind."[4] Max Scheler wrote: "This is the whole magnitude of the world-historical situation, that this unheard-of war is either the beginning of European rebirth or the beginning of its death. There is no third."[5] To which Alfred Weber added: "Thank God that one is a German—the only nation to which one would want to belong today, even if one were not born to it" (p. 30).[6] To him it was "becoming ever more certain today that we are different from and more than others" (p. 34). And being different and more than others "we will, if we are worth it, bring on a new time" (p. 107).

The specific contribution of the philosophers to the "ideas of 1914" was almost always made in the name of Fichte. For Hermann Schwarz, the philosopher of religion, it was in any case clear that "only if we remain active existences . . . above all from the idea of Germannness that Fichte has drawn for us, a greater Germany will one day—no, very soon—become the political and spiritual salt of the earth."[7] Truly great men, said the neo-Kantian Alois Riehl, have the gift to sense what moves an age and to anticipate the developments of the future. Fichte was such a man. He saw that a national reconstruction would require the development of "Germanness." And "he combined in that concept whatever is primordial to human beings, not yet distorted, not turned into mere form; all that which belongs to a primordial people, a people of a living language."[8] For Alfred Weber it was clear that "the only one who has come close to what we feel about the German people is still that man of action Fichte. How beautiful his notion of 'primordialness' as our distinguishing characteristic."[9] For these philosophers it was also evident, just as it had been for Fichte, that the strength of the German character manifested itself most directly in German philosophy. Riehl thought that philosophy was the most authentic "revelation of the German spirit."[10] And his colleague Rudolf Eucken, who had spent a lifetime advancing humanistic idealism, was sure that the Germans and they alone were capable of that special culti-

vation of the soul that expressed itself in philosophy. Stirred by the grandeur of the military battles, Eucken was now convinced that "possession of a primordial world-encompassing inwardness gives us inexhaustible strength" (p. 23).[11]

But when Fichtean themes were called upon in this way, they were invariably transformed and adapted to new historical conditions. Fichte had delivered his *Addresses* when there was yet no unified German state. A century later Germany was an industrial and military power, and this state was willing to use Fichte's rhetoric to promote its own expansionist goals. In 1807 Fichte had spoken on his own, beholden to no authority. A century later a dozen German philosophers (together with hundreds of other academics) were engaged in the public discourse, and all of them were loyal servants of the state. Fichte faced a continental war in which France had been the most restless power and militarily the strongest. A century later France had long lost its revolutionary fervor; it was weak in comparison to Germany; and the world was a larger place in which the game that now also involved the British, the Americans, the Turks, and the Japanese was no longer about the balance in Europe but rather about dividing the world.

When German philosophers repeated the words of Fichte's *Addresses* in 1914, those words had a new and more ominous force. Spoken at a different historical moment, they served a different role, just as the simple words "I love you" can be a confession or a threat depending on the moment and context. In his lectures and pamphlets Eucken could speak in Fichte's terms of "the world-historical meaning of the German spirit" and of "the superiority of our innermost essence." With Fichte he could invoke greatness, truthfulness, and primordialness as the chief characteristics of German life. But his phrases would now be linked to the operations and purposes of a powerful military. When he denied any conflict between German culture and German militarism, since the Germans uniquely combined inwardness with practicality, when he declared the war "a gigantic struggle for our existence" and maintained that Germany's enemies had to be shown that "we are more than they think we are, that we have a world-historical significance," his words would be tied inextricably to the fantasies of those who were dreaming of territorial expansion and a German empire in the sun.[12]

Though the philosophers still spoke in Fichte's words of the Germans as a primordial people, they sensed at the same time that this no longer sufficed in the face of political reality. This was the age in which the idea of a central European identity was gaining hold, and so the philosophers also began to speak of the Germans as a central nation. Thus Riehl wrote: "Germany must also in the spiritual sense become more and more what it is according to its geographical situation, the center of Europe, 'the heart of nations.'"[13] And Scheler declared at the start of the war that Germany, "that currently isolated European middle nation," was living and dying in the faith "it will some day attain the role of being the source of European rebirth."[14] Where Fichte had opposed German primordialness to the dead spirit of the Romanized culture of the French, that contrast seemed no longer appropriate. In the new geopolitical picture, the role of opponent fell instead to the Anglo-Saxons and the Russians. "With regard to the French people as our most noble opponent, we can most easily generate a feeling of equal worth," the classicist Wilamowitz-Moellendorff said in 1915. He was convinced, however, that England harbored "the really driving evil spirit that has called this war forth out of hell—the spirit of envy and hypocrisy."[15] For Scheler as for Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, there existed an essential commonality in culture between the Germans and the French from which he could envisage a postwar Europe "in which the rich unique talents of its individual nations work together harmoniously and complementing each other in the construction of a culture of freedom, of spirit and intellect—preserving the noble traditions of the great Mediterranean culture." But that new Europe would have to expel "English-American capitalism and the impoverished Calvinist-puritanical Christianity that goes with it as a foreign poison."[16] The German character was in every respect the exact opposite of the English character, Scheler said. Whereas in Germany truthfulness was the central virtue, English culture was false and hypocritical. Hence it was vital to remove those "embarrasing dependencies" on English ideas "into which the German spirit has strayed against its true nature . . . in philosophy (Neo-Humeanism), in psychology (associationism), in a large part of economics, and, as Zöllner and Dühring already deplored, in physics, but quite out of proportion in biology (Darwin, Spencer)" (p. 186). Scheler also considered it essential to stop Russia's expansionist

movement. While he abhorred militarism in general, he believed that "to destroy German militarism would mean to make Europe defenseless against Russia and the pressure of the Mongol hords" (p. 241). Alfred Weber fully agreed with these sentiments in his own reflections on the German mission. "The real and great cultural danger by which the European world is threatened today is: Anglicization!" (p. 19).[17] Weber feared that from English capitalism and puritanism would come "a falsification of our nature" (p. 27). Like Scheler, he also saw Germany poised between England and Russia, and Germany would have to control Russian expansionism. Eventually "other nations will beg us on their knees to protect them against the Russians and the Yellow Man and at the same time to resist the disgusting business instincts of the Anglo-Americans" (p. 29). The Germans were indeed called to "pursue a third way of being in the world," one positioned between the English and the Slavs. In the address that the theologian Reinhard Seeberg sent to the German government in 1915, signed by several hundred German academics, we read similarly of the need to defend German and European culture "against the barbarian flood from the East and against the desire for revenge and domination from the West."[18]

The idea of race and the belief in the racial superiority of the Germans did not yet play a role (at least not an explicit one) in these academic and philosophical efforts to spell out the essence of the German character and to identify the peculiar German mission in the world. But such beliefs were already current in the public consciousness and had been propagated since 1900 by Houston Stuart Chamberlain in his book *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century.* By the 1920s, racial theory was becoming respectable for some academic writers. And this was to contribute to further shifts in philosophical attempts to define a metaphysics of Germanness. Though all those attempts continued to draw on Fichte, they were at the same time evidence of an increasing uncertainty of what Germanness meant.

That uncertainty was reinforced by political events. At the beginning of the war, German intellectuals had foreseen a greatly enhanced role for Germany in the world and used Fichte's words to justify their claim. The First World War marked, in fact, the end of an era in German history, the end of Bismarck's political system,

and the devaluation of most nineteenth-century values. When the unanticipated defeat came in 1918, Fichte was once again perceived as a symbolic figure, but this time as someone who had lived in a similar time of distress. In an hour of defeat, Fichte had asked what the essence of the German nation was, and now that same question had to be asked again.

While intellectuals from all the warring nations engaged in rhetorical excesses during the war, the postwar effects of that rhetoric were distinctly different in each country. The victors could turn to other things, and the nationalist war propaganda was quickly forgotten or shamefully suppressed. In defeated Germany, however, the aspirations and ideas of 1914 lingered in the minds of many people as an unfulfilled promise, a picture of what Germany might have been and was destined to be. The defeat, far from inducing sobriety, spurred on resentment and an eagerness to pursue even more fervently the question of the German identity, of Germany's place in the world, and of the true nature of Germanness. Karl Löwith was surely right when he wrote in 1940: "What has happened in Germany since 1933 is the attempt to win the lost war."[19]

THE FICHTE SOCIETY OF 1914

Patriotic fervor led in the middle of the war to the foundation of the Fichte Society of 1914.[20] This was, despite its name, not a predominantly philosophical but a political organization. Its leaders were drawn from various professions and various parts of the country. The association was meant to achieve above all a unification of the various "folkish" groups and to do so under the banner of Fichte's philosophy. As it said in its initial statement, the society recognized "in Fichte the guide for a folkish formation of life, the one who had first given the folkish idea a precise content. For that reason it aims at the re-awakening of Fichte through the dissemination of his essays and treatises" (p. 560). Fichte, so the new group declared, had been the first to see that "the German people have a distinctive mission to perform in the total mass of mankind. We are irreplaceable by any other people because of the uniquess of our character. And if we lost our distinctive folkish nature in material degradation, mankind would be unable to fulfill its tasks without us" (p. 559).

With Fichte the society considered the political task ahead an educational one. It wanted to be understood as a "comprehensive, folkish, educational community which in all its institutions aims at educating the German into being German" (p. 562). Its goal was accordingly to bring "the public tools of a national education such as the school, the theater, the press, books, art education, and the lecture circuit under folkish command"; to eliminate "the un-German arbitrariness which has taken possession of these tools, to bring about "a cleansing and germanification" of these institutions. That these remarks had a distinctly antisemitic flavor is underscored by the fact that the literary historian Adolf Bartels, a notorious antisemite, was one of the leading members of the Fichte Society.

The society set out to publish a monthly journal with the title *Deutsches Volkstum* (German Folkdom) as well as a philosophical quarterly called *Wege zu Fichte* (Roads to Fichte), the latter edited by one Arthur Hoffmann of Erfurt. This publication was meant to promote German philosophers "from Meister Eckhart to Leibniz and from him to Kant and to those who completed his work among whom Fichte means the most for the present day."[21] The journal was, in particular, intended to emphasize Fichte's work as "a contribution of the German genius" and as something of special importance "for the folkish attitude." An introductory statement by Hoffmann himself and an essay on "Fichte and the German Idea" by Bruno Bauch, professor of philosophy in Jena, attacked the predominant philosophical climate and the philosophical literature in general as inimical to folkish needs, as believing falsely that "research ought to be international" and as possessing an "insensitive enlightenment attitude and an attitude of dogmatic realism."

BAUCH'S BREAK WITH THE KANT SOCIETY

The *Roads to Fichte* and the Fichte Society as a whole turned out to be no more than a springboard for the philosophers associated with them. Soon they established their own philosophical association and their own journal. That association was the German Philosophical Society (Deutsche Philosophische Gesellschaft, hereafter referred to as DPG). While the Fichte Society of 1914 was to continue in existence and would remain in contact with the DPG, it was the

DPG that came to unite German philosophers on the political right and played a crucial role in the philosophical politics of 1933 and during the Nazi period.[22]

The story of the DPG begins properly in 1916 with a philosophical scandal involving Bruno Bauch, the society's ambitious founder and guiding light. Bauch had been until then the editor of Germany's most respectable philosophical journal, the well-known *Kantstudien*. After studying with the leaders of the southwestern German school of neo-Kantianism, Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert, and Kuno Fischer, he had received support from Hans Vaihinger, the founder of both the Kant Society and the Kant studies that were published on its behalf. It was Vaihinger who in 1904 had given Bauch an academic appointment at Halle and then made him editor of the journal.

All had gone reasonably well for some years, even though from the start Vaihinger and Bauch were philosophically at odds. Bauch was to write later: "Both of us have been and are still regarded by many simply as 'Kantians.' But from the beginning we were scientifically far apart."[23] While Bauch engaged himself in a conservative reworking of neo-Kantian assumptions, Vaihinger was receptive not only to Nietzschean ideas but also to the influences of French positivism and American pragmatism. Vaihinger's opening up to new philosophical ideas, including ones from abroad, was part of a process that was slowly dissolving the neo-Kantianism that had dominated German philosophy since the 1870s. Bauch and other philosophical conservatives responded to this process with increasing fear that German philosophy as a whole was facing dissolution, overwhelmed by foreign influences. Everywhere they looked they saw a pernicious "supranationalism" in the established philosophical societies and journals in Germany. Such misgivings were magnified when the First World War broke out. Bauch, like many others, saw it as a struggle against an English conception of culture and politics. His extravagant fears led him to write later that the war had robbed the Germans of their freedom and had led to "the profound enslavement of our nation."[24] Vaihinger, on the other hand, who was a political liberal and a pacifist, thought that a false optimism, engendered by the dominant forms of idealism, was the cause of Germany's ill fortune. To the philosophical differ-

ences that had always existed between the two men, the war thus added a stark political disagreement. It led to a break in their partnership.

But the more immediate ground for the break was an article "On the Concept of the Nation" that Bauch published in the *Kantstudien* in 1916.[25] The article, which attempted a conceptual analysis of the concept of nation, provoked an immediate scandal because it included certain seemingly antisemitic remarks. In illustrating his argument Bauch insisted on a sharp distinction between the German and the Jewish nationality. He had, in particular, referred to the Jews as an alien people *(fremdvölkisch)* and argued that for such people the love of the German homeland was impossible or at least difficult; for that reason it was understandable that earlier generations had barred Jews from owning German land and property. Such remarks, bad enough in themselves, gained in ominousness by the fact that they were published in the midst of the First World War and in the midst of growing dispute over who was to blame for the unfortunate course of the war. It is clear from Bauch's response to the uproar, however, that he was quite unable to recognize the offensive character of his words. Insisting that the word "Jew" could never be a term of abuse for any German, he made matters worse in an explanatory letter, which went on to say that Germans and Jews could do justice to each other only if both acknowledged their "folkish difference and destiny." To emphasize this point he spoke of the differences between the "German thinker" Kant and the neo-Kantian philosopher Hermann Cohen, whom he called a "Jewish thinker" and "one of the most venerable figures of modern Jewry" (p. 150).

Bauch's formulations led to protests from Jewish members of the Kant Society and to some resignations from its membership. When the society's governors tried to mediate the dispute and called for a public debate in the pages of the *Kantstudien,* Bauch responded abruptly that he could not accept Jewish censorship over the journal, resigned his editorship and his position in the Kant Society, and soon founded his own association.

At the heart of this dispute lay the question of the identity and character of the German nation. As Bauch himself said in explanation of his break with the Kant Society, the man who insisted that Jews and Germans had distinct destinies was merely "appealing to

the highest to which one can appeal, the values and goods of a nation" (p. 154). Such sentiments came quite naturally to him. Born in 1877, Bauch was, like many of those who ultimately took up the Nazi cause, a product of the Bismarck empire, of its nationalism, militarism, and imperialism, its reawakened antisemitism, its pronounced class consciousness, and its attacks on the social democrats as enemies of the state. Like many of his generation, he considered the First World War a profound threat to German culture and the loss of the war a moment of radical crisis for that culture. As the son of a rich Silesian landowner he was, moreover, deeply disturbed by postwar manifestations of Polish nationalism and embittered by the fact that the new Polish state included parts of what had formerly been German Silesia.[26] On Bauch's death in 1942, the DPG's obituary could say of him that he had always and in every way stood up for the national values and specific possibilities of the German spirit—especially in the area of philosophy. "In the fateful year of 1917 he gave the impulse for a gathering of the like-minded, for the formation of a fighting partnership against the tendencies towards dissolution and an overwhelming foreign influence in many areas of German life." The obituary added: "When in the national rising of 1933 a new impetus and new goals appeared for German philosophy, Bruno Bauch was among the first who set to work with a courageous and trusting view to the future."[27]

THE GERMAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The DPG was very much the creature of its founder. In its first programmatic statement, the society announced that its goal was "the cultivation, deepening, and preservation of the German character in the area of philosophy by following the spirit of the German idealism founded by Kant and carried further by Fichte."[28] Although the words may suggest that the society aimed mostly at preserving a great philosophical tradition, the DPG saw its mission from the start as more than an archeological one. In another programmatic announcement in 1921, we read:

> Internal forces failed when the troubles from outside came upon us and when many of the old forms of life fell apart. "A transformation, rebirth, and renewal of the spirit in its deepest

> roots; the institution of a new organ and through it of a new world in this time" (Fichte) is now the task of those who put themselves into the service of the German mission . . . A strong community must now come together in the spirit of this responsibility.[29]

Still later in 1927 the society defined its purpose in these terms:

> The uniqueness of the German character, as it reveals itself not only in German science, religion, and art, but also in German political life, in the legal and economic thought of the nation is truly to be uncovered with more and more clarity and to be brought close to the constructive forces in our people.[30]

In 1934, after the Nazis had come to power, yet another statement declared:

> Much of what we have aimed at and labored for has come closer to realization through the national revolution. We are not, however, thereby absolved from duty; on the contrary, the immediate present imposes on us even more the duty to use the power of German philosophy for the construction of the German worldview. We must and will join in the work on the life of the German spirit as a whole in which the timeless content of our people's mission has gained temporal concrete shape and historical reality. (B 8:121)[31]

Bauch's most important instrument for promoting his philosophical and political agenda was, no doubt, the journal that the DPG published from its foundation in 1918 to its dissolution at the end of the Nazi period. Initially called *Beiträge zur Philosophie des Deutschen Idealismus* (Contributions to the Philosophy of German Idealism), the journal was edited from 1918 to 1927 by Arthur Hoffmann, who had previously been the editor of the Fichte Society's *Roads to Fichte*.[32] When the journal was renamed *Blätter für Deutsche Philosophie* (Periodical for German Philosophy), it got Hugo Fischer from Leipzig as its new editor, who continued until 1935. Then the editorship was taken over by Heinz Heimsoeth in Cologne, who published it until mid-1944 when the worsening war situation made further publication impossible. Though the two series were nominally distinct, they made up for all practical purposes a single jour-

nal, since they served both philosophically and politically one and the same end.[33]

The change in title in 1927 did, of course, indicate an evolution in what the journal was meant to stand for. In the first number of the *Beiträge* the editors said that the publication was supposed to bring out "the *national* values of the spiritual life of German philosophy" while showing that "the German idealist spirit has produced things that are permanent" (A 1:1). Announcing their own determination to "bring individual efforts and dispersed materials together in a fruitful collaboration," the editors criticized other philosophical journals not only for their supranational outlook but also for their lack of a coherent program.[34] In contrast to other publications, the *Beiträge* were supposed to present an integrated whole: "The ultimate goal to be sought is the elaboration of that view of world and life for which the foundations were laid a hundred years ago during the flowering of German idealism" (A 1:2). As the DPG grew in size and attracted a more diverse membership, the exclusive emphasis on German idealism no longer seemed appropriate. For financial reasons too, the DPG considered it necessary to avoid the impression that the journal was predominantly interested in the philosophy of Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling. So it was renamed *Blätter für deutsche Philosophie.* The preface to the new series identified the publication's goal as the investigation of the content and history of "German philosophy in the widest sense of this word" (B 1:2). The wider focus was certainly reflected in the articles the journal published from this time on. But in both phases the journal remained true to its purpose, to make German philosophy "fruitful for the life of the present day" (B 1:3). While it insisted that its final goal was strictly philosophical, it also held, from its first number to its last, that German philosophy could be understood only through its interconnections with other areas of cultural and political life. "German philosophy," said the preface to the first issue of the *Blätter,* "has for centuries been a creative and preserving force in the higher life of all nations. The disturbances, needs, and lies of the present time call urgently for just those forces."

Over the years the DPG's journal published articles on a wide range of philosophical topics. About half of them were concerned with the history of German philosophy. Particularly notable is the journal's continued interest in mystical writers, such as Plotinus,

Meister Eckhart, and Jacob Böhme. Among the nonhistorical writings, a series of essays on philosophical anthropology along with another on the philosophy of technology stand out.[35] The journal also regularly published essays on the philosophy of mathematics, the philosophy of science, and on both philosophical and symbolic logic. In spite of the DPG's programmatic opposition to positivism, the journal even gave space to positivists like Rudolf Carnap, Karl Menger, and Walter Dubislav. Though antisemitism was an undercurrent in the DPG's ideology, there were also some articles by Jewish authors before 1933.

Since the journal was mostly read by the members of the DPG, who received it free with their membership, and since these were primarily academic philosophers, it devoted itself for the most part to their concerns. At no time was it in any immediate sense a political publication; not a single article in twenty-six years of publication was devoted to the discussion of any current event. But the journal always had a quite definite political agenda. The fundamental conviction that guided it was no doubt the one expressed by Hans Freyer in 1935: "The political is probably one of those decisive starting points from which German philosophy must and, as I believe, can regenerate and further itself" (B 9:357). Freyer considered it one of the failures of nineteenth-century philosophy that after Hegel it had adopted a thoroughly unpolitical attitude. He wrote: "Since we have once again come to experience the power, the magnitude, and the infinite depth of the political and exist once more—as we may say—in the political, it must be self-evident to us to reject the nineteenth century also at this point and to feel akin once again to the great examples of political philosophy" (B 9:348). In this belief in the centrality of politics, Freyer, the DPG, and the Nazis were indeed one. Though much of the content of the DPG's journal was apolitical in content, it was nevertheless an expression of a political viewpoint. It was meant to further a political agenda, and it was all part of the elaboration of the idea of Germanness to which the DPG had committed itself from the start.

That was made evident in the very first article the journal published in 1918, which was entitled "Fichte as a Beacon in our Spiritual Distress."[36] The year 1914, the article said, had been "a great turning point of the ages," and education and the universities in general could no longer remain what they had been. "Primordial

life, not life that is merely derived and has become cold and rigid, must once again break through. What is ultimate and absolute must touch the soul directly. And philosophy is a means to that end" (A 1:3). In this situation, Fichte could serve as a symbol and beacon in a period of distress. "He stood under spiritual conditions which are closely akin to our own, and he made from them spiritual conquests which have become once more our own task" (A 1:7). Now that an age of terrible struggles had once again been brought about by war, salvation could only lie in trusting the power of will that Fichte had first recognized as a world force. The essay concluded:

> Faith in both the individual and the nation, faith in the essential force of history and the power of the educating, self-determining will: all this appears to us in this somber and heavy hour as the German mission . . . We take on the struggle under a shining historical symbol: Fichte! (A 1:9)

From its first pages on, then, the DPG's journal promoted, developed, and expanded the philosophical discourse of the German mission. Of the thirty-seven publications it reviewed in its first issue no fewer than fourteen were concerned with the topic of Germanness.

This emphasis on Germanness did imply antisemitism, but that theme remained for the most part muted in the pages of the DPG's journal. Even as late as 1933, the journal reviewed the works of Jewish authors such as Helmut Kuhn, Hans Kohn, Karl Mannheim, and Leonard Nelson—the latter was also a radical socialist—and did so fairly and without antisemitic rhetoric. Despite the fact that contributions of Jewish authors were occasionally published in the journal before 1933, however, no Jewish philosopher seems to have been a member of the DPG, and certainly none was ever prominent in the society; none belonged to its executive committee, and none was a member of the journal's editorial board. Even after 1933 there was little overt antisemitism in the journal, though the repeated claim that only the Nordic race had the true gift of philosophy was surely meant to convey that Jews were excluded from the charmed circle.

Closely associated with the DPG's emphasis on Germanness in all its forms was the belief that the time was one of crisis. It was voiced again and again in the pages of the journal. When the first

volume of the *Blätter* appeared in 1927 it carried, not surprsingly, a long article on "epochs of crisis and the history of the spirit." In it the noted Hegel scholar Theodor Haering set out to show how Hegel had been preoccupied with the idea of crisis from his earliest years, that he had grown up in an atmosphere of crisis, and that he had said again and again that his calling was to bring about a new age. For Haering the core of Hegel's analysis of the idea of crisis lay in his dialectic, which showed that historical crises were only special cases of the fact that life "in every moment of its being and becoming . . . is both something old and at once something new, something new and yet at the same time something old, that it is, hence, both A and non-A at the same time" (B 1:133). Historical crises were thus to be understood in terms of the transitory character of the temporal moment. Haering argued that Hegel had interpreted the historical circumstances of his time in just this manner and suggested that the crisis facing Germany in the twentieth century could be understood in the same terms. Hegel's account had shown that such crises were a natural part of life itself, that they were by no means evidence of a hopeless process of dissolution, and that their resolution was to be found, as in all dialectical processes, in the unity of old and new, in the return to life of what was essential in the old.

Crisis was often linked in the rhetoric of the DPG's journal to the necessity of struggle. Talk of struggle *(Ringen)* and fight *(Kampf)* occurs constantly in its pages. The journal's authors were frequently given to describing reality as a struggle—and often did so with reference to Heraclitus. The 1933 volume of the journal carried an essay "The Soldier," which said that the military profession was truly "the" political profession:

> The profession of the soldier gives all other professions their decisive accent. The everydayness of life does not determine itself out of itself, but from the greatest danger points of life . . . The profession of the "warrior" is the testing ground for all "peaceful" professions, his situation decides the situation of the totality. (B 7:128)

Another essay reminded the reader of a further aspect of this conception of life by recalling that "in his fighting book and in his fight Hitler has given a principled renunciation of objectivity" (B 7:259).

Objectivity in ideological and political confrontations, the author said, was indeed unwarranted since "the will urges us to action and, when we meet resistance, to fight. In fighting one attacks the opponent, one does not defend him. It is his job to defend himself. . . There is then also a duty to be intolerant" (B 7:263).

The DPG's belief in the German mission, its conviction that the moment was one of crisis and called for a determined struggle, was in turn linked to the idea that the nation would have to come together in one great community, that all divisions and ruptures should be removed, that, above all, there was need for a leader who could assure the Germans of their survival. In 1931 Gunther Ipsen, by then one of the editors of the DPG's journal, set out to describe this idea of nationhood—ostensibly as an account of how the Germans had understood themselves at the time of Napoleon, but no doubt with the intention of delineating a current ideal. Nationhood, he said, was characterized by three features: the existence of a community, shared attitudes, and an acknowledged leadership. Such a national community was grounded in shared spiritual and moral values, in mutual liking and a pervasive sense of unity. A nation always possessed a consciousness of itself as a nation, of its existence as a real people, and in this lay the basis of the sympathy that bound the members of a nation together. The people "in their simple existence" were at the same time like earth that needed to be enriched by a great leader. It was this leader "who generates the force that moves all hearts and overpowers all souls" (B 5:51). It was this leader who held the chain of a nation's destiny in his hands. And "when the chain of things goes in one long pull through the hands of the Führer he aligns and directs the community toward a goal and propels the people in whom a knowledge of themselves is starting to bud toward a breakthrough into the powers of real existence."

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE DPG

Over the years the DPG's journal promoted this discourse of Germannness, of crisis and struggle, of community and leadership, in a series of articles with titles like "The Reich and the World around it," "Nation and State," "The State and the Community of States," "Party and Union," "Politics and Metaphysics," "The Political as a

Problem for Philosophy," and a plethora of reviews of books with similar titles. The philosophers united in the DPG were, of course, not the only ones who concerned themselves with this quadrilateral of concepts and who explicated their political engagement in terms of this particular set of mediating concepts. We have already seen that Heidegger, who was never a member of the DPG, would also make use of those concepts. The question is then what particular application the DPG gave to those crucial notions. In order to answer that question, it is helpful to look at the philosophical assumptions of the two presidents of the society before 1933: Bruno Bauch himself and the Leipzig psychologist Felix Krueger.

Bauch's philosophical thinking is permeated by a conservatism that also characterizes his political outlook. In summarizing his philosophical work later in life, Bauch would speak of German idealism as its systematic and historical basis. At the same time, he denounced not only the "dumb materialism" of the nineteenth century but also "the shoddy theologically inspired philosophizing" of Kierkegaard and his followers, who had babbled of a breakdown of idealism, and the "systematic insufficiency" of Nietzsche and those who aped him in saying that the will to systematization revealed a lack of intellectual integrity. Without noticing that any Nietzschean would have read his words as a piece of irony, Bauch wrote: "The will to systematization is not a lack of integrity, but a will to truth itself and thus integrity to the point of the most radical ruthlessness" (p. 227).[37]

The world was for Bauch not an array of independently given objects that come to be known by means of multiple, shifting experiences. While he allowed that there was an objectively existing world that contained both real physical things and unreal mathematical entities, he also argued that its constituents did not exist on their own, as "the failed part of Kant's doctrine of the thing-in-itself" had taught. Bauch said that the objectivity and real existence of things was grounded, rather, in their relation to truth. Truth constituted both the objects and our knowledge of them. For objects were determined only by concepts that were themselves unsaturated and, when saturated, formed judgments that aimed at truth. "Only in the correct judgment are truth and the object grasped. A judgement is correct when it is directed towards truth and the object" (pp. 242–243). The objects, concepts, and categories that con-

stituted the world in true judgments were, furthermore, part of a larger totality, which Bauch entitled "the Idea":

> What we call the world is nothing without the Idea and the Idea nothing without the world . . . As the nexus of things, which has its ground in the Idea, the world is a cosmos, not a chaos, borne and permeated by order and law, and therefore accessible to thought and action, not removed from them. (p. 256)

Besides the objects of theoretical knowledge, there also existed a realm of objective values. In the assumption of such values he saw himself at one with the great systematic thinkers of the past, but once more at odds with Nietzsche and his followers. Plato's form of the good, Augustine's belief in the unity of the one, the true, and the good in the idea of God, Kant's kingdom of ends, he said, all expressed a belief in the totality of values. But none of these philosophers developed an explicit theory of value. That came from Hermann Lotze, the teacher of Wilhelm Windelband, who in turn had passed it on to Heinrich Rickert and Bauch. For Lotze, values constituted a third, timeless realm, which he postulated to coexist with the temporal realms of sensory perception and physical reality. Lotze had argued that human beings could proceed from their subjective impressions to an understanding of the objective, external world only through the mediation of a third realm. Nietzsche, of course, also spoke of values, but in a more critical vein, disdaining the idea of an unchanging realm of values. Values were for him human and temporal creations, and he was thus as much a critic of the philosophy of value as himself a philosopher in that tradition. It was, in any case, in the form that Lotze had given it that the philosophy of value was to become a major branch of German philosophy in the 1920s, and it was in this form that Bauch adopted it.

Bauch considered his own contribution to this theory to be the discovery that values, like the objects of theoretical knowledge, were not simply a plurality but stood in relations and were objective only in this relatedness. In the realm of values, too, there obtained system and unity. The unifying idea was once more that of truth. The idea that truth is itself a value Bauch had inherited from his teachers. Windelband had been the first to speak of truth-

values, a term that Rickert had subsequently incorporated into his theory of knowledge and Gottlob Frege had used to construct a theory of meaning.[38] But truth was for Bauch not just one value among others—it was the central value, since it formed a bridge between theoretical and practical philosophy. "Truth as a theoretical value is the foundation of all understanding and all science. But as such a foundation truth must encircle also all the domains of value, and not only the domains of being" (p. 278). In his major work, appropriately called *Wahrheit, Wert und Wirklichkeit* (Truth, Value, and Reality), Bauch summarized his philosophy by means of the three concepts that make up the title of his book. He wrote: "Because truth as the totality of that which is valid constitutes total reality through the structural form of the concept, it also makes the realization of value first possible."[39] Totality, integration, system, and unity were indeed Bauch's central philosophical concern. The notion of *Ganzheit* (wholeness) is integral to philosophy itself, which, unlike empirical science, is concerned with "the intensive element of totality as such, with the systematic, not the aggregative character of totality, its order, and structure."[40] Bauch finally wrote that reality is to be understood in terms of the Fregean distinction of concept and object, requiring completion in the notion of Idea. "Therefore the Idea is a complete whole, whereas the concept is an incomplete whole. In the affinity of concepts the Idea unfolds itself as the unity of concepts . . . This affinity makes it [the concept] an organ in the organism of the Idea as the total whole of the infinite totality."[41]

Bauch's philosophical work is characterized by an abstractness that makes its political implications less than evident. Both Bauch himself and his followers were convinced of the political bearing of that work, seeing it above all as an expression of patriotic thought and Germanic mentality.[42] For some, an affinity to "old-Germanic" thought was manifested through its adherence to the idea of organic unity and to the theory of objective value, which allowed for the possibility of tragic heroism.[43] Though such readings were meant by the interpreters to suggest closeness between Bauch's philosophy and National Socialism, Bauch did not in fact see himself dependent on any party ideology. In 1929, in any case, he wrote that his goal was to help his nation and his people philosophically: "That I have tried, indebted only to reason and to it alone,

but not to any political party. I have never belonged to one in my whole life and will never belong to one."[44] Still he eventually came to maintain in 1933 that his philosophical system, in particular the theory of objective value, was indeed the appropriate and the only possible philosophical foundation of the Nazi system.[45]

Felix Krueger, who presided over the DPG from 1927 to 1933, shared many of Bauch's philosophical assumptions. He was also deeply motivated in his work by nationalistic ideals. Born in 1874 he belonged to the same generation as Bauch, had a similarly affluent background, and also came from the German east. He was the son of a factory owner in Posen, now Poznan, a city that at the time was occupied by Prussia and became Polish in 1918.[46] There is no doubt that Krueger's passionate nationalism, like Bauch's, was stirred up or at least reinforced by the creation of a Polish state that incorporated former German territories. After the First World War, Krueger engaged himself politically through the Fichte Society of 1914. In 1920 he founded the Leipzig branch of that society as well as a local Fichte Academy devoted to adult education from the society's folkish perspective. He subsequently also served as vice-president of the Fichte Society's national organization.[47]

Krueger initially studied philosophy in Munich with Theodor Lipps and Hans Cornelius and wrote his dissertation on "The Concept of Absolute Value as the Basic Notion of Moral Philosophy." He then moved to Leipzig where he became a student at Wilhelm Wundt's famous institute for experimental psychology. Despite his professional concentration on psychology, Krueger never lost his philosophical interests. While both he and his teacher engaged in extensive experimental work in psychology, they both adhered to that older understanding of psychology for which there was still no sharp boundary from philosophy. After a number of appointments at various German and foreign universities, Krueger finally became Wundt's successor in 1917, both in his professorial position and as director of his institute. Philosophically Krueger, like Bauch, felt an affinity to German idealism, believed in the theory of objective values, and most of all like Bauch was preoccupied with the idea of organic unity. The difference between them was simply that Bauch pursued these concerns from the perspective of philosophy, whereas Krueger was interested in them as a psychologist and saw wholeness as more central than value.

The concept that linked the fields of philosophy and psychology for Krueger was that of *Ganzheit.* In contrast to the empiricist philosophers and their successors in psychology, he was convinced that the mind was by no means an additive unity but that it formed an organic whole. He denied that the facts of the mind could be comprehended through an analytic and atomistic psychology that tried to understand them as an association of individual ideas. His views intersected here in certain respects with those of the gestalt theory of William Stern and Wolfgang Köhler, but Krueger rejected their work as too mechanistic.

Krueger argued that the gestalt theorists had failed to see that the holistic character of perceptions and intentions could be explained only if one assumed an underlying wholeness in the organism. Wholeness thus became for him an ontological phenomenon, one going beyond the boundaries of psychology. Wholeness manifested itself at different ontologial levels: at the physical and the biological level, in psychological processes, in social organization, and even in mathematics and logic. Given the supposed pervasiveness of the phenomenon, it is not surprising that Krueger did not believe that the notion of wholeness could be fully defined.

What made such a notion even more questionable was the fact that wholeness was in his eyes not only an ontological and theoretical category, but also normative and moral. Metaphysics, psychology, and ethics came together at this point:

> Being structured is not only something that in a determinable manner underlies certain experiences as their precondition; it is also something which in more than one sense is required. Higher organisms can become immediately aware of this demand as a directedness toward mental structures that ought to be realized and maintained. (B 6:116–117)

Certain moral conclusions followed directly from this assumption, in particular that organic social communities were to be preferred to individualistic societies. The fundamental problem of the modern world was indeed the problem of social division: "What is alive becomes formless; it threatens to fall apart, because the parts separate themselves off and step out of the whole of the associations to which they really belong as inseparable members. That is the typical reason for life-threatening crises, the cultural, the social, and

the personal ones" (B 6:135). The modern west was threatened by chaos, and inferior races would gain the upper hand if human existence was not given a new structure. "But the greater the danger, the more necessary are the powers of order, of the creation of symbols, of spiritual leadership" (B 6:139). Those powers would strive for that "which is most characteristic for all life and where all essential community is rooted which is the wholeness that is demanded by inner form."

THE DPG'S MEMBERSHIP

Bauch's preoccupation with the theory of objective value and Krueger's preoccupation with the idea of organic wholeness had a strong influence on the DPG's ideology. This does not mean that all its members were equally concerned with the two notions, but they were common assumptions of many of those members and they lay behind the terms with which the DPG entered the political arena in 1933. Its members also shared to a surprising extent a commitment to German idealism and specifically to the philosophical ideas of Fichte. Even more of a uniting bond was that the DPG attracted from the beginning a predominantly nationalistic and conservative membership. Its program was, however, wide enough to appeal both to conservative nationalists and to budding national socialists.

When Bauch founded the DPG in 1917, it was a small splinter group within the philosophical field, one of many organizations that had sprung into existence at the end of the war. In due course its membership increased and, by the time the Nazis were ready to take power, it was growing quite rapidly. In its annual report the DPG declared in 1937: "the increase in our membership that began in October 1932 has to our pleasure steadily continued. We have succeeded in gaining as new members numerous well-known philosophers from inside the country and from abroad" (B 11:113). By 1933 the society had local chapters in eleven major cities. That made it roughly comparable in size to the older and more established Kant Society.

Complete membership lists no longer exist, but we can gain a good impression of who belonged to the society by looking at the editorial advisers listed in the DPG journal. The first issue gave sixteen names, of whom five were to remain listed for the next twenty

years. These were, apart from Bauch himself, the philosophers Nicolai Hartmann, Heinz Heimsoeth, Hermann Schwarz, and Max Wundt. Max Hildebert Böhm, Paul Häberlin, Alexius Meinong, Hans Pichler, Walter Schmied-Kowarzik, and Heinrich Scholz were listed in the first number but dropped off sooner or later. Others were added at later dates, such as Julius Binder, Hans Freyer, Hermann Glockner, Felix Krueger, Theodor Litt, Dieter Mahnke, Heinrich Rickert, Erich Rothacker, Othmar Spann, Rudolf Unger, and Heinrich Wölfflin, all mentioned as advisers in 1935. In later years the names of Arnold Gehlen, Eduard Baumgarten, C. A. Emge, Hans F. K. Günther, and H. R. G. Günther were added. The growing list of names indicates clearly that the DPG finally succeeded in absorbing almost the whole German philosophical establishment and that, in addition, it attracted representative figures from neighboring disciplines. Apart from such notorious characters as Hans Günther, one of the main theoreticians of Nazi racism and author of numerous antisemitic writings, the leaders of the DPG were almost all respected and respectable academics, holders of chairs in major German universities, and most of them were academic philosophers. Many survived the war and continued their careers (some only after a hiatus during which they were barred from teaching), and some of them (Freyer, Gehlen, Hartmann, Rothacker) became well-known and influential figures in postwar Germany. In retrospect it is impossible to gauge what motivated these philosophers to join and remain in the DPG and to what extent they shared the political ideology that dominated the association. But it is difficult to imagine that men like Hartmann, Freyer, and Gehlen, who were long-term, prominent members of the DPG, did not to some extent identify with its ideological assumptions. Because they joined the society long before 1933, it is impossible to explain their participation as stemming from political exigency.

Those who joined the DPG belonged for the most part to the generation shaped by the experiences of the First World War and its aftermath. Even at the start, Bauch managed to bring some notable figures of the older generation into his society. One was Heinrich Rickert, Bauch's own former teacher. Another was Gottlob Frege, a retired colleague of Bauch's at Jena from whom he had derived some of his central philosophical concepts. Frege died in 1925, but Rickert lived on to witness the DPG's triumph in 1933. Both men

still had articles published in the DPG's journal. Frege, in particular, used the journal to print his final series of papers, "The Thought," "Thought Connections," and "Negation."

Both Rickert and Frege began their lives as political liberals, but both were driven to the right by the events of the First World War.[48] Frege confided in his diary in 1924 that he had once thought of himself as a liberal and was an admirer of Bismarck, but his heroes now were General Ludendorff and Adolf Hitler. This was after the two had tried to topple the elected democratic government in a coup in November 1923. In his diary Frege also used all his analytic skills to devise plans for expelling the Jews from Germany and for suppressing the Social Democrats.[49] Intellectual gravediggers have been busy trying to find the roots of such political statements in the soil of Frege's logico-philosophical writings. Similar digs could, no doubt, be made in the work of Rickert to discover links between his final political commitment and his professional work as a philosopher. That there might be such connections can, of course, not be ruled out on principle. But one thing to consider is that both Rickert and Frege did their important and innovative work at a time when they thought of themselves as liberals and certainly long before they became members of the DPG. Someone might still argue for the existence of hidden links that the two men were not aware of at the time. But again one has to fall back on associative interpretations, free reconstructions, and "deep" readings that are untestable and hence always open to challenge. It is quite possible that someone preoccupied with ideas of a philosophical or logical order may tie them to a supposed need for political order. Such a transition must be based on analogy, as I have said, and would as such be optional. It is equally true that a philosopher or a logician may be just as impressed by the lack of analogy between the two situations. It is, furthermore, not incoherent for him to believe in conceptual necessity and political freedom. In any case, unless we have clear evidence that a philosopher or a logician has actually used his professional knowledge for this or that political purpose, we have no reason to say that he *must* have used it in one particular way.

That Rickert and Frege associated with DPG and that, in their final years, they leaned to the political views of the extreme right, is important on other grounds, however. It has often been said that right-wing politics in Germany after the First World War was the

product of a general hostility to reason and that it was associated with irrationalism in philosophy.[50] This irrationalism has also frequently been considered the essential link between Heidegger's philosophy and his politics. It is certainly true that Heidegger criticized rationalism and that he subjected appeals to reason to withering attacks (though he always added that he was not an irrationalist). But these facts are insufficient for establishing an intrinsic connection between irrationalism, on the one hand, and right-wing and Nazi political views, on the other. The assumption of such a link may be refuted by the cases of Rickert and Frege. Though both men joined the DPG and subscribed to its political program, they also believed in the power of reason and strove to apply it in their philosophical work. Frege and Rickert were, moreover, by no means singular. Other German philosophers, such as Bauch, Hartmann, and Gehlen, similarly believed in science and reason and rejected the criticisms of philosophical antirationalists like Heidegger; at the same time, they committed themselves to Nazi beliefs. Analyses that are based on the assumption of an intrinsic connection between irrationalism and National Socialism fall short of the mark because they explain little.

5

Nation and Race

The philosophical and political goal that the German Philosophical Society set for itself was to elucidate the distinctive German character, to determine the identity of the German nation and people, and to spell out Germany's singular mission in the world. The first issue of its journal asked, "What is German?" Some of the writers who addressed it thought that the answer required a "science of the German national character" or a "comprehensive science of Germanness."[1] Such a science, they said, would have to include a "psychology of the German spirit," an "anthropology of the German race," and a "philosophy of the nation." It would have to define the concept of "people," the significance of a nation in world history, and the ethics of national duty.[2] They considered it especially important to turn to the past to elicit a sharper picture of what they called "the essence of the German spirit." And they expected particularly useful contributions to that picture from a study of the history of German philosophy.[3]

Such questioning would hardly have seemed urgent if the answers had been obvious. The identity of the German nation was anything but self-evident. Were the Dutch, the Swiss, the people of Alsace-Lorraine, or the Austrians to be regarded as German? At some time or other in the past they might have been considered so, and for some, such as the Austrians, the question was still being debated. Those who were searching for national identity were in fact looking for a principle that could perform a dual function. It was meant to determine both who belonged to the nation and who

did not. The principle was to be both a law of inclusion and one of exclusion. It was meant to characterize both the German and the un-German.

As Fichte had originally defined it and others still argued in the 1920s and 1930s, the distinctive feature of the Germans was their primordialness *(Ursprünglichkeit)*. The Germans were a primordial people because they were still living in their ancient home, still speaking their original language, and still capable of primordial thinking. Another, later understanding defined the Germans as the central people, "the heart of nations" and "the source of European rebirth." A third view described them as the pure people—pure in race and blood and hence morally and intellectually pure. To each of those characterizations corresponded a principle of exclusion. In Fichte's original characterization, the French and the other "Mediterraneanized" nations were the paradigmatically un-German people. In the portrayal of Germans as the central people, the English and the Russians became the marginalized people. In the depiction of the Germans as pure, the Jews were the characteristically un-German group. In the debates after the First World War, the various accounts were often employed in combination, whereby the emphasis was sometimes more on inclusion and at other times more on exclusion. While some worried over "what is German," others concerned themselves more with determining "what is un-German."

The uncertainties of this debate were increased by the fact that some of its participants saw the Germans simply as a subdivision of a larger and more significant grouping, which they called Aryan, Germanic, or Nordic. None of these larger terms, however, was any more clearly defined than the term "German" itself, and the groups of people included were certainly not the same. The shifting definitions and the changing lines of demarcation point to the conclusion that what mattered most was that there should exist a sharp boundary between a privileged and an unprivileged group.

Racism played a peculiar role in this syndrome of convictions. As a social attitude and as a related set of beliefs, racism can of course serve many different political purposes. In the United States, for instance, it has been used to define a hierarchy of the various ethnic groups that make up the country and to defend economic and class advantages. In the Germany of the 1930, racism served over-

whelmingly as a support for German nationalism, for the belief that the Germans were a privileged nation. National Socialism was, as its name suggests, a form of nationalism, and it drew on racial concepts to specify the distinctive German character and its mission in the world. That claim is in direct conflict with the often heard assertion that National Socialism was essentially social Darwinism or specifically antisemitism. It is certainly true that Hitler spoke often and viciously of "the Jew" as a "parasite, a sponger, who like a harmful bacillus spreads out more and more" and that "where he appears the host people die out sooner or later."[4] It is true that he said: "All that is not race in this world is trash."[5] And it is also true that he claimed to have learned from the First World War that "life is a continuous, cruel struggle which ultimately serves the preservation of the race" and "some must perish so that others can live."[6] But these statements cannot settle the question of whether racism or nationalism mattered more to the Nazis. Antisemitism, racism, and social Darwinism served ultimately as exclusionary principles in the Nazi worldview. They served as support for the belief in German superiority. Antisemitism, racism, and social Darwinism, one might also say, were the negative complements to the affirmative notion of German nationalism. This is clear in *Mein Kampf* where Hitler identifies pan-Germanism as his primary political idea. There he also describes how this pan-Germanism produced his dislike for Habsburg dominion, how it made him pro-German in feeling rather than a loyal subject of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and how it was the source of his antipathy toward all forms of internationalism. *Mein Kampf* traces a clear genealogy from pan-Germanism through a hatred of the ethnic pluralism of Vienna to antisemitism. Hitler's own development, if we can take it as paradigmatic, suggests that antisemitism and racism were subsidiary to his belief in the privilege of the German people.[7]

Given the crimes the Nazis committed against the Jews and other minority groups, it may be difficult to accept that racial theory was for them only a means to justify their belief in German privilege. But unless we credit that, we will not understand why philosophers who had no sympathy for biological racism could feel in tune with the aspirations of National Socialism. Most German philosophers, in fact, were antinaturalistic and antiscientistic in outlook and found biological racism difficult or even impossible to accept.

Though many of them were antisemites, they justified their prejudices generally in cultural rather than biological terms. The language of biology smacked too much of all those foreign, English, empiricist ideas they were keen to reject. Where the idea of racial purity did make its entrance into philosophy, it was most frequently either in mythologized form, as Alfred Rosenberg or Hermann Schwarz saw it, or in idealistic clothing, as Bruno Bauch and Max Wundt saw it.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF NATIONS

Of all the philosophical attempts to devise a metaphysics of Germanness in the period after the First World War, two stand out as the most sustained and detailed. They were conceived by Hermann Schwarz and Max Wundt, both founding members of the DPG who remained active in the society throughout its existence and whose writings can be found from the first to the last volume of the DPG's journal. Before turning to their elaborations, however, it is necessary once more to emphasize that the ground had been well prepared for what they were trying to do.

Wilhelm Wundt is remembered today as one of the founders of modern psychology. He was also the father of the philosopher Max Wundt, who helped Bruno Bauch start the DPG. Wilhelm Wundt probably joined the DPG at the urgings of his son and belonged, together with Rickert and Frege, to that older generation who lent respectability to the DPG at the beginning. Like Rickert and Frege, he had been a liberal in his younger years but turned somewhat to the right in old age as a result of the experiences of the war. Throughout his life he remained a humanistically minded internationalist and a political progressive. He shared, as far as we know, none of his son's rabid antisemitism. Like Rickert and Frege, he remained committed to reason.

Yet he made at least one important contribution to the metaphysics of Germanness that his son and Hermann Schwarz were to elaborate. It is to be found in his 1915 book *The Nations and Their Philosophies,* which he meant as a personal contribution to the war effort. In this book Wundt strove to show that each of the warfaring nations had its own characteristic national philosophy, in this way seeking to establish the validity of Germany's motivations. Even at

the height of his patriotic fervor, Wundt nevertheless continued to counsel moderation and completely rejected the goals of German annexationists. Instead he held that "the greatest result which this war should bring us as a reward for the incredible sacrifices which it has imposed on us, is the further expansion of the social reforms that had begun during peacetime" (p. 153).[8]

Wundt's book derived from earlier work on the psychology of nations, which was at best a doubtful undertaking but which, under the conditions of the time, served to lend recognition to all kinds of questionable speculations about the distinctive character of the German nation. Wundt's project of mapping out the psychological characteristics of different nations and races certainly had all the appearance of scholarly responsibility, but it was based on the quite untested assumption that nations were real wholes, organic unities with identifiable qualities. In tune with the tradition of Herder and Fichte, Wundt also assumed that a nation was primarily defined through its language and that for this reason a national character would reveal itself most clearly in a nation's poetry and philosophy. Fichte had said that what kind of philosophy one has shows what kind of man one is. Wundt in turn applied this dictum freely to whole nations. Fichte, he said, "understood more clearly than any of his precursors the idea that the national state is a unit of will that stands above the individual person" (p. 105). For that reason he drew special attention to Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation*, which "as the finest product of German idealism should not be missing from any library of a cultured German next to the works of Goethe and Schiller" (p. 96).

In Wundt's psychological view, the main function of philosophy was to create for a people a shared worldview out of the scientific consciousness of its time and its moral impulses. Hence he thought that one could derive the specific metaphysical and moral character of a nation from its characteristic philosophy. So he felt free to analyze the French, English, and German national characters on the basis of their philosophies and then to derive from this conclusions about the moral justification and likely outcome of their political and military struggles.

As far as the French were concerned, Wundt was sure that Descartes was their most distinctive philosopher: "The same wavering between dogmatism and skepticism is not only characteristic of

Descartes but a pervasive quality of the French philosophers" (p. 25). Eighteenth-century French materialism and nineteenth-century French positivism were built on this Cartesian ambivalence, as was the specifically French attitude toward ethical questions where egoistic and sensualist theories of happiness were in constant battle with the moral demands of French patriotism. At the end of this historical development, according to Wundt, there stands Comte's altruism with its motto "To live for others." Quite different were the English, for whom empiricism and skepticism had been characteristic since the middle ages. In their worldview—manifested clearly in the work of Hobbes—"egoism is the foundation of all morality and the egoistic struggle of all against all is the primordial condition of society" (p. 43). From Locke and Hume to Bentham and Spencer, the same concerns were expressed over and over again. No European nation, in fact, had such a clearly identifiable philosophy as the English—a philosophy that found its most mature expression in Herbert Spencer's utilitarian egoism, with his motto "Man versus the state" (p. 68).

Historically the most recent, the most developed, and the most profound national philosophy was that of the Germans. Of this Wundt had no doubt. Their characteristic system of thought was the idealism whose foundations had been laid by Leibniz and elaborated by Kant, Hegel, and Fichte. The significance of this idealism lay in the fact that it recognized "the communally active forces of the will as the creative powers of moral life" (p. 93). And in this way the German idealists, in contrast to the French and the English, had come to recognize the true connection between the individual and the whole.

One may well consider such an effort to press philosophical ideas into national schemata simplistic. Wundt's attempt to define national character can succeed only if philosophers and philosophical ideas that fail to fit the desired pattern are omitted (such as the French anti-Cartesians, the French spiritualists, the Cambridge Platonists, the British Hegelians); if the adopted schemata are kept very loose (such as the French wavering between dogmatism and skepticism); and if philosophers are mercilessly forced into a predetermined pattern. Of Nietzsche, for instance, Wundt can brazenly say that "perhaps without knowing it and certainly without saying so loudly, he has brought German idealism to its rebirth." Admit-

tedly, in order to see that one must first separate the philosopher from the poet and artist, set aside Nietzsche's baroque excesses, ignore his constant jumping from the sublime to the ugly or his measureless intensity, and above all understand that Nietzsche's revaluation of good and evil was "not meant to apply to the positive qualities which the moral consciousness of all ages has considered the highest" (p. 118). With such childish sleights-of-hand, Nietzsche could be made to serve the purposes of German idealism and nationalism.

What gives such oversimplifications a sinister touch is the fact that supposedly historical evidence is used to draw objectionable normative conclusions. Not only are facts taken to show that each nation has a unified character and has therefore developed a unified national philosophy, but it is also implied that forms of philosophical thought that do not fit the pattern are alien to the nation. Supposed historical evidence is thus made an arbiter for what is truly French or English or German. With this we are not far from declaring other kinds of thinking un-French, un-English, or un-German. The criteria are, moreover, meant to apply not only to the past. It is not simply that German idealism has until now been the unique German philosophy, but as characteristic of the nation it must also guide thought in the future. New forms of philosophizing are thereby in advance marked as un-German. There is another, a third kind of force at work in Wundt's account. Insisting on the universality and objectivity of truth he *grades* the various national philosophies. The historical order that generated first French, then English, and finally German philosophy is also an order of ascendence. Even though he believes that he can be fair to the ideas of other nations, Wundt affirms that German idealism is the philosophy that has best proven itself in the changing fates of individuals and nations.

A few years later, while stating that no single nation can fulfill the cultural mission of the whole human species, Wundt says that Germany nevertheless occupies a singular place. Acknowledging the need for a regeneration of world culture, he declares that "only a transformation which brings an idealism to power that is the exact opposite of the now dominant egoistic utilitarianism . . . can bring a new cultural future."[9] Only the German people have given evidence of such a transformation, as far as Wundt is concerned.

They must fulfill a special mission not for themselves alone but as an example for all other nations.

Wundt's psychology of nations thus helped to provide a veneer of respectability to further work on the metaphysics of Germanness. It also helped to promote and entrench confusion between historical facts and moral norms. That is, it encouraged the thought that one could derive what the German nation should be from what it had been in the past, that one could derive what is truly German from considering one or another product of German culture. In addition, Wundt's discussion drew the attention of later theorists to a problem to which there was no easy solution: relativism. If every nation had its own worldview and its own characteristic philosophy, it seemed possible to conclude that each such worldview and philosophy was valid only for that nation. But this conclusion conflicted with what was precisely the major goal of all theories of Germanness, to prove that the Germans were superior to other nations.

TRANSCENDENTAL NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Hermann Schwarz, who was born in Düren in the Rhineland in 1864, had studied mathematics under Georg Cantor at Halle and obtained his doctorate with a dissertation on *The Theory of Order Types*. In 1904 he became a lecturer in philosophy at Halle (where he was a colleague of Bruno Bauch), specializing at first in epistemology, then in ethics, and finally in the philosophy of religion. By 1910 he was a full professor at Greifswald, where he served as rector of the university in 1922, retiring in 1933. Schwarz was the first German philosopher to come out in public support of the Nazis—which he did in 1923. In the final years of his life he became an advocate of the German Faith movement *(Deutsche Glaubensbewegung)*, which propagated a Nordic form of religiosity cleansed of all Jewish ingredients of Christianity. In his long career he was also the editor of a philosophical journal and wrote more than twenty books, which extended from traditional areas of philosophy to an attempt in the years before his death in 1942 to lay the foundations of "transcendental National Socialism."[10]

On epistemological questions Schwarz took a rather sober view. He considered himself a critical realist who freely assumed that ob-

jects exist outside human consciousness, and in this he set himself clearly apart from his associates Bruno Bauch and Max Wundt. Their kind of epistemological idealism was for Schwarz the result of a confusion between the contents and the objects of human consciousness. Any kind of ontological monism or holism was anathema, for the world, he said, consisted of a multiplicity of separate real objects. "There exist relations of similarity," he wrote in a critique of holism, "relations of interaction, the interconnections of biological life. But in none of these interconnections do we find real unity or totality" (p. 80).[11] This was true for him at all ontological levels, including human social life where he saw stronger tendencies toward strife and disunity than to community and friendship: "Creatures seem to exist with one another only in order to be against one another" (p. 81). This did not necessarily mean the struggle of every single individual against all others, but it did establish the existence of narrow social circles with no unifying spirituality. If such selfishness was to be overcome, there was the ethical problem of how to discover a unifying principle.

That principle could not be the God of the Christians. Neither theism nor pantheism nor atheism was strictly right. Schwarz agreed with Meister Eckhart and Jacob Böhme that the initial "ungiven" was not god but a godhead that lacked all features and that "essenced" without existing. The godhead's aim was to turn itself into God, but being full of negativity it generated instead the world of individual things. "The text of the divine writes itself out of the featureless depth and inscribes itself in the properties of the individual thing, which thus becomes the page for that text" (p. 79). The world existed in fact before God. But beyond its being lay the godhead's striving for God. Still following Eckhart's thought, Schwarz declared the human soul to be the place that the godhead had created for its divine realization. God was really the small spark that, in the words of Eckhart, was at the bottom of the soul.

This mystical conception of things bore immediately on Schwarz's ethical views. When the godhead comes alive in the human soul, he said, it generates the appearance of values. Values do not exist as objective realities—as Bauch and others were saying—nor are they merely subjective states of the soul. They are expressions and realizations of the godhead in us. When human beings live their lives in pursuit of such values, they can finally achieve

unity in themselves and between themselves—a unity that a simply natural life always lacks. The highest values are the ones that tie an individual to his people and his community. Christian altruism, which had taught universal love as its highest value, was in contrast a dead idea. For "humanity in the abstract is a dead concept, to which no altruistic, social, idealistic liking, no feelings of kinship and friendship, responds" (p. 125). The life of the divine wanted to create itself precisely in the natural relations and the natural closeness of souls. "Thus rises the idea of a national culture, and the concept of a universal human culture fades away" (p. 124). In families, tribes, and nations, connections of blood are experienced as feelings of kinship and pride in a common descent and as a separation from alien kind. The most compelling form possible for the realization of social unity in historical life was "the form of the love for one's country saturated in folkish brother love" (p. 122). Mysticism thus issued, finally, into the folkish myth.

Even after he reached retirement age in 1933, Hermann Schwarz continued his efforts: "Precisely because of our National Socialism we cannot do without German mysticism and German idealism," he wrote in 1934.[12] Looking at the history of the nineteenth century, he saw a struggle between nationalism and socialism which Nazism was now trying to overcome. Fortunately, "the spoken word of the Führer has had mystical force. Adolf Hitler has awakened us to the consciousness of a common blood and a fateful belonging together in the community of blood" (p. 43). Hitler's words were indeed those of a third, German testament written into the soul. He had defined National Socialism as the immediate decision to experience nationhood through the ties of common blood. Conceptually and biologically, the notion of "blood" remained changeable and hard to pin down. "Here are tasks to solve for which the concept of blood must be supplemented" (p. 21). Rosenberg's mysticique of the "racial soul," while pointed in the right direction, was philosophically unsatisfactory because of its assumption of a superindividual soul. Hence one would have to look for another solution, transcendental National Socialism. The unity of the ideals of nationalism and socialism could be achieved only in the "experience of folkdom," which was not just a subjective human emotion, a psychological phenomenon, but something that had objective value. For in the experience of a common blood a

nation could be moved in a religious way, to feel a divine depth in life. The historical decision for those who had lost faith in Jehovah was either materialism, liberalism, and bolshevism or the religious autonomy of the German soul. That autonomy could be grasped only in terms of mystical and idealist thought.

The core of the German folkish experience was the idea of honor, said Schwarz, which meant that one should be master of one's own condition, including one's own inner condition. Such a concern with honor would in turn lead to faithfulness to one's own kind, to a folkish unity that was borne by the genius of its leader.

> The folkish ideal of the personality is tuned to labor, performance, sacrifice, war. . . . The value of the rush to fight, of sacrifice and unbreakable cohesion, of iron discipline in the faithfulness to the beloved leader storms here through the soul. In the community of the trench war one feels united in living and dying and one wants to turn the whole German people into such a trench war community.[13]

Since National Socialism required a grounding in German philosophy, since the folkish values under which the nation was to be unified called for philosophical validation, since the experience of common blood needed to be explicated in the philosophical language of mysticism and idealism, since the German identity, the specific German mission, the essence of Germanness, could only be spelled out in philosophical terms, German philosophy would of necessity occupy a central place in the new world Schwarz saw appearing. To answer the question of Germanness meant to identify the specific consciousness of German philosophy. But what was the character of that consciousness? What was specifically German in German philosophy? Unfortunately, German thinking had again and again subjected itself to foreign influence, alienated itself from its own true nature, and thus betrayed itself. At three points in history, "foreign spirit had broken into the German essence" (p. 7).[14] Each time the German spirit eventually overcame its influence and went back to its own innermost nature. On the first occasion, foreign ideas had been imposed by Christianity. Eventually German mysticism transformed that influence into a truly German thinking. The second penetration of foreign ideas occurred when French rationalism and English empiricism flooded over the German soul in the seven-

teenth century. Leibniz's philosophy, the thought of the romantics and idealists, as well as Nietzsche's thinking, had erected against those influences "a high spiritual construction of the true German kind." A third invasion of alien thinking occurred through the growth of the natural sciences. Positivism and a flat realism gained a stranglehold at the broadest levels of German society. One could almost speak here of the fall of the German spirit: "The soul of our people became thus an easy prey to that destructive intellectualist spirituality with which Jewish thought ate into all areas of culture, economics, and politics" (p. 8). There followed the great cleansing process by which "National Socialism has freed us from the intellectualist poison. Thus a truly German philosophy could awake once more and renew the flight of which Fichte had once spoken."

Truly German philosophy, Schwarz said, was characterized by its concern with a metaphysics of depth and by its dynamic nature. In fact, only in the German people did the light of a becoming universe continue to burn. In all other nations the metaphysical drive had atrophied: there was no spiritual future. "The German people have become what the Greeks once were, *the* human nation to whom the meaning of the universe is linked" (p. 38). The Germans had the most difficult and highest task in the world, to take in the breath of the universe, to renew themselves in their struggle with themselves and with other nations until one day "history takes on a German shape."

THE IDEALISM OF RACE

In contrast to such constructions, Max Wundt undertook to devise a metaphysics of Germanness that was firmly based on a commitment to just the kind of idealism that Schwarz had rejected. Unlike Schwarz he was a full-fledged idealist as well as a Lutheran—and most of all, a virulent antisemite. For Schwarz idealism was attractive only as a moral lesson; Christianity was interesting only when it was cleansed of its belief in a transcendent god; and antisemitism was a marginal issue. Though he spoke of the poison of Jewish intellectualism, his characterization of what it meant to be German did not revolve around the exclusionary aspect of the idea and was not constructed around the thought that the Jews were the para-

digmatically un-German people. But Wundt's writings were permeated by a profound and painful hatred of everything Jewish. "The Jewish view of the world," he would write, "stands opposed to the folkish world view as its total antithesis."[15]

Wundt, who was born in 1879 the son of the psychologist Wilhelm Wundt, studied classics and philosophy in Leipzig, Freiburg, Berlin, and Munich. In 1907 he became a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Strasburg and, after military service during the First World War, taught for a short time at Marburg. In 1919 he was appointed as Rudolf Eucken's successor at Jena and thus became a colleague of Bruno Bauch's. Ten years later he moved to the University of Tübingen and remained there until 1945, when he was suspended and eventually barred from further teaching. With Bauch he shared not only political assumptions but also a deep attraction to idealism, though, unlike the latter, he was primarily a historian of idealism and made no attempt to recast it in modern terms. Insofar as he is remembered at all, it is for his writings on the history of Greek and German philosophy. These include works on Greek ethics and the Greek view of the world, on Plato and Plotinus, on German philosophy in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, specifically Fichte.[16] On the systematic side of Wundt's writing lie the pamphlets and books in which he elaborated his understanding of the metaphysics of Germanness and a folkish worldview. In these texts he proved himself far to the right of his father; espousing rabidly nationalist and racist ideas as well as conservative and even reactionary social policies. It is no surprise that he became an outspoken and active supporter of the Nazis.

That he should be so much in the grip of these political questions was probably a result of his experiences in and after the war. In 1925 he wrote that the most pressing task in this time of "deepest humiliation" was for Germany to define its own identity as a Volk. While the German state that Bismarck founded had stood up under the pressures of war, Germany still had to become a nation, so that "all shall be one and shall feel and know that they are" (p. 6).[17] More than a natural or conscious community, a nation required consciousness of itself, to be captured by the idea of its own identity. That self-consciousness would have to arise first in single individuals:

> It is here where the leading man intervenes in the forming of the nation. In single great men, the heroes of a nation, the thought of nationhood arises to conscious clarity. They understand the meaning and goal of the national life and direct it to that goal out of the force of their will and the depth of their insight. Such great, leading men are born to people only in great times. They are the times of great need. (p. 21)

Fichte had clearly been such a man. Now a new effort had to be undertaken by new men to bring the nation to self-consciousness. These would have to be spiritual as well as political leaders, for the German mission was a spiritual one and could be defined only in philosophical terms. What distinguished the Germans was precisely their philosophy. The folkish movement, Wundt said, had begun as a fighting movement, but it needed to become deeper, since the task of the folkish movement was in the end nothing less that "the great reflection of the German people on itself" (p. 4).[18]

What view of the world was such a reflection meant to generate? What was "the minimum that every German who subscribes to the German essence must recognize"? (p. 74). The Germans had unfortunately lost their holiest of holies, the basis for any unified view of the world, their metaphysics. They had no shared belief but suscribed indiscriminately to all sorts of ideas. For Wundt it was clear that "the real reason for this lack lies in the German character and in the historical course of events it has brought about. It lies in their faithlessness against themselves of which Germans at all times have been more guilty than any other people" (p. 15). In trying to overcome this condition and in looking for the sources of a German national worldview, we find on the one hand the Aryan faith that some appeal to and, on the other, the rich and varied history of German thought. The faith of the ancient Germanic people, of the Edda, or that of the ancient Persians and Indians was too bloodless, too undeveloped, and too distant from modern life to be of use at the present day. German thinking had also been influenced again and again by foreign ideas: first by Christianity and Greek philosophy, then by the Spaniards, the Italians, the French, and the English. Foreign ideas could not be removed from the German worldview without eliminating most of what makes it valuable, including the works of the great philosophers. What was one to do?

The answer was obviously that one needed to separate those foreign ideas that German ingenuity had assimilated to itself from those that remained mere foreign intrusions. To do this required a principle or rule for distinguishing between what is vital to the German worldview and what is not.

One might legitimately appeal here to the ancient Aryan faith. It was characterized by the fact that it knew no separation between God and the world. Aryan faith held that spirit is the force that determines all reality. There is divine reason. Nature is determined by spirit, the expression of a supersensible realm, a symbol of divine action. Accordingly, in Wundt's view, all ideas are truly German if they conform to this conception of the relation between nature and spirit, even though they may derive from foreign sources. Christianity, which teaches God's reconciliation with the world, could thus be considered a genuine and indispensable component of a German national worldview (at least, that is, the part of Christianity that was cleansed from the characteristically Jewish elements of the Old Testament). Greek philosophy of the classical age, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, as well as Heraclitus and Plotinus, were also akin to genuine German thought and should be preserved. But later Greek thought, the skeptics, cynics, epicureans, and stoics, had to be considered alien. The same held for most of the products of the Roman mind and of those produced by the Romanized nations of Western Europe. "The intellectual world of Western Europe has here proved essentially only destructive; and so we must consider it one of the most dangerous and most hostile powers for the German character" (p. 42). Roman Catholicism, too, was alien to the German spirit, though Luther's form of Christianity was certainly not. Finally and most of all, everything Jewish was un-German, since the Jews were committed to the idea of the separation of God and world.

The German spirit conceived of reality as alive and as a constant becoming, not as fixed. That reality could open itself only to the intuitive reason that German philosophy had claimed as its own, not to a merely abstract kind of understanding. Because the German worldview found life and development everywhere, it grasped reality as a constant struggle. The word of Heraclitus that war is the father of all things was indeed the right characterization of the nature of things. There existed on this view a continuous struggle be-

tween perception and idea, between what is and what ought to be, and out of that tension arose a sense for the tragic nature of life. Sin and salvation were the terms in which such a worldview conceived the world (p. 116).

That view saw the vocation of man not in an egoistic individualism but in duty, faithfulness, honor, respect, and self-control. The individual was insolubly tied to his community. In the sense of honor and the sacrifice to the community, there manifested itself that ultimate German value of heroism (p. 144). In his relation to the community, a German was tied to his people, his state, and his church. The state and the church had, in turn, to be shaped in the spirit of the people. The folkish German state was the people's consciousness of itself. The folkish, German, Protestant church was the consciousness of a people of God. Practical consequences followed from this. The state had to fulfill the conditions of folkish existence. It had to be a state in the Nordic spirit, to foster healthy families with many children, to encourage a militant state of mind and strengthen the military might of the Germans, to concern itself with the eduation of the German people, to acquaint them with the living water of folkish thought. All these measures had to be united into one goal: to bring responsible men to power: "The idea of the Führer must permeate our whole public life" (p. 169). "No healthy state can do without that highest leader who is responsible only to God in his conscience and who is therefore truly by God's grace."

In every respect, the Jewish conception of things was for Wundt opposed to this worldview. The Jews represented the separation of nature and spirit with their destructive materialism. They saw the world as static being, as something to be grasped by abstract concepts. They could not recognize the constant struggle of things and hence the tragic nature of reality. They had no sense of the Christian belief in sin and salvation. Espousing individualism and hence liberalism, democracy, and capitalism, they had brought to Germany the pernicious ideas of late antiquity, its skepticism and epicureanism. They had taken up and spread Roman and Romanized ideas. Through the Roman Catholic church Jewish thought and feeling had even permeated Christendom. And in modern times the Jews had promoted the influx of Western European thought into Germany.

There can be no doubt about Wundt's obsessive fixation on the

Jews. Every thought and every argument leads him back to that topic. But this obsession generates its own difficulties. As an idealist he cannot accept Darwinian theory, which smacks too much of naturalism and materialism. "A world view that is built entirely on the idea of race," he writes in 1925, "will therefore always have something general and pallid about it and cannot reach the determinate expressions of folkish life" (p. 11). Materialism is "strictly spoken an anti-folkish world view, which therefore finds its bearers not accidentally for the most part among Jews." Wundt resolves his dilemma by concluding that races are in fact "spiritual forces that have created bodies for themselves" (p. 90). Plato and Fichte, those great idealists, were indeed the true forerunners of racial theory; they had already recognized that different people have different rank and that their essence and value depend on the degree of purity of their blood; philosophical materialists had generally preached equality.

Wundt disagreed with those who described the Jews as an inferior race. They were, strictly speaking, not a race at all but the result of a particularly strong mixture of all kinds of races, of the Mideastern, the Nordic, even the Mongolian. According to Wundt, they were at best a race of second order, one that had constituted itself over centuries through inbreeding. The real root of Judaism lay not in race but in religion, and the Jews could be understood only if one saw that their religious history was marked by great breaks and disruptions. First there had been the prophets who tried to bring them the living message of God, but the Jews failed to hear the word of God; they hardened themselves and submitted instead to the dead letter of empty ritual. Christ had come, and they rejected him too. They had become a people oblivious of the call of the living God and they thereby lost the true meaning of their existence. Where they had at one time displayed the noble characteristics of trust in God, love of family, faithfulness to tradition and home, and devotion to work, they were now greedy, false, and vengeful. They had become the true children of Satan. "Now the Jewish spirit developed which has ravaged the Germanic people with its diabolical power and which is ravaging it still today, the spirit of depravity, the spirit who rejected the salvation of man and is therefore lost" (p. 187).

Jewish history itself was for Wundt a display of a great folkish

history. It was the tale of a people destined to great things who came to reject their calling. As such, the Jews were a terrible warning to the Germans, a profound lesson of what happens to a people who reject the divine spirit. Since the Germanic people were the chosen bearers of the Christian spirit, since they were destined to preserve that spirit in their worldview, poetry, and art, the devil was particularly active among them. "Two spirits struggle over the soul of the German people, the spirit of Christ and the Jewish spirit" (p. 194). And like no other people the Germans had already fallen prey to the Jewish spirit. But "if we reject Christ, as the Jews have rejected him, then we must share the destiny of the Jews" (p. 195).

For Wundt there remained in all this a puzzle that had also worried his father. If worldviews were expressions of national character, if the Germans had their own distinctive view—that is, if only they could reflect on who they were—if the Jews in turn had their own appropriate worldview and if, indeed, every nation had a view that was true to its nature, why was not the result a form of tolerant relativism? Every nation had its own truth and every nation was justified in its view of the world? Wundt believed, however, that there was no such thing as a folkish truth, that truth itself was eternal and unchanging. Only the forms and patterns through which that truth was recognized could be different. The folkish worldview was a matter of the form that eternal truth took for the German people. But Wundt also thought that not all forms should be assumed to lead equally deeply into the essence of truth. "Only that national worldview can have a claim to real validity which has struggled through to a definite form that derives from the essence of truth itself" (p. 66). To create such a worldview was the task of the Germans; they alone had grasped the essence of truth most fully and in its greatest depth. For that reason the Germans were privileged in what happened to be their natural and national inheritance.[19]

In the last phase of his development, Wundt went on to say that even though the Germans formed a distinct racial and cultural group, one could still find among them fine racial and cultural differentiations. Hence it should be possible to distinguish the different racial combinations of the various German philosophers and to see how each such combination had led to a distinctive embodiment of the essence of truth. Wundt took on the task of studying the great

German philosophers in order to determine to what extent each of them was more Nordic or Western, more Dinaric or Alpine, and then—after careful scrutiny of the evidence gathered from drawings, paintings, sculptures, and verbal descriptions—to derive the principles of each system of thought, to derive the form that the essence of truth had taken for each one of them, from nothing less than the shape of their skulls.[20]

The Perils of Nationalism

Expressed in the efforts of Schwarz and Wundt lies an attitude that goes back to ancient times. While European nationalism is no doubt a modern phenomenon, the idea that a particular group of people occupies a distinct and unique place in history has engrossed humans in many places and many times. The ancient Greeks, for instance, set themselves apart from the surrounding "barbarians" by maintaining that they were speaking the only meaningful language. They also thought, just as the Germans were to do, that theirs was a central place in the world. For Aristotle it was self-evident that his own nation had the positive qualities of both Europe and Asia, "just as it holds the middle in terms of location."[21] This myth of centrality was not of course confined to Europeans. The Chinese also took comfort in the belief that they were at the center of the world, in the Middle Kingdom. With this sense of separateness and distinction often came the idea that God or destiny had specially chosen a people. The ancient Hebrews considered themselves preferred by their God Yaweh, and when the Christians and Moslems adopted that belief they in turn used it to define their own world-historical distinction. Since the rise of modern nationalism, myths of superiority have been competing with one another. The English, the French, the Italians, the Americans, the Germans, and the Japanese have all developed such mythologies.

The German variety of this mythologizing is distinguished from the others most notably by its reliance on philosophical concepts. No other modern nation has developed a "metaphysics" of its own nationality in this fashion. German nationalism arose at a time when there was no nation-state, no appropriate political order to channel and contain nationalist feelings. Instead the Germans were forced to rely on literary, poetical, and philosophical means to make

sense of them. The idea of the nation, of the distinctive German mission in the world, became a concept that bridged politics and philosophy and drew philosophers into making political claims. Herder and, most important, Fichte initiated the search for philosophical theories of Germanness. They were pursued throughout the nineteenth century, renewed in the turmoils of the First World War, and finally taken up again in the writings of men like Schwarz and Wundt. When Heidegger talked in his rectorial address of the unique spiritual mission of the German people, he was not initiating a new kind of discourse, but merely inserting himself into one that already had a long history. We can also see that, in comparison to other philosophers, he added little to it. He simply adopted the idea of the Germans as a primordial and central people. He agreed with Fichte and others that the Germans had a language with metaphysical origins and that this language made them uniquely capable of original thinking. In this they were just like the Greeks. He also spoke of Germany as a middle nation caught between the pincers of America and Soviet Russia, as a nation whose specific destiny derived from that central location. None of those ideas was his invention, and he made little of them in his philosophical thinking.

These ideas served him, nevertheless, to bridge the chasm between his own original thought and the politics of the time. Like the metaphysicians of Germanness, Heidegger thought that the identity of the German nation could be defined only in philosophical terms and that philosophy was hence both called upon and needed in the turmoil of the age. The German mission derived its political meaning from its spiritual, philosophical source. In the idea of the German nation as both a political and a philosophical concept, Heidegger and the other philosophers found one of the notions that made their transition from philosophical discourse to political engagement both possible and inevitable.

But the various philosophical attempts to define a distinctive German mission left many questions unanswered. Why should the fact that the Germans were a primordial, central, and pure people—assuming they were all that—endow them with a singular world-historical mission? Grant it that they were a people still inhabiting their ancestral land, that they were speaking a language derived from that of their forebears, and that they were capable of a thinking that reached back to an originating past. Why should such

staidness, such tradition, such historically rooted thinking, endow a nation with a current and future mission? Grant them that they were living in a central place—why should that be a mark of distinction? Grant them even that they were pure in blood and race—why should that give them a world-historical meaning any more than if they were all born with strong bones? Such criteria could be considered evidence of a privileged function only if they were indicators of some as yet unnamed characteristic of the Germans. Philosophers like Schwarz and Wundt who engaged themselves in such questions were in any case certain that the privilege attaching to Germanness would have to be an inner quality, that it had to be linked to a consciousness that was characteristically German, that the distinctive mission of the Germans would have to be a spiritual mission. This led them quite naturally to another thought, which Fichte had first entertained: that the peculiar character of the Germans revealed itself naturally and most clearly in their philosophy. This, in turn, raised more questions. For what was to be learned about the nature of Germanness from the history of German philosophy? Given the competing philosophical voices, how was one to identify a single, coherent German character? What, in any case, was German in German philosophy? Finally and perhaps most important, what practical lessons could one draw from knowing the answers to all these questions?

In contemplating such questions, the philosophers assumed from the start that nations have true essences and that the Germans did have a distinctive historical mission. They failed to consider the possibility that nations are only temporary formations, that their identities are fortuitous and their boundaries shift, that they are discursive constructs with no reality outside the speech that defines them. The philosophers were in the grip of a historical *a priori*, in other words. Once adopted, the discourse of identity, of folkdom, of a distinctive folkish mission, of the historical meaning and uniqueness of the nation, indeed seems inescapable, more so than any empirical fact could be, but it is our discourse that constitutes these objects and makes them inescapable. Once the idea grips us, a picture takes hold that we cannot evade—it is grounded in our discourse and that discourse repeats it to us inexorably. The German philosophers never succeeded in freeing themselves from that picture, and hence they never asked themselves what functions the

discourse of nationhood plays in actual political life and what philosophical conclusions one can legitimately draw from such observations. Instead of subjecting the discourse of nationhood to critical scrutiny, they subjected themselves to it.

Talk of nations and peoples serves, in fact, a number of political and practical uses, but above all it is a tool for establishing and maintaining the unity of a group. Once such unity has been defined, the discourse of nationhood can also function as a principle of exclusion and subordination. By defining such hierarchies, it can energize nations into undertaking extraordinary efforts of self-assertion and domination. If the Germans were the primordial people, then all the others, the rootless people, would threaten the Germans with their own forgetfulness of origins and roots. For Fichte at least, it was clear that French culture was prying the Germans loose from their language and their specific capacity for primordial thought and that the Germans were constantly tempted away from their rootedness. If the Germans were the central people, all the others, the marginal people, would threaten to displace the Germans from their rightful position. Hence, as Scheler and others said in the First World War, the Germans had to stand up against the English drive to world domination and against the Russian drive toward the west. If the Germans were the pure people, all the others, the impure ones, would threaten the Germans with their own impurity. Hence the paranoid fear of the Nazis of being contaminated by the supposed mental and moral depravity of the French, the Africans, and the Jews. But behind all such ideas, behind the belief in the German mission and the inferiority of other nations, behind the energies of conquest and self-affirmation released by such convictions, lay the even more fundamental idea that the Germans did have their own distinct essence. What provides all other functions of the discourse of nationhood with a foundation is the idea of the essential unity of the nation.

The idea of the nation is always a useful tool for integrating a social group that is divided or in danger of dispersion. Fichte undoubtedly used the metaphysics of the German mission like this when he first elaborated it. In 1807 the Germans were separated into numerous principalities, divided by religion, history, background, and dialect. The *Addresses to the German Nation* can be read as Fichte's attempt to define a unifying mythology around which a

united nation might grow. Even after 1871, when a unified German state was finally achieved, the Germans felt divided by class, religion, politics, and tradition. It took the eruption of the First World War to remove that sense of disunity, but the political consensus of 1914 did not last very long. The political, social, and economic upheavals after the war produced even deeper and more painful divisions. Again there seemed to be a need to recapture unity. And so, once more, in 1933 the metaphysics of Germanness seemed an important tool by which philosophers could affect the political process. Since the Nazis were also concerned with restoring national unity, the philosophers could consider themselves quite naturally aligned to their efforts.

The weakness of all such appeals to unity was that nations are never really unified and that no declaration of national unity can overcome the divisions within them. Nowhere is this more evident than in Germany. "The Germans" had, in fact, no unity of blood, culture, or history. They were Germanic people mixed in the west with Celts and Romans, in the east with Slavs, and in the mountainous regions with indigenous Alpine people. They were divided in manifold ways by political, religious, and cultural division. The Rhinelanders in the west, for instance, often felt more kinship with their French cousins than with their fellow Germans toward the east. They were proud of their Roman heritage, which they knew the Germans across the Rhine could not share. Unlike most Germans they were Catholic by religion, and their Christian roots went back to earliest times. Living along an ancient trade route, they were used to strangers and readily intermingled with them. For them the people along the stream, the Swiss and the Dutch, were closer than the Germans along the Elbe or the Oder. So it was with the multitude of other tribes, regions, princedoms, and municipalities that made up "the German nation."

What makes the idea of unity problematic is not that the Germans had no real national unity. It is not that better boundaries might have been drawn to unify social groups. The problem is rather that the very notion of unity is a political construct and that, like most such constructs, it operates on a binary logic that cannot fully reflect social reality. According to binary logic, one is a member of a particular nation or one is not, one belongs to a particular state or one does not, one has a certain right or one does not. But

the social reality that such political distinctions are meant to regulate consists of an infinitely complex web of relations with all kinds of gradations and variable degrees of closeness and distance. The speakers of "one" language are really held together only by a network of resemblances in their linguistic habits and understandings. The adherents of "one" religion are in reality divided by many degrees of conviction. People who live in "one" place and have shared "one" history find that they have different if related stories to tell. The members of "one" nation are held together by multiple and various relations, which are not confined to any national borders but extend beyond them in the same complex and intricate way.

Our political discourse superimposes on this domain its binary divisions. However we draw the boundaries, we will cut across important linkages. What is inside any such boundary will, by necessity, always be multiple and diverse and disunified, and so will what is outside. Unity is a political construct and, when it is not seen as such, becomes an illusion. The German philosophers recognized that the nation lacked visible unity, but instead of taking this as starting point for a critical examination of the idea of unity itself, they began to search for a deeper, spiritual unity. Here, too, the ground proved uncertain. It led to multiple and overlapping principles of inclusion and exclusion. It led to never-ending attempts to fix the dividing line between German and foreign, between German and un-German. In all these efforts the one action that might have clarified matters remained undone: there was no critique of the very notion of unity on which all these undertakings relied.

6

The Philosophical Radicals

The sparks flew higher than the surrounding houses into the wet, unfriendly sky as 20,000 books burned in Berlin's Opera Square on the night of May 10, 1933.[1] A crowd of curious onlookers watched as students tossed into the fire the works of Marx, Freud, and Magnus Hirschfeld, of Thomas and Heinrich Mann, of Jewish, socialist, and pacifist authors, At midnight Joseph Goebbels, the recently appointed minister of propaganda, appeared and announced the end of "an age of exaggerated Jewish intellectualism," adding that the German revolution had finally made the path free for the German way.[2]

Among those who took part in the book burning were students who had just attended Alfred Baeumler's inaugural lecture at the university, and they were accompanied to the square by Baeumler himself. He now held a newly created chair in philosophy and political pedagogy, since the Nazis were eager to bring academics and philosophers to the capital who could lend them intellectual and political support. (Heidegger had also been offered a position in Berlin but turned it down after some soul searching.) Baeumler was in no doubt about the public and symbolic function he was meant to serve, and it was surely for this reason that he had arranged for his inaugural lecture to coincide with the day of the book burning. A delicate, balding man, he appeared that evening in the lecture room dressed in a plain dark suit but accompanied by two sturdy SA men guarding a large Nazi flag. For his topic he chose a theme that was to preoccupy many German philosophers that year—the

question of the bearing of philosophy on the new political situation. Like many others who shared his political commitments, Baeumler was convinced that the end of an era had come. A great revolution was in progress, he told his audience. A new age of the world was awaiting, "the political age of the world, the world age of socialism" (p. 138)[3]—not of course that of international, Bolshevist socialism but rather that of a German and national socialism. Like other philosophers of the period, Baeumler was also convinced that the political revolution in progress needed to be accompanied and supported by a "spiritual revolution" in the universities (p. 123). This in turn necessitated a new thinking in philosophy.

He added that though he felt attuned to the new political reality, he could not claim to be able to derive National Socialism from his philosophical system. He did not mean to dabble at all in politics. "It is my task to draw the picture of political, i.e. real, man," he said, "not to engage in politics from this academic chair" (p. 130). Politics and philosophy were complementary forces. There existed two distinct but interdependent realms: the symbolic realm of politics and the discursive, verbal realm of philosophy. Their separation meant, among other things, that the intellectual autonomy of the university had to be respected. "The German University will never become the executive tool of a will external to it," Baeumler said. "It has its own relation to the whole. Politics and spirit are united in the symbols but divided in the organs. In the interpretation of the symbols we are free" (p. 138). Unlike the old liberal system, however, the new political regime expected agreement on the symbols; beyond that lay the struggle for "the truest and deepest interpretation of what is now and here occurring. The word cannot be prescribed by an administrative edict" (p. 132).

Baeumler insisted in his lecture that the philosophy appropriate for the historical moment could only be "political realism." This realism was the proper attitude of the new political man. "I will put in place of the neo-humanist picture of man the true picture of political man," he told his students. "I will newly define the relation of theory to practice, I will describe the orders of life in which we actually live" (p. 130). This new man had to be understood as belonging to a specific race and folkdom. The model was not to be the humanistically educated, universal individual but "the political soldier," and it was the task of philosophy to interpret this exemplary figure.

In concluding his lecture Baeumler spoke of the book burning to which he was about to take his students. The event, if correctly understood, could serve precisely as a symbol for the struggles ahead and for philosophy's place in them. "You are leaving now to burn books in which an alien spirit uses the German word to fight us," he told them (p. 137). But he warned them that they should remain conscious of the merely symbolic character of the act. The event did not constitute an actual burning of political opponents. Those opponents still needed to be fought, not through fire but in a struggle of words. With that promise he led them—in a new form of philosophical leadership—to the burning.

Baeumler came from the Sudetenland, which had been made part of the new Czechoslovakian state at the end of the First World War. Born in 1887, he belonged to the same generation as Heidegger and most of the other philosophers who became politically involved in 1933. In later life he maintained that he had grown up in apolitical surroundings and that at the beginning of the Weimar Republic he was sympathetically inclined toward the social democrats. When forced to justify himself before a de-Nazification tribunal in 1948, he said that it had been "the disastrous course of party politics which then followed that made me completely disoriented" and that had finally attracted him to the Nazis.[4] He also said that his students at the Technical University at Dresden had first acquainted him with the Nazi movement, but that the party itself was unfamiliar territory to him until 1933. Though he had met Hitler once before, the man made no impression on him at all nor had *Mein Kampf*. After the election in 1933, however, he felt that there was here a great popular movement and a great political need and that it was impossible for him to stand apart from those developments as a powerless and partyless critic.[5]

Such statements, like Heidegger's to his de-Nazification committee, were defensive and at best told only a partial story. Even though Baeumler officially joined the party only in 1933, he had been increasingly veering toward it since 1929 and was a member of Alfred Rosenberg's Crusade for German Culture *(Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur)* since its foundation that year. Baeumler was, in fact, more than any other German philosopher, the typical fascist intellectual. Possessing a keen sensibility for the arts, a refined feel for language, an interest in Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, at the same time he also had an almost erotic obsession with war, soldierliness,

masculinity, and youth. These traits were evident long before he actually joined the Nazi party.

Baeumler had been a student of the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin in Munich, where he obtained a doctorate in 1914 with a dissertation on Kant's aesthetics.[6] In 1920 he published a revised version in book form, and this work is still considered one of the most important discussions of Kant's *Critique of Judgment.*[7] Also at this point he began an intellectual journey that was to take him first to Hegel, then to Kierkegaard, after that to the romantic anthropological author Johann Jakob Bachofen, and finally to Nietzsche. Bachofen and Nietzsche ultimately shaped his philosophical outlook. In a detailed introduction to an edition of Bachofen's writings, published in 1926, Baeumler expressed interest not so much in Bachofen's well-known theory of early matriarchy but in his general philosophy of history with its stress on myths and symbols as formative structures in human history.[8]

Baeumler's move to the right and to an increasingly fascist understanding of politics was fully evident by 1929. That year he spoke to the "University Ring of German Kind" about the meaning of the Great War, which he now interpreted as a world-historical turning point. Appealing to the memory of the fallen soldiers he said, "the world which has seen this is no longer the old world. If the war in which our comrades fell has any meaning then it signals a world-historical turning" (p. 2).[9] There had been a struggle, and it was continuing, between two great systems of life, two cultures, between left and right. On the left side stood a materialist culture of feeling and sensual desires, of individual possession and individual gain, the culture of the bourgeois, an urban and urbane culture for which the ultimate city was Paris. This culture was in essence "determined by woman" (p. 7). Man had only a secondary role, whereas the opposite form of life, that of the right, was that of man, the state, work, heroic deeds of the sword. The masculine corporation was inseparable from such a heroic form of life. "The king and his faithful, the military leader and his horde for whom he is at once a model and an educator, constitute the kernel of the heroic condition of life" (p. 13).

Without perhaps realizing it, Baeumler was in effect adopting Fichte's distinctions between the primordial unspoiled character of the German people and the derived and dead Mediterraneanized

culture of the west. Urban culture, he told his audience, had been a product of Roman civilization and had been adopted by the French. Against it had stood the Germanic people. Again and again Roman civility had clashed with Germanic, heroic force. For a thousand years, Germany had been subjected to a weakening of its heroic potential through the enticements of an urban culture and an urban spirituality. If the First World War meant anything, it signaled the beginning of a third great epoch of German history. The first had been the pre-Roman, Germanic age. The second was that of Rome. "With the World War begins the post-Roman epoch of German history" (p. 15). More precisely, it was putting before the Germans a decision between a beginning and an end. The task was not to resurrect Bismarck's empire. "The World War led us beyond Bismarck's spiritual and political world. It calls back into a memory the heroic song of our race, it calls us to the struggle against urbanization, to the heroizing of our life through work" (p. 16).

These sentiments find echoes in the writings of Hitler, Goebbels, and Rosenberg, but Baeumler did not specifically connect them with the Nazis in 1929. They were actually less characteristic of National Socialism than of a more pervasive fascist outlook. The term fascism has, of course, many rhetorical uses—I mean here an understanding of society in essentially military terms that stress struggle, heroism, leadership, masculinity, and youth. Fascism, understood in this way, is not confined to a particular region of the world and can take on many different forms. Baeumler's was a German and Prussian fascism that made itself out to be anti-Roman (in contrast to Mussolini's Italian fascism, linked precisely to the Roman state). Baeumler's kind of fascism was not uncommon in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. Both Oswald Spengler and Ernst Jünger represented versions of it. It was a viewpoint that shared with the Nazis a hostility to the system of Weimar, though it did not lead to a quick alignment when they came to power. While Baeumler decided to throw his fortune in with the new regime, Spengler and Jünger kept a careful distance.

Philosophically Baeumler grounded his "heroic realism" in a reading of Nietzsche, which he first laid out in 1931 in his book *Nietzsche as Philosopher and Politician*. The work had a double intention. Its author wanted to show first of all that Nietzsche was not just a literary figure but that he had a philosophical system. He also

intended to establish more provocatively that Nietzsche's philosophy had as its main goal a new politics. Nietzsche had been no mere theoretician, as Baeumler put it, but an "existential thinker" whose politics followed from that attitude.[10]

Nietzsche's philosophy was spelled out most clearly in the posthumous *The Will to Power,* which in Baeumler's eyes presented a whole system of philosophy.[11] The unifying thought of that philosophy was the realization that the world is nothing but will to power. Nietzsche's metaphysics constituted a decidedly this-worldly and realistic doctrine. It excluded the possibility of a higher and stable world; the world was rather a "becoming" through and through, which involved at once struggling and winning. Hence war was the father of all things. Nietzsche had moreover understood that the will to power was a more fundamental and pervasive principle than physical energy, and that it was a creative and productive drive from which came all the achievements of human culture. To perceive the world and human beings in this manner, Baeumler wrote, was

> to see them as they are: unexhausted and inexhaustible, creating and bringing forth out of the depth of the unknown, producing figures that come out of the mixing jug of existence according to a law of eternal justice, figures that fight one another, maintain themselves in struggle or go under. If one wants a formula for this world view, one may call it heroic realism.[12]

Bracketing out the Nietzschean doctrine of eternal recurrence as standing "in no relation to the fundamental thought of the will to power,"[13] Baeumler thus ascribed to Nietzsche a thoroughly Heraclitean picture of the world.

This picture was to be at the same time the basis for Nietzsche's politics. As Baeumler said in 1934: "In place of bourgeois moral philosophy, Nietzsche puts the philosophy of the will to power, i.e. the philosophy of politics."[14] Nietzsche had in fact been engaged in a struggle over "the real power in a real Germany," Baeumler had argued in his 1931 book. He was concerned with nothing less than the destruction of a moribund culture and the founding of a new one. Nietzsche criticized European culture as dominated by the denial of will, a nihilism inherent in western thought since Plato that

had finally shown its face in Schopenhauer's philosophy. Against that historical reality Nietzsche had projected the vision of a new politics in which the will and the life of which it is an expression were finally accepted. That world had to be understood as a play of ever-changing centers of power and not in terms of ahistorical values. Values were only temporary creations of particular historical cultures. Each culture constituted a center of power that defined a perspective on the world by producing a web of order and subordination in relation to all the other centers. Politics was a struggle for power between different and opposed conceptions of the world. All politics was thus ideological and agonistic; all politics was, indeed, ultimately military. In this lay also the deeper and hidden affinity between Nietzsche and Hitler, as Baeumler was to add in 1934. Nietzsche had been the philosopher of a heroism that Hitler was determined to live out. Both had a distrust of happiness, of resting in contemplative states. Both recognized a "Nordic-masculine" will to power as the ultimate driving force that sought resistance, was determined to stand up to fate, to pursue its own freedom, and to increase itself. Nietzsche himself said it most precisely: "We Germans want something from ourselves which no one has wanted from us as yet—we want something more."[15]

This was a "fascicized" Nietzsche: a Nietzsche bereft of the curiously mystical depth that the doctrine of the eternal recurrence contributed to his thought; a Nietzsche whose metaphors of power and struggle, of overcoming and winning, were all interpreted in military terms; a Nietzsche who was no longer in voluntary exile in Italy, and outside German political and cultural life; a Nietzsche who was not mad but the heroic prophet of a new Germanic Reich, a political competitor and equal to Bismarck. As Baeumler thus described him in his book, it was this Nietzsche with his "heroic realism" that he hoped to raise as the true and only philosopher of the National Socialist movement.

POPULIST HOLISM

Thirteen days after Baeumler's inaugural lecture and the book burning in Berlin, the philosopher Ernst Krieck stood on the podium in Frankfurt to be inaugurated as the new rector of the university. He had only just been appointed professor of philosophy

and pedagogy at the University of Frankfurt, having spent the previous five years in a similar position at the local teachers' training college. His was a long and hard career. Born in 1882 Krieck came from a family of small peasants and craftsmen from the area of the Black Forest. Like Heidegger he was the first in the family to be sent to a university. Less gifted and less fortunate than Heidegger, he was forced at the end of his student years to take a job as a primary schoolteacher, a position he was to occupy for the next twenty-four years. Undeterred, he embarked on a career as an author of pedagogical and philosophical writings. In 1921 he ran into luck. His book *Philosophy of Education* brought him unexpected success, wide recognition, and eventually an honorary doctorate from the University of Heidelberg. Finally he could leave school service, and in 1928 he obtained his position as professor at the Pedagogical Academy in Frankfurt.

Throughout his life Krieck never forgot his low origins and consequently espoused a thoroughly populist politics and philosophy. Such a populism was no doubt also a source and an ingredient of National Socialist thinking, but it was worlds apart from the ideas that propelled Baeumler's political engagement. For Krieck, National Socialism represented above all an "affirmation of the unity of the working people"[16] in which the established social divisions could be healed. Military heroism, masculinity, and youth were not his dominant obsessions. He had none of the aesthetic refinement and sensibility that lay behind Baeumler's fascist rhetoric. Even in his philosophical writings Krieck did not hesitate to adopt a thoroughly down-to-earth, populist attitude. He was happy to express his ideas, as he said, in a "slogan-like formula."[17] His formulations tend to be direct, assertive, and without qualification, a style that alienated him from his academic colleagues but made him an effective party spokesman.

Krieck's populism is prominent in his rectorial address. He characterizes his own role as incoming rector as "the bond between the University and the workers" (p. 5).[18] In his position of leadership within the university, he wants to bring about cooperation with all those who work with their hands. Making "The Renewal of the University" the theme of his address, he declares it his goal to overcome the separation of the academic community from the ordinary people. University life is to be connected once again to the life of

the nation. The humanist ideal of the university that Humboldt had made the standard at the beginning of the nineteenth century is accordingly to be replaced by that of the "folkish-political University."

Like others speaking that year, Krieck sees the moment as the end of one historical epoch and the beginning of a new one. "We are moving toward a new culture," he tells his audience, "for which National Socialism and the Führer's political revolution have cleared the path" (p. 14). Like other philosophers he stresses the special world-historical mission of the Germans which requires the spiritual leadership of the universities for its fulfillment. Hence it is clear to him that the renewal of the university "is an essential component of the renewal of the whole folkish-political social system" (p. 6). The universities have to give, above all, "future leader personalities their instruments and tools" (p. 14). They are not likely to fulfill that vital task if they are not given a wholly new organization and order. The German university once stood under the unifying ideal of neo-humanism and that ideal was held together by German idealism. "But the University of recent decades has no longer had a unified basis and a singular direction of meaning" (p. 9). It has become a mere assemblage of dozens of specialized disciplines, ruled by a false understanding of autonomy and independence. What is required in this situation is more than a practical reorganization. The universities must be given a new meaning and purpose. This, Krieck is certain, is to be found only in a "unified folkish-political worldview" (p. 10).

Such a worldview calls for a new kind of philosophy. That philosophy will not be the work of a single great figure. It will rather be produced by the whole community working together. University teachers must learn to break through the barriers of their disciplines, must learn to see their work in the meaningful context of its historical and folkish condition. Thus

> each field should be able to produce a new philosophy from its own problems and tasks, a philosophy under which the multiplicity of individual disciplines is gathered meaningfully together as under the dome of a cathedral. In this way it would be possible to establish a unity of purpose for all scientific work across the barriers of the academic fields and to

> bring about the interweaving of all details into the total worldview. (p. 11)

This will be achieved only when the new university becomes "the organ and member of the state." The university will have to subject itself to "authoritative leadership," and so the "liberalist age of dissolution and of a false freedom" will be brought to an end (p. 12). The so-called academic freedom of the past will be given a new footing. All academic work will be integrated into "the great and wide contexts of the folkish world view" (p. 13). The universities will be given a new plastic form. All science will be soldierly and militant. All education will be devoted to the formation of a national will and character: "We will represent in the University the unity of the folkdom which the *Führer* has declared a demanding goal. From now there will be no place at the folkish University for a private existence, not for the students and also not for the teachers: there will only be public service" (p. 6).

Such political statements stemmed directly from Krieck's philosophical assumptions, summed up over and over again in two fundamental principles. The first expresses an organic holism according to which the individual is no totality but exists only as a "member and servant" of a superior whole. The second principle maintains that this whole is the nation or folk and that all supra- and infranational structures are "one-sided, dependent, and incomplete."[19] It was these ideas that shaped both Krieck's philosophy of education and the political philosophy he constructed out of it.

"Populist holism," as we may call his view, shaped in particular his pedagogical writings. The process of education, he argued, was wrongly taken to be one aiming at the formation of individuals. Education was essentially the self-formation of a whole people. This was a doctrine that Krieck held from the beginning of his writing career. By 1930, however, he had come to link it with a kind of Hegelian thought, according to which the actual history of a nation should be conceived as an educational process and specifically as a process of national self-formation.[20] That idea he came to connect with the further notion that the Germans had so far failed to realize themselves fully in their nationhood and that now was the first moment at which a true *Volkwerdung* (forming of the nation) of the German people might actually be achieved. It was for this reason

that he spoke, like so many others, of the present as a singular moment of crisis for the Germans. Introducing his journal *Volk im Werden* he spoke of "Germany's great hour":

> If this generation fails, then the German future will be lost once and for all . . . The German people as a whole and every single member of our people face in this hour of destiny the question whether they will stand the test. We are crossing the great threshold.[21]

Everything would now have to be subservient, he argued, to the great goal of forming the nation. This was particularly true of the pedagogical process. Since all *Volkwerdung* was ultimately an educational event, the reorganization of the schools and universities was decisive for achieving national self-formation. The forces within the universities had been dispersed in all directions in the age of individualistic liberalism; the development of science had led to a growing division and subdivision of disciplines; the predominance of analytic methods together with the accumulation of ever more information had separated departments from one another and produced a system of narrow specialists. All this was to be reversed. The true task of science was "the creation of the folkish world picture."[22] The age of the revolution, Krieck said, was characterized by the primacy of the political, and all culture, art, science, and philosophy would have to submit itself to this fact. What was needed now was for all sciences and the whole university to become political.

AN EXISTENTIAL MANDATE

Two weeks after Baeumler and four days after Krieck, it was Heidegger's turn to enact his political commitment in public. He did so, as we have seen, on the occasion of his own rectorial inauguration. Like the other two, he took the occasion to emphasize that philosophy was most relevant to the current political situation and that the philosopher was called to a role of spiritual leadership.

Heidegger's political engagement in 1933 was a belated affair and came as a surprise even to some of his closest friends and associates.[23] They remembered a man preoccupied with other, more philosophical questions who had deliberately abstained from express-

ing political opinions in his writings and lectures. Though he was undoubtedly shaped in his views by the turmoil of the age, this Heidegger had made no public political statements. Unlike Walther Rathenau or Oswald Spengler, Ernst Jünger or Max Scheler, he did not begin his career in 1918 with a cultural and political diagnosis of the times. Separating the general commotion from his own needs, he had, on the contrary, written to Karl Löwith: "I am concerned with what I consider vitally necessary in the present situation of upheaval without a glance at whether a 'culture' will come out of it or an acceleration of the decline."[24] A year later he wrote to Löwith once more in the same spirit: "I do what I must and what I consider to be necessary and do it as well as I can—I do not adapt my philosophical work to the cultural needs of an unspecified Today . . . I work out of my own 'I am.'"[25] The political tribulations of the day were evidently of less concern to him during those years than the problems of his own existence.

This kind of apolitical and anarchic attitude was still visible in Heidegger's major work, *Being and Time* (1927). The book promised a phenomenology of being *(Sein)* approached through an analysis of being human *(Dasein)*. In the first part of the work Heidegger appears to be entirely preoccupied with the question of individual human existence. He explores the question how *Dasein* can become its own *(eigentlich)*. This discussion of authentic existence might have provided Heidegger with a forum for speaking of the social and political dimensions of human existence. He does not use it, however. He remains instead focused on the crisis that an individual human life faces when it resolves to find itself out of the "lostness" of its everyday condition. As far as other human beings appear in *Being and Time* they play, first of all, the role of the community in which human life initially finds itself and, second, that of the anonymous "one" into which the individual human life is lost and as a result fails to realize its potentiality for being itself. Heidegger grants that human life is, of course, always a being with others: "The world is always the one that I share with others" (p. 118).[26] But those others are at the same time the most severe obstacle to an authentic mode of existence. There remains the possibility of an emancipation from the "one," of becoming authentically one's own and thus having a thoughtful existence.[27]

In the second part of *Being and Time*, written a year or so after

the first, Heidegger seems to have shifted to a more communitarian understanding of human existence. He now emphasizes that even authentic human existence shares a world with others. Even though in becoming authentic *Dasein* has achieved a condition of resolute openness, a mode of disclosure that is "primordial because it is its own" (p. 297),[28] Heidegger now stresses that this does not "detach human life from its world, nor does it isolate it so that it becomes a free-floating 'I' . . . Resolute openness brings the Self exactly into its actual concerned being with what is available and pushes it into solicitous being with others" (p. 298). Resolute openness allows human life to become aware of the condition in which it exists, to recognize its own facticity, and to determine its factual possibilities. It follows now that "the resolute openness in which human life comes back to itself, discloses current factical possibilities of authentic existing and discloses them *in terms of the heritage* which that resolute openness, as thrown, *takes over*" (p. 383). In order to become authentically itself, human life must first grasp the finitude of its existence and recognize "the simplicity of its fate." That also means, as Heidegger declares, that it has to share in the destiny of others. This destiny is not made up of individual fates, for those have already been guided in advance through our being with one another in the same world and through our resolute openness to possibilities. The fate is rather "the happening of the community, of a people."[29] As a result it is evident for him now that "human life's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make up the full authentic happening of human life" (pp. 384–385).

We are tempted to read these remarks today in the light of Heidegger's later political action. But, that engagement does not follow directly from the communitarianism of the second half of *Being and Time*. The first point to make here is that, though the text says that authentic *Dasein* is forced to choose in light of its heritage, it also emphasizes that *Dasein* must still make a choice with respect to that heritage. Heidegger writes: "One would completely misunderstand the phenomenon of resolute openness if one were to suppose that it consists simply in taking up and seizing ready-made and recommended possibilities" (p. 298). Authentic human life is always faced with different possibilities, different courses of action, and divergent options. Its choice is, moreover, not constrained by historically in-

variant norms or values, for if there were such "maxims which one might be led to expect—maxims which could be reckoned up unequivocally," they "would deny to existence nothing less than the very possibility of taking action" (p. 294). *Being and Time*, in fact, is not meant as an an *ethics* of authenticity. When Heidegger describes how authentic *Dasein* chooses in terms of its heritage, he is not telling us how it ought to choose in order to be authentic—he makes no moral prescriptions—but he is asking how human life can choose the possibilities on which it projects itself. He is, in other words, not making a normative claim but stating necessary (indeed, obvious) conditions for the possibility of authentic action.

It would be easy to extend this line of reasoning and to conclude that Heidegger's philosophical thought is clearly disjointed from his political commitment and that his defenders have been right all along in claiming that there is no significant link between his philosophy and his politics. Such reasoning is too one-sided, however. When Heidegger did finally get politically involved, he himself claimed to have done so in the name of his philosophy, and it is evident from his political statements at the time, in particular from his rectorial address, that he was drawing on philosophical concepts and categories to explain his commitment.

The external facts of Heidegger's political activism are easily enough recounted.[30] What moved him to get involved were first of all the effects of the world economic crisis of 1929 and the political death throes of the Weimar Republic in the following three years. It was then that he began to study the works of political writers such as Ernst Jünger.[31] Both he and his friend Karl Jaspers eventually became so alarmed that they concluded the time was ripe for philosophers to exercise leadership. Jaspers led the way with his book *The Spiritual Situation of the Age* in which he spoke of the turmoil of modern existence, the prevailing loss of faith, the dangers of technological mass society, and held up against this the ideal of a philosophical life through which men might generate the power to be themselves even when their lack of faith forced them to face nothingness.[32] This power, Jaspers said in words that might also have been Heidegger's in 1933, "considers itself called to the highest and lives in the tension of that compulsion; it lives in the violence against mere existence, in the flexibility of what is relative, in the patience of being able to wait, in the exclusiveness of a historical

bond" (p. 181). By the spring of 1933, Heidegger had also reached a moment of decision. At the beginning of April he wrote to Jaspers that he was ready to get into university politics and that, together with a number of colleagues, he was thinking about a total reorganization of the university system.

It soon became clear that Heidegger meant to ally himself with the Nazis, who had come to power in January of that year. When a group of Nazi professors at Freiburg met to discuss the situation at the beginning of April, they were able to inform the regional ministry:

> Professor Heidegger has already been negotiating with the Prussian ministry of education. He has our fullest confidence . . . Colleague Heidegger is not as yet a Party member and does not at present consider it practical to become one in order to have a freer hand in this way with colleagues who are so far undecided or hostile. But he is willing to join at any moment, if this should be considered opportune for other reasons.[33]

On April 21 the academic senate at Freiburg elected Heidegger as rector for the year 1933, after some last-minute maneuvering to oust the man previously chosen for the position. The path was now free to the podium of the great hall at Freiburg University for Heidegger's address.

Like Baeumler and Krieck before him, Heidegger was motivated in his address by the thought that the university needed radical reform. He was deeply convinced that the moment called for spiritual leadership and that it needed to be exercised above all within the context of the university. When challenged after the war, he admitted that his political engagement had been due in part to his belief that the Nazi revolution represented a significant political and historical departure. But he added that this had been only one of the poles between which he had fluctuated in 1933. The other was his concern with the university, above all with the place of philosophy within the system of knowledge as a whole.[34] He got caught up in politics, as he put it then, precisely "by way of the University."[35]

Heidegger was concerned with the issue of reform and the place of philosophy within the university from the beginning of his teaching career.[36] Those concerns were certainly evident after his return to Freiburg in 1927. In the inaugural address he delivered

there after appointment to the philosophical chair vacated by Husserl, he complained that the sciences were now so far apart from one another that the "roots of the sciences in their essential ground have died."[37] He added that "this disintegrated multiplicity of the disciplines is only held together today by the technical organization of the universities and its faculties and only retains some meaning because of the practical purposes set for the departments."[38] He concluded that the undesirable state of the universities could be overcome only by the realization that philosophy was the common ground in which the sciences grew. "Only if science exists out of metaphysics," he declared, "can it recover in ever new ways its essential task."[39] It followed, moreover, that philosophy, which provided science a route to the "primordial happening of *Dasein*," could itself "never be measured by the standards of science."[40]

Though Heidegger gave those assertions a deliberately provocative flavor at the time by claiming for philosophy and metaphysics a privileged access to the realm of nothingness, it should be clear that he had, in fact, expressed a common, entrenched, and even traditional view of the nature and role of philosophy. The view was eventually to lead him into conflict with the Nazi worldview or, at least, with a particular and official conception of it. Heidegger himself later described his rectorial address as an attack on the Nazi belief that science and philosophy had to submit to the primacy of the political and thus to presuppositions of the National Socialist view of the world. "The counter position to this politicization of science is specifically expressed in the rectorial address," he told his interviewers.[41] He maintained that the title of the address, the self-assertion of the German university, was meant to refer to "the positive task of winning back a new meaning in the face of the merely technical organization of the University, through reflection on the tradition of Western and European thinking." On this conception the university was to renew itself "through its own reflection, not with the National Socialists, and thereby gain a firm position against the danger of the politicization of science."

This later account of what he had been up to in the rectorial address is borne out by what he actually said at the time.[42] In his address Heidegger argued that the crisis Germany was facing was not simply a political event and that it could not be resolved by mere institutional and political changes. It was certainly not

enough to reject the past altogether and to set out for a radical reorganization of all institutions. "The merely negative activity which looks back only at the last decades presents, for all purposes, the appearance of genuine effort," he said, but it was not getting at the root of the problem (p. 7). It would be equally insufficient merely to change old institutions and to add new ones. What was needed instead was rather the realization that "a spiritual world alone guarantees a nation its greatness" (p. 13). This spiritual world was no mere cultural superstructure, but "the power of the deepest preservation of its earth- and blood-bound force, the power of the innermost excitations and the broadest tremors of its existence."

A nation's spiritual world, Heidegger continued in the address, manifested itself most clearly in its science *(Wissenschaft)*, for spirit "is primordially attuned, knowing resolute openness to the nature of Being." Thus "the will to the historical . . . mandate of the German people as a nation knowing itself in its state" was at the same time a will to science and hence to the essence of the German university. What Germany needed in its greatest hour of need was reflection on the proper mission of the German university; the need of the moment was, in the end, an educational need. "Out of the resolute openness of the German students to face the Germany destiny in its greatest need comes a will to the essence of the University." That would manifest itself as a binding into the national community "which from now on will be rooted into the students' life through labor service" (p. 15); as a binding to honor "which in future will permeate the students' whole life as military service"; and, finally and most important, as a binding to the spiritual mandate of the German nation which would manifest itself in the students' service to knowledge (pp. 15–16). "Those three bonds are . . . equally primordial in German nature. The three services that derive from them—labor service, military service, and the service to knowledge—equally necessary and of equal rank" (p. 17).

In order to achieve those goals, some further questions would have to be answered. What was the nature of science and knowledge? What was the essence of the German university? Here "the most permanent and hardest self-reflection" was required of those engaged in the institution. They were faced with the ultimate question, "whether science shall be for us in the future or whether we shall let it drift to a quick end" (pp. 7–8). One thing and only one

thing would assure the future of science—it would have to subject itself once more to "the power of the beginning of our historico-spiritual existence." That beginning had been the start of Greek philosophy, for in it western man had for the first time subjected Being as a whole to questioning and had grasped it for what it is by means of the power of his language. Hence it was clear to Heidegger that "all science or knowledge is philosophy whether it knows it and wants it—or not. All science remains indebted to that beginning of philosophy" (p. 8).

The Greek conception of science or knowledge had not, however, been that of pure contemplation, of "theory" for its own sake, theory in the modern sense. The Greeks had, on the contrary, sought theory as the highest realization of genuine practice. For them science was "the power that keeps alert and embraces the whole life," and "the innermost determining center of the whole national-political existence" (p. 10). The beginning that had appeared in Greek culture was still there: "It does not lie behind us as something long past; it rather stands before us." The calling of the German university in this moment of need was, in fact, "to recover the greatness of the origin" (p. 11). In defining the historical mandate of the German people in this way, Heidegger thus conceived of the need of the moment as that of the recovery of greatness and the beginning found in the first Greek philosophers. To define science in national and political terms meant to define it as the Greeks had.

According to Heidegger, the Greeks gave us an admirable example of the initial amazed perseverance before Being which could, however, no longer exactly be ours given "modern man's abandonment in the midst of *Sein.*" Man was now living under Nietzsche's dictum "God is dead" and so was forced to exist in "completely unprotected exposure to what is concealed and uncertain; to what is questionable" (p. 12). Questioning was no longer a first step toward an answer but had become itself the highest form of knowledge. Such questioning was breaking apart the encapsulation of the sciences into separate disciplines, "calls them back from their endless dispersion into isolated fields and corners" and exposed them once more to "those earthly powers of human-historical *Dasein* such as nature, history, language; nation, custom, state; poetry, thought, faith; disease, madness, death; law, industry, technology" (p. 13).

What was needed to reach such questioning exposure was first of all that the teachers themselves become spiritual leaders; those leaders would in turn have to be "led by the inexorableness of that spiritual mandate which forces the destiny of the German people into the mold of its history" (p. 5). They had to move ahead into an extreme outpost where the essential exigency of things was constantly near and where the world itself became uncertain. "Here the decisive thing about being a leader is not the mere walking ahead, but the strength to walk alone not out of egoism or some desire to rule, but through the deepest determination and the most far-reaching obligation" (p. 14). These teachers would have to "rear and discipline the leaders and guardians of the destiny of the German people" (p. 7). Students would have to force themselves "into the utmost clarity and discipline of knowing" (p. 20). Both had to be moved by a will to the essential and to be willing to enter into a mutual struggle. "All capacities of will and thought, all the powers of the heart and all the abilities of the body must be unfolded in struggle, increased through struggle, and preserved through struggle."

Where Baeumler's inaugural lecture had been straightforward and political and Krieck's rectorial address direct and practical, Heidegger's speech was full of majestic darkness. In oracular formulations he related the political moment to the deepest and most troubling aspects of human existence, to the beginnings of Greek philosophy, to Nietzsche's discovery of a world without metaphysical solace. If the National Socialist revolution was to have any philosophical grounding, he was saying in effect, it would be found neither in Baeumler's heroic realism nor in Krieck's rough-and-ready populism but only in the authentic revelations of existential ontology. Because he was reaching so much farther out, his vision was at once also more removed from the practical reality of Nazism, though it too claimed a more profound grounding of its worldview. Heidegger was at work on another and more private project, however. Allying himself politically with the victorious Nazi regime, he was trying to bend it to his own will. Unlikely as the project may now seem, he wanted to make the revolution his own.

Once in office Heidegger collaborated vigorously with the Nazi authorities and helped them, in particular, to replace the old system of university self-rule with one based on dictatorial leadership. The

idea of leadership became so dominant in his mind that he could bluntly tell his students at the beginning of the winter semester: "Not doctrines and 'ideas' should be the rules of your existence. But the Führer himself and he alone *is* the present and future reality and its law."[43] Throughout the year of his rectorate he spoke often and vociferously on behalf of the Nazi cause, especially on November 11, one day before the plebiscite on Hitler's policies and on Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations. Now he joined a number of distinguished German academics at Leipzig in support of the referendum. "We have renounced the idolization of a groundless and powerless thinking," he said on this occasion:

> We are seeing the end of a philosophizing subjected to such thinking . . . The primordial courage to break or to grow in dealing with that which is represents the innermost motivation in the quest of a folkish science . . . The National Socialist revolution is not merely the assumption of a previously existing state power by a party that has grown sufficiently large to do so; this revolution rather brings about a complete transformation of our German existence.[44]

A TEMPORARY ALLIANCE

Different as Baeumler's, Krieck's, and Heidegger's assumptions, assertions, and intentions were, they found themselves in the spring of 1933 in close alliance. Corresponding with his old friend Jaspers, Heidegger referred to Baeumler and Krieck as two colleagues with whom he had been in close contact about plans for the reform of German universities.[45] Even though they would eventually end as bitter enemies, they considered each other friends in 1933.[46]

This alliance was based on their shared conviction that the political turnover needed to be completed by a spiritual revolution, a revolution in thinking, that this demanded a total renewal of the educational process and the university system, and that philosophers were specifically needed to define the principles of such a renewal. All three saw themselves, in fact, cast in a role of spiritual leadership.

University reform had been a subject of public debate ever since the inception of the Weimar Republic. There was general

agreement that the structures designed at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Wilhelm von Humboldt were no longer sufficient for the time. There was also deep disagreement about the depth and the direction of the changes needed. Von Humboldt's neohumanist principles still had many admirers, particularly among the professors in the established humanist disciplines. They believed that the main function of the university should be the formation and cultivation of individual character. They also wanted to believe in the inseparability of teaching and research. In the meantime, however, the natural sciences had come of age. A whole new range of disciplines had developed, all striving for power, influence, position, and money within the universities. These disciplines often required elaborate and expensive research institutes that were sometimes directly attached to university departments, were sometimes independent units within the universities, and were sometimes detached from university structures. The development of the natural, medical, and technical sciences and the growth of an increasingly complex industrial state also called for the schooling of more and more specialists. Were the universities now to turn into professional training schools, and how were they to reconcile that new mission with the old, humanist ideal? In some cases the problem was solved by the institution of special technical and professional schools and academies. But soon the question arose of the relation between the new structures and the old ones. Competition between them, not least for limited resources, was inevitable.

The political shakeup of 1918–19 had also contributed to the clamor for reform within the universities. Until then they were bastions of social privilege. The most visible sign of this was the dueling fraternities, with their uniforms paraded in public and their retrograde nationalist, militarist, and antisemitic politics. Few students came from the families of workers and socially disadvantaged groups. Even Catholics, who were an embattled minority in Germany, had a hard time in the universities. Inside the institution the full professors had accumulated an extraordinary amount of power. In contrast, junior teachers were poorly paid or not paid at all, and neither they nor the students had a voice in the running of the system. Now there arose a call for an opening of the universities to other social groups and for the introduction of a more democratic regime.

Although some small reforms were undertaken by the governments of the Weimar Republic, the debate about university reform had only meager results. This is perhaps not surprising since there were so many diametrically opposed and hotly contested views on what needed to be done. Those who had profited from the old system stubbornly defended every inch of their ground. This included often enough professors in such established disciplines as philosophy. Communists and social democrats demanded access for working-class students, scholarships for the underprivileged, a curtailing of the right-wing fraternities. Technocrats called for modernization and specialized courses of education. The political divisions of Weimar and the weakness and instability of its governments, in effect, made radical reform impossible.

When the curtain was finally rung on the Weimar Republic, those who had previously advocated reforms within the universities could hope that the much needed and much debated renewal of the system could finally take place. Among those who carried that hope were Baeumler, Krieck, and Heidegger. All three had long been concerned with the question of radical reform.[47] It is perhaps worth pointing out here that all three men came from other than the traditional social backgrounds of university professors and that all three represented nontraditional philosophical viewpoints. All three were, in a way, rebels against the academic and philosophical establishment.[48]

In the end the three differed, of course, in what they thought the reformed university should look like. To begin with, however, they were united not only in the demand for a radical renewal but they also shared certain positive conceptions of the renewed universities. They believed that the universities should help to heal existing social divisions, and so they all called for structures grounded in the needs and expectations of the people.

This vision of the university as a unifying force in the nation and as actually subservient to "the German mission" brought all three into immediate conflict with the older understanding of the autonomy of the university. Hence they all three in their addresses attacked the established concept of academic freedom. They maintained that from now on science and the university would have to recognize a new public responsibility and that this was incompatible with the usual understanding of academic freedom. At the same

time, they all argued that within the framework of national requirements science and education would have to be able to retain their independence. Hence they set out to define a new, "positive" conception of intellectual freedom. All three were also convinced that the redefinition of the task of the universities called for an end to the process of specialization, the separation of the various disciplines, the splintering of the old educational structure. Not only socially but also intellectually and "spiritually," there should be coherence and unity. Thus all three believed that the old divisions into departments and disciplines had to be rethought and that a unifying philosophy would pull the efforts together and in the same direction. All three, in other words, maintained a leadership role for philosophy in this process, but all three were also convinced that this could not come from traditional academic philosophy, that there was rather a need for a radically new kind of philosophizing. Since each man believed he had somehow taken hold of such thinking, each also assumed that in the exigency of the moment a special leadership role had fallen to himself.

Those who had agitated longest and hardest for change within the universities during the Weimar period were the students, who were also the least privileged group within the institution. Those who returned after the First World War found it extremely difficult to readjust to the old-fashioned structures. Later on, bad economic conditions and the fact that university training could not guarantee a job led to further unrest. The students had also been the most active political agitators, and well before 1933 radicals on the right had managed to get control of the national student organization and imposed themselves loudly and visibly with their demands on the universities. While the majority of professors kept the traditional distance from the students and many detested the agitation, there were a few who sought them out and at least partially identified with them. These were often professors who were particularly devoted to education and who felt as alienated from the academy as their students did. Baeumler, Krieck, and Heidegger were certainly part of this group of teachers, and they were also most directly influenced by their students' political views.

It is no accident that both Baeumler and Heidegger later reported that they became familiar with National Socialism through their students. As a teacher and expert on pedagogical matters Krieck

was, in any case, close to their concerns. Baeumler's prominent participation in the Berlin book burning was certainly the result of his effort to stay close to student concerns. The whole book-burning campaign—which moved from Berlin to other universities—was the work of the Nazi student organization. Apart from Alfred Rosenberg's Crusade for German Culture,[49] no other official Nazi organization participated in the planning. Hitler's government actually looked upon the whole campaign with some unhappiness. Goebbels, who was the only one to show up at the burning in Berlin and who was traditionally considered an ally of the students, avoided his usual rhetoric that evening and told the assembled students soberly that "revolutions of political power need intellectual preparation."[50] Hitler himself and the other members of his government maintained an embarrassed silence about the events, which did not reflect government policy and were not allowed to be repeated after May 1933.[51] The whole affair was no doubt the students' reminder to the new regime of how much it owed to them. If men like Baeumler as well as academics in other university towns participated in the burnings, it was a vivid expression of their identification with the students.

Krieck also made it clear how much he was taking the side of the radical students when he delivered his rectorial address. In his speech he celebrated the "national-revolutionary student body" for having been "the real motor in the life of the University" during the preceding decade (p. 7).[52] Promulgating a new student law that announced study rules as well as a law of conduct, and committed the students to both labor and military service, Krieck described it as "a victory of the students after a long fight for the renewal of the University." With this law, they were becoming "a member with full and equal rights in the self-administrative organization of the University" (p. 6). Heidegger, too, paid careful obeisance to the students in his rectorial address: "The Germans students are on the march. And those they are seeking are leaders through whom they can elevate their own purpose so that it becomes a grounded, knowing truth, and to place it into the clarity of interpretive and effective word and work" (pp. 9–10).[53] Envisaging fulfillment of the German mission, he concluded: "We do will ourselves. For the young and the youngest strength of the people, which is already reaching beyond us, has already decided the matter" (p. 13).

Though as rector he prevented students from displaying an antisemitic poster at the entrance to the university and from holding a book burning, he kept in close contact with the Nazi student leaders and clearly signaled to them his sympathy with their activism. In the summer and fall of 1933 he arranged for a series of "science camps" outside Freiburg in which students and teachers were to come together in a new form of collaboration.

Apart from their shared belief in the need of a fundamental renewal within the university and their shared sympathies for the radical students, Baeumler, Krieck, and Heidegger also had in common their determination to take a stand against those German philosophers who were now claiming that the victory of the national revolution demanded a return to the German idealist tradition. In his inaugural address Baeumler criticized explicitly such conservative philosophical positions as irrelevant to the new reality. The old idealist and humanist tradition, he said, had adhered to an essentially imageless system of thought. Hence its preoccupation with words and concepts, and its purely theoretical, antipolitical stance. One might have respect and even veneration for men like Fichte and Hegel, but "the systematic critique of the idealist tradition belongs to our future task" (p. 125).[54] When he continued that critique later, he was even more insistent in his disagreement with those philosophers who wanted to make idealism, particularly Fichte's version of it, the foundation of the Nazi worldview. He granted then that no future German philosophy could ignore the link to German idealism, and he praised the daring boldness and power of Fichte's thought, which he interpreted as an expression of an "heroic voluntarism" for which "neither the world nor the logos is the first but rather the creative will" (p. 487).[55] In Baeumler's view, Fichte was best seen as a precursor of Nietzsche. According to that reading, Fichte had taught that "the world order looses all its sense, as soon as one admits the possibility of an order in itself." In an unmistakable reference to the DPG and its ideology, Baeumler added that "the doctrine which assumes a hierarchy of being and value, of an eternal order in itself, under whose influence one is willing, if necessary, to forgive everything to man, as long as he only acknowledges that order, leads to a destruction of all humanity" (p. 489).

Krieck was equally adamant that the old idealist tradition and its

more recent elaborations were unsuitable for current philosophy. "We no longer live in the age of self-cultivation, of 'culture,' of humanism, and of pure spirit," he wrote, "but under the necessity of struggle, of the political organization of reality, of soldierliness, of folkish discipline, of folkish honor, and a folkish future. The people of this age are therefore not called to an idealist but to an heroic attitude as the task and necessity of life" (p. 1).[56] Idealism had created divisions between spirit and life, but the heroic man "lives not out of the spirit, he lives out of blood and earth. He lives not for self-cultivation, but for the deed" (p. 4). The prophets of this new man had been Hölderlin, Nietzsche, Stefan George, Moeller van den Bruck, and most recently Ernst Jünger and his circle. Now the heroic spirit was reaching for victory in the national-revolutionary movement, and "the symbolic name of this victory and of the heroic attitude is Adolf Hitler" (p. 5). The new world picture thus emerging would lead to a new kind of philosophy, science, and art, and the claims of so-called culture would be disputed and the idealist presumptions and prejudices cleared away.

Krieck's hostility toward idealism went all the way back to the period of the First World War. It was in his 1917 book on the German idea of the state *(Die deutsche Staatsidee)* that he had first undertaken a critique of philosophical idealism and of the existing educational system in the schools, whose flaws he blamed on the idealist tradition. While praising idealism for its exalted attitude, he called it at the same time "a flight from the unmastered reality of its age" (p. 8).[57] Idealism had constructed a higher world of pure spirit, an empty space of idealities above everyday life, and thus separated spiritual life from that of professional work and economics; it had promoted a false individualism; it had separated the educated from the workers, and thereby made possible the rise of Marxist materialism. Idealism and materialism were nothing but estranged brothers born of the same age. Krieck was convinced that the events of August 1914 signaled the moment when all the established divisions between the German people had fallen away and when the folkish realism first manifested itself.

Though Heidegger stayed away from such polemical denunciations of the idealist tradition and even adopted deliberately the language of spirit in his rectorial address and subsequently praised its "greatness, breadth, and originality,"[58] he too thought that the situ-

ation in no way called for a revival of the idealist tradition, and he too was suspicious of those who, like Bauch and his DPG, were trying to establish their latterday version as the official philosophy of the age. That is certainly clear from his sustained critique of the philosophy of objective value which the traditionalists were trying to promote as their contribution to the national revolution. In opposing themselves to the powerfully conservative wing within German philosophy, Baeumler, Krieck, and Heidegger all identified with Nietzsche. The alliance they struck in the spring of 1933 was above all an alliance of Nietzschean radicals against a traditional philosophical establishment.

The alliance was not to last long, since their conceptions of philosophy were too far apart to allow for constructive collaboration. They could agree on what was to be opposed, but Baeumler's heroic realism, Krieck's populist holism, and Heidegger's existential ontology were ultimately unreconcilable. Though all three were calling for spiritual leadership in the revolution, it soon became clear that each of them was claiming that role for himself and in the name of his own philosophy. Heidegger's relation with Krieck was to be of the shortest duration. It had been initiated in the spring of 1933, but only a year later Krieck's journal *Volk im Werden* was denouncing Heidegger's philosophy as un-German and its author as trying to usurp philosophical leadership. Heidegger himself had, from the beginning, little trust in Krieck's idea of a political science and a politicized university. Without mentioning Krieck, he rejected such a conception of science in his rectorial address. He came to that theme again and again in subsequent statements. Baeumler's relation with Krieck seems never to have been all that close. There is, in any case, no evidence of their working together after 1933.

Baeumler's relation with Heidegger, on the other hand, was more complex and longer-lasting. The two men had known each other since 1928, when Heidegger had written to Baeumler out of the blue to express admiration for his introduction to the Bachofen edition. Heidegger had even suggested Baeumler as his successor at Marburg, but nothing came of it because of resistance within the faculty. Subsequently the two men were in touch through the Nietzsche archives at Weimar. In 1932 Baeumler invited Heidegger to Dresden, and the two spent some days together on a hiking tour.[59] Before taking on the rectorship in 1933 Heidegger tried to

contact Baeumler again to ask him about his own plans for university reform.[60] In June of that year they met once more at a leadership conference organized by the Nazi student association, where both spoke of their reform plans. In the summer they spent time together at Heidegger's retreat in the Black Forest. Baeumler's high estimation of Heidegger at the time is made evident in a confidential memo he wrote in September, where he called Heidegger "the most important appearance in philosophy since Dilthey," adding that *Being and Time* had transformed the philosophical field and Heidegger's influence on philosophy, not only in Germany, was inestimable.[61] Even so, their ultimate estrangement was inevitable.

Though they both saw themselves indebted to Nietzsche, they were from the start at odds over what was still relevant in his work. The difference became evident when Heidegger began to lecture on Nietzsche in 1936. There he attacked Baeumler's neglect of the doctrine of eternal recurrence as a gross failure to understand the unity of Nietzsche's thought. In contrast to Baeumler, he did not make the doctrine of the will to power his own but labeled it the last embodiment of a metaphysical tradition that had now come to an end. In Heidegger's eyes, Nietzsche's real importance lay in his analysis of European nihilism. Unlike Baeumler, he also did not celebrate Nietzsche as a politician but instead left out of his discussion all the political parts of *The Will to Power.* Where Baeumler had derived from Nietzsche's philosophy his heroic realism, Heidegger used reflection on Nietzsche to deepen his own earlier concern with the question of Being; through Nietzsche's account of the history of western philosophy, he was guided to his conception of a history of Being. Baeumler's ultimate conclusion from Nietzsche was a political activism that kept him engaged in Nazi politics until 1945. Faithful to the end, Baeumler came closer to the centers of political power than any other German philosopher of the period. Even so, this did not assure him the spiritual leadership he aspired to, as we will see. Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche, on the other hand, became part of the process of his withdrawal from politics. As the grand perspectives of the history of Being unfolded before his eyes, he came to see human life less and less as autonomous and self-defining and more and more as the outcome of planetary processes over which humans had no control. The activism inher-

ent in the conception of *Dasein* held in *Being and Time* gave way to a call for stillness, holding on, and letting be. If Heidegger was still laying claim to a kind of spiritual leadership at this time, as he surely was, it was not the sort that called for specific political involvement.

7

The Philosophical Conservatives

With the inaugurations of Baeumler, Krieck, and Heidegger, and their much-publicized speeches, the philosophical radicals had clearly taken a lead in the philosophical-political debate of 1933. It was now time for the conservatives to respond, and this they did in October of that year when the DPG held its twelfth annual conference.

The meeting took place at Magdeburg and was devoted to the apparently unpolitical theme of "Purpose, Meaning, and Value." In reality, however, it was an occasion to allow the DPG to pledge its allegiance to Hitler. From its beginning the society had advocated nationalist ideals that were closely akin to those now in control of the political system. It warned again and again that a unique historical crisis was at hand, and it spoke over and over of Germany's singular mission in the world. It detested the republic, elevated folkish values, and bemoaned foreign and Jewish influence. The DPG could in all honesty declare its support for Hitler and his regime at the conference. The speeches and declaration delivered there are now forgotten, together with those that Baeumler and Krieck gave earlier the same year. What is generally remembered are Heidegger's rectorship at Freiburg and the address he delivered in the spring of 1933. But selective memory threatens to distort perception of the historical facts. Against the background of a history effaced, the significance of Heidegger's actions and words looms larger than it actually was. Uninformed hindsight makes Heidegger a singular figure and suggests a direct link between his

thought and Nazi ideology. In order to avoid rash conclusions, it is important to bring out not only Baeumler's and Krieck's contribution to the philosophical politics of 1933 but also what was done at Magdeburg that fall. The philosophers assembled at the DPG's conference were trying to effect a conjunction between philosophy and the new political reality. Only here it was a whole organized group of them who were demonstrating their commitment to the German revolution. Like Baeumler and Krieck but unlike Heidegger, they were no last-minute converts to political activism.

The DPG itself later characterized the meeting as "the first big gathering of important philosophers and philosophically interested personalities in the new Germany which had been specifically dedicated to the question of worldview" (B 8:65).[1] The report in the DPG's journal also said that the assembly had been "conscious of its demanding duty to join in the exploration of the true German worldview" and had stood "under the sign of folkish self-reflection." The meeting began with an address by the DPG's outgoing president, Felix Krueger, who welcomed representatives from many levels of government, dignitaries of the church, heads of various corporate organizations, leaders of industry, guests from abroad, as well as old and new members of the society. Krueger reminded this diverse audience in his opening words that the DPG had been founded in 1917 in order to protect German intellectual life from the influence of foreign ideas. Though the society's initial goal had been to preserve the German philosophical heritage, it had also recognized from the start the need to make the content of German value perception fruitful for contemporary life. In Krueger's eyes there was now a "need for a close coordination between the insights of philosophy and the demands of the moment." The German philosophers were saying yes to the mighty reorganization of the state, while the state was demanding that "philosophy step to its side as a force and power for forming the nation" (B 8:65-66).

There followed the singing of the German anthem and the Nazi "Horst-Wessel Song." Krueger then read a telegram from Hitler: "May the force of true German philosophy contribute to the foundation and strengthening of the German worldview," and the members of the congress thanked the Führer by telegram for his good wishes and trust in them (B 8:67). A high official from the Ministry of the Interior in Berlin spoke next and stressed that "German

philosophy is urgently needed for our people," as it always had been in periods of German rebirth. The ministry spokesman went on to compare Nietzsche, the man who philosophized with a hammer, and Adolf Hitler. Where Nietzsche had been the great revaluator of the established values of the scientific age, Hitler was "the great revaluator of the political ideas and forms of the dying materialist, liberal-Marxist century" (B 8:66).[2] The local military commander in his welcoming words reminded the assembly "of the great military philosophers Frederick the Great, Clausewitz, Goltz, Moltke, and Schlieffen, who had seen the meaning of life and war in struggle" (B 8:67). With such high-minded thoughts behind it the congress was finally ready to turn to its philosophical business.[3]

Though the conference theme was chosen well before the Nazis had come to power, all the speakers strove to relate it to the new political circumstances. That was true, in particular, of the conference's three major speakers, Felix Krueger, Nicolai Hartmann, and Bruno Bauch. All three agreed that the moment called for a determined act of spiritual and philosophical leadership. All three also held that the traditions deriving from the first great epoch of German philosophy should be the basis of the new worldview. At the same time, they took somewhat different lines on which part of the traditional set of ideas was most relevant to the current moment. Where Krueger emphasized the idea of wholeness as the crucial idea, Hartmann stressed the objectivity of value. It was left to Bauch, who was taking over again as leader of the DPG, to bring the two sets of ideas together by maintaining that values must be realized by whole nations and that the values so appropriated were necessarily part of a greater whole. The concepts of value and organic wholeness were thus part of a single doctrine that could serve as the foundation for the true German worldview.[4]

Krueger, as the first speaker in the regular philosophical session, began by raising the question of the limits of causal explanation. Though such limits had often been recognized, he said, it was generally thought sufficient to supplement mechanistic and causal theories with teleological explanations. Teleological theories unfortunately ignored the phenomena of structure and wholeness. That made them unable to account for the integrated character of psychological processes, for the underlying unity of the world, for the wholeness of the human person, and most of all for the nature of

human communities. The question of the ontic character of the world was, moreover, linked to that of the meaning of things, and since both causal and teleological theories were ontologically inadequate, they could not explain that meaning. What was needed was a conception that could see the world as a structured totality.

Krueger said he was certain that such philosophical questions had immediate practical significance. It was, in fact, impossible to make sense of human action as long as one spoke only in terms of conscious purposes. That had been the problem with the democratic state. It had been caught in an obsession with numbers and deliberate purposes and had therefore been unable to recognize the validity of other and deeper powers. Democratic society had proved to have no understanding of the significance of military might, of the deep meaning of the national character, and of the resulting oppositions between states. A democratic state could not even fully acknowledge the value of private property and the existence of different ranks, classes, and degrees of honor. Such a state was, in a word, the symptom of a deformed mentality that recognized no inner bindings. But, Krueger said, "our nation is now finding itself out of its former division. It has arisen out of its decline and we all are honored to be present on this occasion . . . This nation is subjecting itself in freedom to a strict and even a hard order. That is, it wants to find itself, so that it becomes what it has always been in essence. It finally wants to attain its own form" (B 7:465).

THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP

Nicolai Hartmann is a marginal figure today. From the 1920s to the 1950s, however, he was a major presence in the philosophical field in Germany. As a student of Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp, he began his teaching career at Marburg in 1920. Within just over a decade he managed to obtain one of the most prestigious positions in German philosophy, a chair at the University of Berlin. The advent of the Nazis did not interfere with his appointment. Without difficulty he retained his position in Berlin until the end of the war and then left for the tranquillity of Göttingen, where he taught up to his death in 1950. Cool, cautious, and sober in temperament, modern and yet conservative in outlook, interested in the philosophical tradition as well as in contemporary science, rationally

minded and fair in judgment, Hartmann seemed to many at the time the paradigm of a philosopher. Some even considered him equal to Heidegger in philosophical importance. In retrospect, though, he appears as a somewhat pale figure. One of his students was later to say that it was Hartmann's peculiar destiny "that he, who was in the highest sense a conservative thinker, should have lived in a time that was more ready to throw things overboard than to retain them."[5] He now seems to be no more than a transitional voice. In helping to overthrow neo-Kantian idealism by advancing critical realism, in promoting work in ontology and philosophical anthropology, as well as in the theory of values, Hartmann was a man of the moment. He was at the same time sufficiently attached to the tradition to be called a "timeless thinker" preoccupied with the great traditional problems of metaphysics, ethics, and ontology.

What is now forgotten, even by those who recall Hartmann's philosophical work, is the fact that during the 1920s he associated himself with the DPG and other right-wing causes and that in 1933 he hailed Hitler at Magdeburg. In order to understand this association, one must remember that Hartmann was born in Riga, Latvia, in 1882 and that the overwhelming political emotion of the Baltic Germans of his generation was a fear of the Russian empire—a fear that was multiplied after 1918 by the Bolshevik revolution.[6] That Hartmann was motivated by such concerns is suggested by the fact that for years he served on the editorial board of Houston Stuart Chamberlain's journal *Deutschlands Erneuerung*, a rabidly nationalistic, antisemitic, and antibolshevist publication that had close links to some of the most reactionary Baltic agitators.[7] Hartmann's correspondence with Heinz Heimsoeth, his closest personal and philosophical friend, indicates that until the end of the First World War neither of them was preoccupied with political questions.[8] Like other Germans of the war generation they appear to have been driven to the political right by the loss. In 1917 the two joined Bauch's DPG shortly after its founding and agreed to work on the editorial board of its journal, even though they privately expressed qualms about the society's political direction and about Bauch's antisemitism. During the 1920s their hesitations appear to have evaporated. In that period, in which the DPG identified more and more with the Nazi cause, Hartmann and Heimsoeth immersed themselves more and more deeply in its activities. After he moved

to Berlin, Hartmann let himself be appointed chairman of the DPG's influential local chapter, and Heimsoeth became chairman of the corresponding Cologne chapter—positions they held to the end of the Nazi period. Heimsoeth, moreover, took on the editorship of the DPG's journal—a role he performed until 1945—while Hartmann became an active participant in the society's declaration of loyalty to Hitler at Magdeburg.

If Hartmann impresses one, despite these political activities, as apolitical and disengaged, it is probably due to the fact that he treated political questions with the same caution that characterized his approach to philosophy. His biographer was to write of him that in 1933 "he looked upon what was happening in a carefully weighing and thoughtful manner in accordance with his principle to be suspicious of nothing but also to accept nothing before it has proven itself."[9] This caution was clearly evident in his talk at Magdeburg. Almost everything he said on the occasion can be found in his earlier philosophical writings—except for certain small, though important omissions and certain other equally small but equally important additions. Hartmann's greatest achievement at Magdeburg was to let the context give his words a political meaning. While the DPG's conference report later praised his talk for having been closely interwoven "with the present will of the German people for a renewal" (B 8:68), the address is permeated by a certain highmindedness that at once suggests a link to the political present and obscures it. Such a lack of specificity is admittedly an essential part of Hartmann's intellectual style, but here it served the further purpose of leaving his meaning undefined enough to allow it to be interpreted in various ways according to the varying political circumstances. Hartmann's caution paid off. As a result he managed to flourish throughout a long career that took him from the Weimar Republic through the Nazi years to postwar Germany without losing even a month's salary.

Basic to Hartmann's philosophical thought was his "realism." This amounted to a rejection of the neo-Kantian claim that philosophy was basically a theory of knowledge and the assertion of the priority of ontology over epistemology.[10] This turn had first become evident in Hartmann's *Outline of a Metaphysics of Knowledge* of 1921 where he argued that to know an object was not to produce it, as idealism has held, "but the grasping of something which exists as

well before all knowledge and is independent of it."[11] The fact that the objects of knowledge revealed themselves in this way as transcendent to the act of cognition convinced Hartmann that a descriptive ontology of those objects was possible and that such an ontology could serve to lay the groundwork for a future metaphysics. Much of Hartmann's work was devoted precisely to the task of spelling out a descriptive ontology of the conditions of being, of the modes and strata of being, of its categories, relations, principles, and dependencies. In writings like *The Construction of the Real World,*[12] he set out to delineate a hierarchy of being that ascended from inorganic through organic nature to individual consciousness and finally to culture. Two points stand out in this undertaking. The first is that reality is seen in terms of a strict order that in turn is conceived as an ascendance from the lower to the higher. The second is Hartmann's conviction that higher strata of being are necessarily weaker than the lower ones and are thus dependent on them.

Though Hartmann saw his ontological investigations as preliminaries to a full-blown metaphysics, he was skeptical of traditional system building. "The time for philosophical systems is over," he said, though the goal of philosophy would always be systematic.[13] Metaphysics would from now on have to be understood not as a general concern with the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality, nor as a struggle between different worldviews, but as a systematic unraveling of certain recalcitrant problems. Metaphysical problems had the peculiar characteristic of being ultimately unsolvable and could be approached only through a method of painstaking research that could accept partial answers. Logic and mathematics, physics and biology, the philosophy of history, ethics and aesthetics, were giving rise to such unsolvable problems. Philosophy would have to examine all these areas. The old static picture of philosophy would have to give way to a historical and dynamical one.

For the purpose of understanding Hartmann's address at Magdeburg, we need to focus on just one aspect of this conception of philosophy. The address concerned itself specifically with the question of moral and political order, and it argued, first, that there existed an objective order of value whose ontological structure could be investigated and, second, that our understanding of this order was necessarily incomplete at any given time and manifested itself only in a long process of historical approximation. Already in his *Ethics*

of 1926 Hartmann had undertaken to describe what he conceived to be the objective order and hierarchy of the realm of values. The peculiar fact about values was, as Hartmann put it, that they were ideal postulates, normative principles "whose demand is transformed into reality only when a real power appropriates and carries them through" (p. 326). In fact, "values neither originate nor disintegrate in history, only the consciousness of value changes." The realm of values was, in fact, like a foreign land that remained to be explored. "Only slowly and in a historically far-reaching process of maturation will it open itself to the seeking and probing value-consciousness. It is impossible to accelerate the process arbitrarily. Step by step the human value-organ must grow towards its object" (p. 324).

Hartmann's address at Magdeburg was to take up precisely those themes. He began it by expressing agreement with Krueger's insistence on the difference between purposes and values; he said that it was equally important to distinguish between meanings and values. That distinction was, however, not always sharply observed. The first and most significant difference was no doubt that values are always given, while meanings are chosen. "Man cannot grasp his own nature without grasping a meaning to which everything is related that belongs to him. Wherever in history there has been a question of human renewal, man's own essence has appeared to him in a new self-reflection" (B 8:1). Plato had become the classical philosopher of the west because he put the problem of meaning above that of being. His conception, profound as it was, had unfortunately also severed meaning and value from the world of becoming. Kant and the idealists after him had been the first to see that meaning and value really belong to this world. Indeed, "It is the achievement of German idealism to have broken through the transcendence of meaning" (B 8:14). A third essential step forward had been taken by the philosophy of value, which had come to recognize that there exists a plenitude of different values. Here Hartmann came to speak of what he considered to be Nietzsche's contribution to the debate:

> In the critique of Christian morality and its principle of charity, the seeker Nietzsche came up with that insight. Though his critique overshot its goal, there remains this positive element

> in his thought, that there are values which are covered over in Christian morality . . . A plenitude of other human values comes thereby into value-consciousness: force, will, power, beauty, vitality, happiness, the readiness to bear responsibility, and many others. (B 8:17)

Nietzsche had certainly gone too far, according to Hartmann, in holding that man had not only the power to grasp values and to realize them but the even greater power to invent them. "The material value-ethics of our own day has cut this excess back to normal size. It is the synthesis of the Kantian apriority and timelessness of moral demands with Nietzsche's recognition of the manifold values" (B 8:18). Not the values themselves changed, but merely our grasp of them. We think otherwise only because we confuse meaning and value. Men must indeed give meaning to the world, and only through human actions are values realized. Yet Plato had been right in assuming that "all value is eternal value and all meaning eternal meaning" (B 8:25). He had failed to see, however, that eternal value and meaning can exist in things that change.

Values are realized when human beings choose them to give meaning to the world, and such meaning exists only as a result of human action. Hartmann had argued previously that values could be realized only by a being that was itself real, that was open to the call of evaluative norms, and that could take a stand in favor of what ought to be. He concluded that "among the beings we know, only man satisfies those three conditions."[14] To this he now added at Magdeburg that it was always whole nations rather than individuals who gave meaning to the world. "In every time and in every people," he said, "that is valid which is in accord with the living spirit of the community; its principle determines what is right and what is wrong. The individual is tied to the national spirit to which it belongs, and real insight is for it to grasp what that spirit is" (B 8:13).

The national community in turn depended on the great individual, on a leader to lead it to a realization of its meaning. "Neither public opinion nor a numerical majority can clearly express its own tendency. Only the 'great individual' can tell it what it is" (B 8:14). For Plato the leader had been the man illuminated by the idea, by the vision of a transcendent realm of values; that picture had been

corrected by Hegel, who recognized that the leader must always be rooted in what is historically real:

> He sees what is essential in the already existing tendencies of the objective spirit and brings it to expression. He does not grope for that which is far away but into that which is substantial in the present; he discovers only what all bear in themselves but do not yet know. Since knowledge alone can raise freedom to reality, he is the one through whom all giving of purpose and meaning in history is mediated. (B 8:14)

The leader's task was not merely to rule, to organize, or to reconstitute the state; it was rather to *see* what was essential, to *grasp* what was substantial, to *discover* what others did not yet know consciously. Only because of his special knowledge was such a leader capable of mediating purpose and meaning in history. Reminding his audience that the time was one of transformation and renewal, Hartmann emphasized that now was the time for true *Führertum.* This called for an exertion of will and involved a struggle, particularly at the present moment. "Everything great in history has struggled upwards against great resistances," Hartmann declaimed in conclusion. "Not in happy enjoyment do the nations of the earth become strong but in need and fight and heavy labor" (B 8:37).

It would be easy to dismiss Hartmann's eulogy on the Führer and the idea of leadership as an opportunistic addendum to his theory of value. He was certainly intent on making his words at Magdeburg bear on the political moment. Except for the apocalyptic tone of voice he adopted for the occasion, however, the underlying ideas had been formed long before the advent of National Socialism. He had long been convinced that "the mass never knows directly what it really wants. It must be told, it must be put before their eyes what it is" (p. 322).[15] He had long argued that the peculiar "power of leading ideas" that rule over human needs, desires, and passions was most clearly recognized by the individual figure of a Führer (p. 321). A leader had to learn to free himself from general opinion, had to grow beyond it and lead the people in roundabout ways to accept his own realization of the idea. There was, however, one point at which Hartmann's earlier doctrine of leadership diverged from what he said at Magdeburg. Earlier he had emphasized that the leader "remains necessarily human," that he too must operate

"within the limits of human individuality" and that even the great leader will, in the end, lack an adequate grasp of the political life of his time (p. 320). Such thoughts Hartmann evidently thought it wise to omit on the day the DPG was declaring its loyalty to Adolf Hitler's political leadership.

Meaning, Value, and National Socialism

Posterity has separated the names of Hartmann and Bauch. Whereas Hartmann managed to save his philosophical reputation beyond the end of the Third Reich, Bauch, who died during the war, was quickly forgotten after 1945. His engagement on behalf of folkish and Nazi ideas, his outspoken antisemitism, even the DPG and its journal, were considered embarrassments. In philosophy itself the time had passed over his attempt to breathe new life into neo-Kantian idealism. His long-winded writings lacked the inventiveness that might have kept them alive in this changed philosophical climate. Yet Bauch and Hartmann had much in common. They both belonged to that generation of Germans from the eastern part of German territory who felt threatened by the surge of Slavic nationalism. Philosophically both came out of the neo-Kantian school and worked in the area of objective value theory. Their political and philosophical consonance manifested itself, moreover, in their long-term collaboration in the DPG and became most evident when they joined together at Magdeburg to deliver their addresses.

Bauch's address, was meant to combine the themes that Krueger and Hartmann had taken up before him. Like them he was eager to show that the German philosophical tradition had an important contribution to make to the Nazi revolution. He agreed with Krueger and Hartmann that it should play a role of spiritual leadership in the present situation. Speaking dramatically of the "miraculous national revolution," he declared its mission to be the overcoming of the false spirit of pragmatism and materialism that had taken hold in Germany over the last century. He added that it was "the holy duty and task" of German philosophy to collaborate on this task. Combining Krueger's and Hartmann's preceding considerations, Bauch argued that individual values had to be understood to be a part of an organic realm of values and that the human appropriation of values was possible only within a "coherent unity

of wholeness of the highest order" (B 8:58). In attempting such a reconciliation, Bauch was by no means treading new ground, since he had always spoken of the coherence of the world of being and that of norms in the overarching notion of the Idea. He was, in fact, merely adapting his previous thoughts in order to make them relevant to the Nazi revolution.

Bauch also began his address by distinguishing between two related concepts. Where Krueger had spoken of the difference between purposiveness and meaning, and Hartmann of that between value and meaning, Bauch took up the distinction of values and ends. Ends and values were in no way the same. "An end exists always only for myself insofar as I make it the goal of my intention. A value, in contrast, has an existence that is independent of my intention, removed from my will" (B 8:42). An end exists only insofar as someone has posited something as his end, but "a value is independent of such positing, stands above all intention and will, is independent not only from will and intention but from all subjectivity and individuality, is, to say it even more generally, not bound to any individual existence" (B 8:42–43).

Bauch went on to say that subjective ends on their own could never give meaning to human life, that such meaning also required the existence of objective values. He considered it evident that "whenever we express a sentence with meaning there is always presupposed a certain objective value . . . the truth-value" (B 8:45). All knowledge and all science presupposed an objective value. By recognizing that fact, German science and philosophy had once again returned to the insights of Plato's theory of ideas. Plato argued that the sophists' denial of an objective truth-value and their claim that truth was merely purposive utility put them on the level of monkeys, pigs, and tadpoles. The denial of an objective truth-value was, in reality, evidence of the denier's own inferiority. Such a denial represented an individualistic relativism that was characteristic of an age of decline and dissolution. Bauch thought that Plato's invective against the sophists fitted the present age:

> Nobody will deny that this account fits our own age to some degree—no one who has until recently been forced to observe with his own eyes such horrendous phenomena of our age as atheistic propaganda, the scandal of a freethinking which is

> free of any real thought, the political mass and majority seesawing of the democratic party state, the cultural bolshevism of the literati and whatever other absurdity. (B 8:50)

This catalogue of ills was for Bauch a symptom of a deeper condition: the denial of the absolute value of truth, the confusion between subjective purposes and objective values, and the identification of truth with mere usefulness. That was the foreign ideology against which the DPG's whole campaign had been directed—the influence of pragmatism, utilitarianism, liberalism, and materialism. It was, Bauch added, grotesque to see that those who opposed his point of view declared themselves to be authentically spiritual while they exhibited, in fact, "merely the formal virtuosity of a superficially sparkling, dry ratiocination that enjoys wallowing in the nether world of slime and dirt, but cannot enter the holy depths of the realm of values."

Bauch reminded his audience of Richard Wagner's words: "To be German is to do a thing for its own sake" (B 8:52). This expressed, he said, the truly German attitude toward scientific research, sharply distinct from the pursuit of science for the purpose of self-promotion. "Have we not recently experienced the repulsive phenomenon that science was degraded to an advertising medium by Einstein, Freud, and those who consorted with them?" (B 8:53). What they engaged in was a caricature of scientific research which they used for the satisfaction of their own self-importance. "In the former case an eccentric at best satisfied his individual curiosity and made its object quite unobjectively to its medium, while in the latter a hero of self-promotion satisfied a certain hunger for money and a certain need to generate individual sensation or respectability." Even to an inattentive listener, such remarks were bound to carry an antisemitic message. What Bauch did say, in any case, was that neither the theory of relativity nor psychoanalysis was in accord with the German conception of truth.

There was a further message in Wagner's aphorism. It also meant that whenever a thing is done for its own sake, it will be done for the sake of the national community. The more purely a researcher serves his subject matter, "the more he serves also the social whole in which his activity stands, i.e., the nation" (B 8:54). The value areas of life were not detachable from the roots of folkdom, just as

folkdom was not detachable from values. In agreement with Hartmann, he said that objective values were, of course, never completely realized in our actions, which were always a striving toward them. "Standing still and rest are banned from the true life of the values. It is, to speak with Luther, 'not a being but a becoming'" (B 8:56). In this alone lay the meaning of Nietzsche's revaluation of values, he said, once more in agreement with Hartmann. Though some of Nietzsche's own closest associates had understood him as advancing a relativism of values, Nietzsche had really meant to say that every pursuit of values is always a process of approximation to the one objective realm.

Because the life of value was thus a dynamic thing, our purposes had no rigid, solid being but were a doing, a becoming, a process that "fitted into the whole we call the world" (B 8:58). In trying to reconcile Krueger's and Hartmann's accounts of the new tasks of German philosophy, Bauch here made a significant adjustment to his earlier philosophical thought. He spoke no longer of the Idea as the unifying principle of reality and value. It was rather the community, the nation, that he saw now as the point of unification, and so he concluded: "Our own true freedom, as a being free to the realization of the divine eternal destiny of human life on earth, can therefore never lie outside the people . . . We become therefore truly free in the freedom of the nation by joining responsibly in its unified action" (B 8:59).

HEYSE AS A MEDIATOR

The speeches at Magdeburg vividly illustrate how strongly German philosophers were willing to attach themselves to the new political system, but they also reinforced the existing divisions between them. Baeumler, Krieck, and Heidegger had all called for a fundamental renewal of the university and identified themselves with the demands of the radical students. No such calls were heard at the DPG's conference. The speakers at the conference stood for the existing university system and for the philosophical ideas on which it was founded. For the philosophical radicals, the renewal of the institution was tied to their hope for a renewal in philosophy. The conservatives at Magdeburg were hoping for the preservation and strengthening of the great German tradition and for the acceptance

of their own reworking of that tradition as the philosophical basis of the Nazi worldview. Though the DPG had touted the occasion as the unified effort of German philosophers, it was in reality only the expression of one wing of the philosophical community. Heidegger never showed up for the occasion; Baeumler and Krieck, who were present, did not utter a word and left the conference in disgust.[16]

Given the divisions within the philosophical field, there were those who sought to mediate between the opposing groups for the good of the country and the national revolution. Most prominent among them was Hans Heyse, who occupied the Kant chair at Königsberg and who was that fall about to begin his own term as rector of the university. Born in Bremen in 1891, Heyse belonged to the same generation as Baeumler, Krieck, Heidegger, Hartmann, and Bauch. After studying at Heidelberg, Marburg, and Leipzig, he served as a soldier in the First World War. After the war Heyse was influenced by the neo-Kantian philosopher Alois Riehl and published various works on Kantian problems. He finally obtained a position first at Breslau and then in 1932 at Königsberg.

By 1933, however, he had come philosophically and politically close to Heidegger. In his writings of this period, the influence of Heidegger's language and ideas is apparent. Heyse had also decided by 1933 to engage himself politically on behalf of the Nazis. After the war he explained:

> In the difficult situation of the modern world, and particularly of Germany after 1914, National Socialism came to power in 1933 as a not yet clearly defined movement with much promise. In long, friendly conversations with Professor Martin Heidegger in the spring of 1933, we concluded that this movement would in some way be a destiny for Germany and that everything depended on creating an intellectual and moral core for it.[17]

Heyse's political engagement at the time involved not only assuming the responsibilities of the rectorship at Königsberg. In November 1933 he became one of the organizers of a public meeting at Leipzig, where many prominent academics, including Heidegger, expressed their support for Hitler's regime. The declaration issued on that occasion was signed by more than a thousand professors.

Heidegger's philosophical influence is clearly evident first of all in

Heyse's rectorial address—delivered in November of 1933—which closely parallels Heidegger's earlier speech. The influence is even more apparent in Heyse's major work, *Idea and Existence (Idee und Existenz)* of 1935, in which he freely adopts Heidegger's talk of *Dasein* and *Existenz*, of truth as unhiddenness *(Unverborgenheit)*, of time and temporality, of the overcoming of the subject-object distinction, and of the crisis of modernity. There is, in addition, much talk in Heyse's book of the need for a radical rethinking of Greek philosophy and tragedy, of Meister Eckhart and Hölderlin, and also of the metaphysical foundations of logic and historical thinking. Despite such appropriations, Heyse's texts have none of the fascination that Heidegger's still possess. That is due not only to Heyse's limitations as a philosopher and writer, but even more to the fact that he put his philosophical work from 1933 onward completely at the disposal of the political needs of the moment. He made intellectual compromises that lack philosophical justification. In spite of such shortcomings (perhaps precisely because of them), Heyse's rectorial address and his book are pivotal texts for understanding the entanglement of German philosophy with National Socialism. No balanced assessment of Heidegger's political involvement is, in fact, possible without comparing it to Heyse's.[18]

The similarities between Heidegger's and Heyse's addresses are partly due to the fact that both dealt with the standard themes of the philosophical-political debate of the time. They both spoke of crisis, the German mission, the need for spiritual leadership, the new order. Where Heidegger had talked of Germany in its hour of greatest need, Heyse referred to "a fateful turning point of the ages" (p. 3).[19] Both saw the crisis and its resolution centered on Germany. As Heyse put it: "In the greatest crisis of our existence, in which the question was that of the life and death of our nation, we experienced that greater and truer than all the others are the basic values of Germanic-German man" (p. 10). Both Heidegger and Heyse thought that German philosophy was called on to make a unique contribution. While the Germans had a special mission in the world, Heyse said, they were often tempted to forget their calling. He added: "It is the highest and heaviest business of philosophy and science to keep the true meaning of our deepest task open and free" (p. 14). Finally, Heyse also agreed with Heidegger that the crisis of the west manifested itself specifically in the modern understanding

of knowledge. It was crucial to ask "how the idea of science can come to be renewed from inside and how science can become free to its innermost meaning through the essential law of our historical life" (p. 3). The pursuit of knowledge would from now on have to serve the political needs of the community, and the German university would have to be reconstituted in accord with this new conception.

Though these are significant parallels, they do not in themselves establish Heyse's debt to Heidegger. That debt becomes apparent from what Heyse actually says about how the understanding of science and the university would have to be renewed. Such a renewal required first of all a critique of the modern view of knowledge. For the Greeks knowledge had been "that deeper consciousness of the eternal order of being and life in which humans stand and through whose affirmation they persist—a consciousness which can be obtained only through the valor of existence" (p. 5). The modern understanding, on the other hand, was characterized by the dominance of a mathematizing natural science, by its methodological individualism, and by its identification of reason with theory. The latter implied that knowledge was primordially a knowledge of things, and "all being, even human *Dasein*, human life itself is interpreted according to this paradigm" (p. 5).

Heyse said that the loss of the Greek understanding of knowledge had been due to a revaluation of values brought about by Christianity. The modern conception of science that emerged from this had, in particular, affected our understanding of society, which it took to consist of separate individuals, society itself being no more than the result of the free play of individual forces. From that idea had come almost all the modern ideologies, not only bourgeois liberalism and capitalism but even proletarian anticapitalism. The societies of Western Europe, France, England, and most recently Germany itself had all fallen under the sway of the same false conception. It was, in fact, in Germany where it had triumphed most visibly since the war. Hence it was also Germany that "in a mighty turn, in a radical revolution . . . had taken upon itself a European task" (p. 9). This revolution demanded above all a reshaping of the German universities, for the great movement of renewal was above all a "metaphysical act." Heyse went on to say that we can grasp the new idea of science and the university only when we realize with Nietzsche

that a new set of values was needed—one that leads out of the modern conception of science, "that expression of a broken existence which, as an untrue existence, leads by necessity into catastrophe" (p. 9).

So much agreement between Heyse's and Heidegger's addresses might blind one to the fact that there remained fundamental differences between them. The first and most obvious is that Heidegger carefully refrained from talking explicitly of Hitler and National Socialism in his address, whereas Heyse made repeated, positive references to both. National Socialism, he declared, was the leading force in European renewal. The Führer of the German people was the leader who embodied and revealed the essential law of historical life to his people. Hitler had given his people a German socialism and "National Socialism is the historical bearer and executor of this will, which realizes and will realize those basic values in a true national order, in a genuine economic order, in a deeper political order" (p. 11). It might be argued that Heidegger said similar things in other public speeches during the time of his rectorate. That is true, although the fact that the one avoided specific political references at the decisive moment of his inauguration to office and the other emphasized such references also signaled a difference in degree of political commitment. Heidegger's active engagement was, as the following years were to show, short-lived, and he withdrew more and more in disappointment over political realities. Heyse remained a political activist to the end and never seems to have wavered in his faith in Hitler. Their different life histories were ultimately grounded in their different views of the relation of philosophy to politics. For Heidegger the two undertakings were distinct, whereas for Heyse "science and life, idea and existence, philosophy and politics are deeply united" (p. 12).[20]

It was also this intense concern with politics that drove Heyse to mediate between the hostile philosophical factions in 1933. The national revolution required a unified philosophical response, as he saw it. Common ground had to be found between those who called for a radical philosophical renewal and those who wanted a return to tradition and to a realm of unchanging values. This political purpose most sharply separated Heyse from Heidegger, who was perfectly willing to engage in sharp philosophical confrontation. Heyse sought to breach the divide by agreeing with Heidegger that there

could be no independent realm of values, but he thought it possible to derive another kind of value from the existential conditions of man. What he envisaged was in essence the existential ethic that Heidegger had always shied away from. When Heyse said in his rectorial address that Nietzsche had brought the old system of values down and a new one was needed, he was expressing precisely a hope for reconciliation between Heidegger's side and that represented by Bauch and the DPG. Comparing his own political engagement to Plato's involvement in politics, he finally declared: "As Plato's philosophy takes off from the basic values of Greek *Dasein* and reaches its height in his *Republic* . . . so our philosophy and science takes off from the basic values of Germanic-German man . . . and reaches its highest level in the idea and the reality of the Reich" (p. 12). This was a theme to which he would return again, particularly in his *Idee und Existenz*. Here the two conjoined terms of the title were clearly meant to stand for the two opposed traditions. The book sought once more to reconcile them by arguing for the ultimate identity of normative value and historical reality. Those efforts could not, in fact, heal the existing divisions. Neither side took Heyse's attempt at reconciliation seriously. Philosophical radicals and philosophical conservatives remained locked in their struggle over who could define the principles of the national revolution.

Plato's Self-Appointed Guardians

In his rectorial address Heidegger had boldly made a "commitment to *spiritual* leadership" and tried to appropriate the historical moment for the purposes of his own philosophy.[21] Privately, he told his friend Jaspers that his goal was "den Führer zu führen," to lead Hitler himself.[22] Even after he abandoned his attempt to gain immediate political influence, he continued to lay claim to such a higher form of leadership. Commenting on Plato's statement that it is essential for philosophers to be rulers, he said in 1936:

> This sentence does not mean that philosophy professors should run the business of the state, but that the basic attitudes which support and direct the community must be founded on essential knowledge, assuming always that the community as an order of being is grounded in itself and does not receive its standards from another order.[23]

Such essential knowledge concerned the question of the meaning of being, and Heidegger made it clear both in 1933 and three years later that he considered himself the most qualified man to examine that question. If the new politics was to be based on essential knowledge, it would have to be the politics of Heideggerian thought.

Heidegger's political engagement thus appears as an attempt to secure his philosophical influence in the unstable conditions of the 1930s. His rectorial address was more than an expression of support for the Nazis; it was also meant to promote Heidegger's own philosophy and his own claim to spiritual leadership.[24] Heidegger was not the only contender for this role. Baeumler, Krieck, Hartmann, Bauch, and Heyse made similar claims. All those others have faded away. We recall the words of his students and followers, who took him to be the outstanding philosopher of the age and the secret king of German philosophy, and we conclude that Heidegger must have occupied a singular position in the 1930s.[25] Only a thorough grasp of the historical facts can correct this misinterpretation. Heidegger's claim to leadership was by no means secure when he made it in his address. It was open to challenge from other philosophers and remained so all through the Nazi years. As the years went by, Heidegger's position became, if anything, more marginal. Though *he* may have continued to believe that the time required his leadership, the others were barely aware that he was still making that claim.

When the German philosophers spoke of their calling to spiritual leadership, they were employing a notion that had much currency in the political debate of the time. The call for leadership was, indeed, a leitmotif of public opinion in Weimar Germany.[26] It was a theme that fascinated even the most liberal thinkers of the time. Max Weber, for instance, talked of charismatic leadership, and his brother Alfred spoke of the need for a "leadership democracy." Such beliefs were encouraged by the pervasive turmoil of the postwar years, the incessant struggle between parties and interest groups in the republic, the constant changes of chancellors and governments. They also reflected nostalgia for the stability of the prewar empire and the memory of Bismarck's strong-handed form of government. Above all they were the expression of a general tendency toward authoritarianism and of a poor understanding of democratic principles.

The idea of democracy is not easily reconciled with charismatic leadership. In theory at least, a democracy has no need for leaders, since it is governed by autonomous citizens who have come together in a free assembly for their mutual advantage. The state is ruled by the power of law rather than by individuals, and the law has been instituted by the consent of a free and politically equal citizenry. In reality even democracies are associations of unequals, and hence there will inevitably be leaders of political movements, activists and a silent majority, officeholders and a more or less compliant public. Democratic leaders are, nevertheless, sharply distinct from the charismatic kind. They are chosen by popular consent, remain directly responsible to those they lead, and are constrained by constitution and law. Real (as against ideal) democracies are distinguished from systems of authoritarian leadership not by the absence of leaders but by their abundance. There is a plurality of leadership, and the various leaders (at different levels of government) hold independent positions in virtue of the power of law and direct popular election. Democracies are characterized, moreover, by functioning mechanisms for changing leaders which are exercised on a regular and routine basis.[27]

But this was not what a large part of the German public was longing for. On the right, the political leaders of the Weimar Republic were dismissed as meddling agitators and parliamentary debate as useless babbling. Weimar democracy was seen as a system without any "true" leaders. "God give us a leader and help us to be a true following," *Deutschlands Erneuerung* wrote.[28] Democracy itself was attacked as un-German, and other systems of government were proposed that modeled themselves on accounts of Germanic tribal rule. In these pictures there invariably appeared the figure of the great leader who came to office because "he made himself by understanding the history of his people, by knowing and willing himself as the leader."[29] The leader was a messianic figure. He represented, as Ernst Krieck put it, "a human type superior to that of the following and the community" and was the one who "formed a new order of life, created a new kind of humanity, was at once politician and educator" (p. 392).[30] In this picture there existed a natural and organic bond between the leader and his following, which needed no confirmation through an act of election. "The leader is not without us, just as we are not without him," Krieck

wrote. "A stream of energy runs in a circle from him to us and from us to him . . . The leader's destiny is the destiny of the German people" (p. 390). Leadership is a gift that manifests itself in the leader's "instinctual certainty" and his unique "luck" as leader. The great leader is thus no "individual personality" imposing his own will on a recalcitrant people; he is no dictator and not meant to be sovereign—but he is also not merely the chief executive of the state, the corporation, or even the people.[31]

When Heidegger and his colleagues spoke in similar terms of their own claims to spiritual leadership, they were not simply appropriating the political rhetoric of their time. Instead they found rhetoric to correspond to conceptions of leadership that had long been current in philosophy. There existed the picture of the philosopher as a leader gifted with that same "instinctual certainty" and "luck" which the public discourse ascribed to the political leader. The philosopher could lead all the inquiry into reasons and causes, perhaps represented a higher type of humanity because of his superior grasp of things. Because of these qualifications, the philosopher had a role even in the political realm. No one had made these claims more explicitly than Plato in the *Republic.* It should not surprise us that he was so often referred to in the philosophers' public speeches during 1933. Heidegger concluded his rectorial address with a dramatic invocation of the *Republic.* In Magdeburg Hartmann and Bauch referred to Plato as the founder of the philosophy of value, and for Heyse Plato was the paradigmatic philosopher of the new age. For the Nazi philosophers, Plato became the most authoritative political thinker and the *Republic* the most widely read work on political theory. His critique of democracy, his militarism, his belief in the need for a strict political order, and his commitment to the existence of different social ranks all fitted the prevailing political mood. But Plato's most important teaching, as far as the philosophers were concerned, was his famous assertion that a well-ordered state required philosophical leadership. Plato's attack on the political systems of his time had its root in his rejection of *any* unphilosophical conception of politics. In place of the old style of politics, he wanted to erect a system in which the philosophers themselves would be the supreme guardians of the state. They would draw their authority not from popular approval or from brute power but from their access to philosophical truth itself. How was the ideal

state to be brought about? What was "the smallest change that would bring a state to this manner of government"? The smallest change, Plato declared, would be that "either philosophers become kings in our states or those whom we call our kings and rulers take seriously and adequately to the pursuit of philosophy, and there is a conjunction of these two things, political power and philosophy" (473C).[32]

Where could philosophical leaders be found? Plato was certain that existing society was unlikely to foster them. A philosophical nature was in any case "a rare growth among men and is found in only a few" (491B). In a corrupt society even those rare exceptions were likely to be corrupted, since "the best endowed souls become worse than the others under bad education" (491B-E). It was almost impossible for real philosophers to emerge and flourish in existing society. That was only likely to happen when a philosopher understood that there is

> nothing sound or right in any present politics . . . [and] remains quiet, minds his own affairs, and, as it were, standing aside under shelter of a wall in a storm and blast of dust and sleet and seeing others filled full of lawlessness, is content if in any way he may keep himself free from iniquity and unholy deeds throughout his life and take his departure with fair hope, serene and well content when the end comes. (496E)

Such a sheltered existence, however, was not the greatest fulfillment of which philosophy was capable. That would be found only when philosophers could move actually existing society toward the ideal state, an extremely difficult task to accomplish. "For all great things are precarious and, as the proverb truly says, fine things are hard" (497D).

There thus emerged in Plato's words a double picture of the state, of philosophy, and of their interrelation. There was, on the one side, existing society which was un- and antiphilosophical in character. To this corresponded a philosophizing that was either itself corrupt or could exist only in retreat from its time. Politics and philosophy would be alienated in this condition. On the other side was a society organized according to absolute standards of justice, to the true philosophy. Politics and philosophy would be one in this condition. The philosopher would be the person who set the soci-

ety's standards, who realized the society and stood over it as guardian.

The question was, of course, to determine who was a true philosopher and who was corrupt. "When these are clearly discriminated, it will be possible to defend ourselves by showing that to them by their very nature belong the study of philosophy and political leadership" (474C). No one would be in a position to adjudicate the competing claims except the philosophers themselves. Plato engaged himself incessantly in this struggle over who was to count as a true philosopher. When the German philosophers made once again a claim to the spiritual leadership of the state, they also faced the question of who among them should be considered a true philosopher. If the new state demanded philosophical leadership, the question would be who was called to such leadership. Given the multiplicity of claimants, a struggle was inevitable.

It was, in any case, the established consonance between this philosophical conception of leadership and the idea of charismatic political leadership that allowed the philosophers to move so easily between their own and the political domain. Given the understanding they had of themselves as philosophers, it was natural for them to take part in the political process. Though they recognized that there were natural divisions between philosophy and politics, they considered it their task to overcome them. In taking on that function, they never questioned the self-understanding on which they based it. To think of oneself as a spiritual leader, as a seer and guru, may invest one's concern with an aura of power. It is also a conception of philosophy that is thoroughly unfree. The philosophers who thought in terms of leadership had no difficulty in accepting the kind of leadership that Hitler had to offer. The picture that Heidegger may have had of himself as spiritual leader standing next to the political leader may have been unrealistic—but it did evolve from an understanding that the two conceptions of leadership were exactly alike.

To question the ideal of philosophical leadership is not to deny the existence of inequalities and differences between human beings. We are entitled to recognize the differences between Plato and Heidegger and others of less creative and productive talent. But we can respond to such inequalities in different ways. We can affirm them, or we can acknowledge them as fact and then set out to pass

over them. The philosophical claim to leadership has regularly affirmed. Still there have always been those thinkers who—critically and skeptically—have refused the mantle of leadership. They have been the free spirits who give philosophy its life. It was Heidegger's weakness and that of his colleagues that they could not free themselves from the stifling tradition of an assumed authority.

8

Ideology after 1933

In 1934 Adolf Hitler was once again on his way to the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth when he visited the Nietzsche archives at Weimar. He had made his first visit there the previous year. This time he appeared in a plain dark suit, his lapel unobtrusively decorated by a party pin, his usually unruly hair neatly combed back. He was accompanied by his personal photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann. The main purpose of the visit was to give Hoffmann a chance to take a picture of Hitler contemplating the bust of Nietzsche, which stood in the reception room. The picture appeared duly in the German press and was later incorporated in Hoffmann's popular book *Hitler as Nobody Knows Him,* which by 1938 had sold almost half a million copies.[1] The volume contained a hundred captioned photographs of Hitler at various stages of his life: as a schoolboy, a soldier in the First World War, a political agitator, in Nazi uniform surrounded by party faithful, inspecting factories, negotiating with business executives, talking to children, and admiring the bust of Nietzsche. The caption to the latter read simply: "The Führer before the bust of the German philosopher whose ideas have fertilized two great popular movements: the National Socialist of Germany and the Fascist of Italy."

Benito Mussolini, we know, was familiar with Nietzsche's writings and a long-time admirer of the philosopher, but Hitler's connection with Nietzsche remains shadowy and uncertain. The programmatic statements of *Mein Kampf* contained only one reference to a philosopher and that was not Nietzsche but Schopenhauer,

who was praised as "one of the greatest minds of mankind" because he had once called the Jews "masters of lying."[2] Hitler's familiarity with Schopenhauer is well attested, and so is his devotion to men like Richard Wagner and Wilhelm Bölsche, who were themselves in turn indebted to Schopenhauer's ideas. As a soldier during the First World War, he carried Schopenhauer's and not Nietzsche's works in his backpack and years later could still recite whole passages by heart. To his dinner audience he would confide in 1944 that he had learned much from Schopenhauer.[3] There is no record that he ever said anything similar about Nietzsche. Hitler's knowledge of Nietzsche's philosophy seems, indeed, to have been negligible; while he referred occasionally to the titles of Nietzsche's books, there is no evidence that he ever read any of them.

The relation of other Nazi authorities to Nietzschean thought appears to have been similarly ambiguous. Alfred Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century* mentioned Nietzsche a few times, but the references were passing in character and revealed no real engagement with Nietzsche's philosophy. The thinkers who interested Rosenberg were the Hindu mystics, Meister Eckhart, Leibniz, Kant, and Schopenhauer.[4] Even Alfred Baeumler, who was keen to link Nietzsche's name to National Socialism, was forced to admit: "It is hardly the case that National Socialism took directly from Nietzsche in its beginnings. In the first years after the war nobody thought to bring the new movement in connection with Nietzsche."[5] Only in retrospect did Baeumler find an affinity between Nietzsche and Hitler. In spelling out that connection he, in turn, assimilated Nietzsche's thought to Schopenhauer's. Nietzsche was for him above all philosopher of the will to power and as such the direct heir of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the will. Baeumler achieved that likeness by excluding the distinctively Nietzschean idea of eternal recurrence and by ignoring the critical, destructive, and anarchistic side of Nietzsche's thought.[6]

Schopenhauer could never have become the official philosopher of the Nazi movement. A staunch conservative in private life, he had a profound dislike for all revolutionary turmoil. In 1848 he applauded the troops who had gunned down the democratic revolutionaries. He had no expectation that a great historical crisis was at hand, and he was no nationalist. While Schopenhauer's metaphysics may have appealed to them, Hitler and Rosenberg could

hardly have accepted his ethics. Schopenhauer advocated an ethics of withdrawal, not of active engagement in the world. They certainly could not accommodate his pessimism and his belief that salvation could be attained only through denial of the will. This was where Nietzsche became of interest, particularly a Nietzsche interpreted as the heir of Schopenhauer's metaphysical system, as the one who had turned Schopenhauer's pessimism into an affirmative activism. The reports on Hitler's dinner conversations record one memorable moment when he gave his audience an overview of German philosophy. Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche were the three most important German philosophers, men "to whom the English, French, and Americans have nothing to compare." He praised Kant for having overcome philosophical scholasticism and dogmatism, Schopenhauer—"to whom we may owe extraordinarily much"—for having overcome the Hegelian philosophy of purpose, and Nietzsche for having overcome Schopenhauer's pessimism. That pessimism, Hitler told his guests, had been due entirely to Schopenhauer's "subjective feeling and the experiences of his personal life."[7] Rosenberg took a similar view of Schopenhauer's achievements. While he valued the philosopher's metaphysics and aesthetics, he maintained that his ethics had failed to distinguish adequately between organic drives and the conscious human will. Instead of preaching denial of the will, Schopenhauer should have spoken of the denial of the drives and the affirmation of the will.[8]

Hitler's relation to Nietzsche was thus at best tenuous and indirect. That Hoffmann's photograph and its caption suggested otherwise was, however, not simply an error committed by a subaltern who knew no better. Hoffmann was one of Hitler's confidants, who spent hours and days discussing politics, art, and philosophy with him. From the early years in Munich to the last moments in Berlin in 1945, Hoffmann accompanied Hitler everywhere as his personal photographer. In his postwar autobiography Hoffmann boasted that "Hitler needed a man beside himself who for 25 years of his life recorded him as an eyewitness. That man was myself."[9] That self-characterization was in at least one important respect disingenuous. Hoffmann's photographs served not only to record Hitler's life, but helped to establish, enhance, and sustain his power over the German people. The picture that Hoffmann took at Weimar must be seen in the light of that purpose. It was not simply a visual docu-

ment of an existing relation between Hitler and Nietzsche, as the caption maintained, but the attempt to establish a linkage between the two. The picture reveals itself on closer examination as an attempt to appropriate Nietzsche for the Nazi movement, an effort to connect the Führer to the philosopher and to show him partaking by association in the philosopher's truth.

This is only part of the story, however. While the photograph exemplifies how an association with philosophy can be used by the powerful for their own purposes, it also illustrates how philosophers may be drawn to the powerful. In order to see that, we may take note of the fact that the picture is haunted by the invisible presence of a third person. I am speaking here of Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth, the founder and head of the Nietzsche archives, without whose help Hoffmann's photographic session would not have taken place. It was with her interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy that Hitler was associating himself on that occasion. The photograph depicted not an association between the Führer and the philosopher, but one between Hitler and a representation of the philosopher, and that representation had been commissioned by Elisabeth Nietzsche herself. The bust by the German art-nouveau sculptor Max Klinger showed a sober, resolute Nietzsche, an eminently sane and self-controlled man, critically subjecting the world to his will through the power of his eyes. That pose was miles away, for instance, from the one depicted in the head sculpted by Otto Dix in 1912, in which Nietzsche was shown as an intensely introverted, mad visionary. Dix's view of Nietzsche was not the one that either Elisabeth or the Nazis cherished. While the Nazis were ready to associate Hitler with Klinger's bust, they confiscated the one created by Dix and eventually destroyed it. By photographing Hitler in front of Klinger's bust, Hoffmann was in effect incorporating a particular reading of Nietzsche's philosophy. Consciously or not, Hoffmann turned that reading into one of Hitler himself, since he made him adopt exactly the same resolute pose and glance that Klinger had given to the philosopher.

Nietzsche's sister had her own good reasons for promoting this connection. She was certainly convinced of the truth of her brother's ideas—interpreted in her own light—and strove to promote them as head of the archives. But by investing herself with Nietzsche's truth, she also sought to enhance her own social stand-

ing. Unlike her brother, she sought out the company of the rich, the famous, and the influential, an effort dictated by her opulent lifestyle. During the days of the empire she had tried hard, though unsuccessfully, to gain the attention of the emperor himself. After the war she had sought support from various democratic politicians, in spite of the fact that she detested the republican system. Because she finally received a government pension, she kept her distance from Hitler until 1933. Then she embraced the Führer wholeheartedly.[10] It was in these circumstances that she helped to arrange the photo session in 1934. As it turned out, she once again calculated correctly. The association with the new regime brought her all the benefits and rewards she had been looking for. Not only did Hitler himself make a number of financial contributions, but he arranged for various government grants to be awarded to the Nietzsche archives. In 1935 he returned to Weimar once more, this time in the company of his architect Alfred Speer, who brought along plans for a Nietzsche memorial auditorium and library. Even after Elisabeth's death that year, the mutually fruitful relations were continued. The archives came now into the hands of Elisabeth's cousin, Major Max Oehler, who, until his own death in 1945, maintained the contact that Elisabeth had established with the Nazis.[11]

No doubt as part of this concerted effort, Richard Oehler, Max Oehler's brother, published his little book on *Friedrich Nietzsche and the German Future* in 1935, where he proclaimed the virtual identity of Nietzsche's philosophy and Nazi ideology. The book carried the picture of Hitler contemplating the bust of Nietzsche as its frontispiece. In Oehler's histrionic account, the two men were linked in a kind of apostolic succession. There was, he said, a great trajectory, a longing for unity of thinking, feeling, and willing moving through German history. Nietzsche had personified that longing in his thought, and Hitler was its new embodiment. Thus Nietzsche was "the best guide for the new reality" (p. 5).[12] Oehler admitted only one divergence between Nietzsche and Hitler, and that concerned their attitudes toward Christianity. Being a devout Christian as well as a National Socialist, he maintained that "National Socialism is not anti-Christian. Certainly not in Nietzsche's sense . . . Here there are differences in view which one cannot obliterate or obscure . . . National Socialism is not going to accept Nietzsche's fun-

damentally anti-Christian attitude" (pp. 21–22).[13] Even here he found ways to reconcile the two sides. Arguing that the hooked cross of the swastika was nothing but an improvement on the Christian cross, he wrote that only the latter had been a negative symbol for Nietzsche, whereas the swastika was a symbol for health, beauty, courage, spirit, goodness of the soul, life itself, and thus everything that Nietzsche had valued.

How, we might ask, could Oehler believe that Nietzsche's thought coincided in every other respect with the Nazi worldview? It was not that he was ignorant of Nietzsche's derisive references to nationalism and socialism, of his wariness of all things German, and of his contempt for antisemitism. He was, in fact, an avid and knowledgeable student of his uncle's works and in other writings proved himself fully familiar with Nietzschean statements that seem irreconcilable with the Nazi worldview.[14] The partiality with which he selected his material in 1935 from the often glittering, ambiguous, and contradictory remarks of Nietzsche's writings might certainly make one suspect that he was motivated by other than philosophical considerations. Is it possible that he wrote his book only to help the Nietzsche archives and to assure the continuing support of the government? It seems plausible to assume that Oehler's motivations were not entirely unselfish, but the pathos of his words suggests that there was more to the story. He was clearly willing to believe in 1935—for, at least, that moment—that Hitler might be the executor of Nietzsche's philosophy. Even though he was already in a position to see through the hollowness of his own claims, he appears to have been blinded by the wish to transfer to Nietzsche and those associated with him the charisma of Hitler's power.

Oehler's enthusiastic identification of Nietzschean philosophy and Nazi ideology did not altogether please those in authority. Two years after his book appeared, the Nazi party's own publishing house brought out a work intended, as it said, to combat the belief that Nazism was nothing but the "Nietzschean movement of the future" (p. 7).[15] Heinrich Haertle, the author of *Nietzsche and National Socialism,* argued that the attempt to draw the two so closely together denigrated the originality of the Nazi movement and its Führer. While Nietzsche could be considered a forerunner of National Socialism, Haertle was convinced that he "might have fought

in vain—had it not been for the man who came out of the world war, the philosopher from the trenches, the thinker and doer: Adolf Hitler" (p. 168). Though he was willing to consider Nietzsche a helpful philosophical guide, Haertle believed that in concrete political terms, Paul de Lagarde and Houston Stuart Chamberlain had actually been closer to the Nazi movement. Comparing Nietzsche's thought item by item with what he took to be the essential teaching of National Socialism, Haertle found important discrepancies as well as agreements.

Common ground between them was due, he said, to Nietzsche's positive attitude toward reality, to his ethics of struggle, his denial of Jewish-Christian values, his critique of culture and commitment to the enhancement of life. Nietzsche's views on almost all political and cultural matters were, however, flawed by his insufficient grasp of biological facts. Regrettably Nietzsche had been under the influence of Lamarckian ideas and thus lacked Mendel's insight that inherited characteristics were invariant. So he had been able to believe in the possibility of racial mixture and integration. Lamarckianism had instilled in him the belief that the Jewish problem could be solved through assimilation. Lamarckianism had even colored his views on breeding, race, and rank. When Nietzsche spoke of breeding, Haertle pointed out, he often meant only education; when he spoke of races and differences of rank, he commonly meant social estates and social differences. Because of his insufficient grasp of the biological facts, he lacked an "organic conception of folk" and that in turn shaped his political views. His disdain for the popular masses, his critique of nationalism, his aristocratism, his overestimation of great leaders, his hopes for a great European politics, all stemmed from this.

If Haertle proved a more discriminating reader of Nietzsche than Oehler had been, it was not because he was better informed. In pointing out the divergences between Nietzsche and the Nazi ideology, he was concerned with defining a differential relationship between the two. Yes, the two were linked. Philosophy and the Nazi worldview belonged together. But there was a question of precedence. National Socialism was not to be considered merely an applied philosophy. Haertle was, in fact, eager to establish the primacy and independence of political power. Without Hitler, the man of power, Nietzsche, the man of truth, might have thought in vain.

The existence of such a differential relationship had already been hinted at in Hoffmann's photograph. The photographer, who shared a passionate interest in painting with his political mentor, based the composition of his picture on Rembrandt's famous *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer.* Where Rembrandt had depicted Aristotle hovering over the bust, Hoffmann's photograph showed two heads occupying the outer margins of the picture, separated by a window through which one can glimpse an outdoor scene. This somewhat awkward arrangement clearly stemmed from the fact that the pedestal elevated the bust above normal eye level; had Hitler been any closer to it, he would have to look up to the philosopher. That impression both Hoffmann and Hitler were evidently keen to avoid. Hoffmann relied, in addition, on a number of other devices to suggest a relation of distance between the Führer and the philosopher. First of all, he made them look in different directions. While Hitler is shown scrutinizing the bust sideways and horizontally, Nietzsche's bust is positioned toward the viewer with eyes cast slightly downward. Next Hoffmann framed his photograph in such a way that Hitler's whole head is shown while we see only part of the bust. Finally, he focused his lights discretely on Hitler and not on the bust, which in consequence looks rather gray. Such clues suggest that Hoffmann's photograph was meant primarily as a picture of Hitler subjecting Nietzsche's bust to his glance, and not of the bust itself or of Hitler's intellectual debt to the philosopher.

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In a way that was no doubt unintended, the photograph of Hitler and Nietzsche's bust reveals how little the Führer and the philosopher had to say to each other. The encounter is formal and silent, each of them remains quite evidently enclosed in his own world. In their pronouncements Nazi leaders insisted again and again on the primacy of the political, on that of action over reflective thinking. The philosopher Hermann Glockner commented ruefully in 1935: "First of all one must note that philosophy plays no decisive role in the spiritual movement of the new Germany. Our Führer is, like Bismarck and Moltke, a thinker but not a philosopher. National Socialism has a cultural program but no philosophical system."[16] The philosophers, Glockner wrote, were finding themselves in a

[To view this image, refer to
the print version of this title.]

Heinrich Hoffmann's photograph of Hitler contemplating the bust of Nietzsche

defensive position. "They have received a vote of no confidence" and had to defend themselves now against a pervasive distrust. They were generally considered "eccentrics unfamiliar with life and the world who could produce nothing but artificial foliage on their desks and in their lecture rooms." Philosophical lectures and discussions were seen as the "playgrounds of an intelligence that bore no responsibility" and whose endless argumentative reasoning favored only liberalism and individualism (p. 43).

Unlike Marxist communism, the National Socialist movement had no clearly defined philosophical roots. Marx and Engels came to their dialectical materialism by reconstructing Hegel's philosophy, and they built their politics in turn on their philosophical system. No such ancestry existed for the Nazi movement. At its pre-Hitler beginnings, the Nazi party was a straggling protest movement of the underprivileged. Under Hitler's guidance, it became a rallying point for those who, moved by dissatisfaction with prevailing conditions, sought a remedy in hard and uncompromising action. This drew many former professional soldiers into the folds of the party (men like Röhm and Goering). Such a focus on action was shared with the fascist movements in other parts of Europe. In the uncertainties of the years immediately after the First World War, the Nazi party readily adapted itself to a volatile political and ideological climate and did so by cleverly adjusting its underdefined policies. Indeed in this adaptability lay the formula for its astonishing growth in the postwar period. It could be many things to many people, both nationalistic and socialist, egalitarian and elitist, left and right. At first the party understood itself as a workers' party devoted specifically to the issue of social reform. Nationalistic and antisemitic sentiments played a minor role in its program. At first the party program also focused almost exclusively on internal problems and was largely silent on questions of foreign policy. At first the party was an exclusively Bavarian and regional movement, wary of involvement in northern Germany and the Reich. In each of these respects, its priorities were to change so that in the end the party was primarily a nationalist rather than a socialist movement, concerned with world power rather than social reform. Even as it changed its policies, the party retained its old program and the rhetoric of its divergent and incompatible goals. Thus it managed to give the impression that it represented a political movement un-

like any other, one that could overcome all the usual political divisions.

Given its opportunistic concern with action and power, National Socialism had no particular need for philosophy with its verbal preoccupations, argumentativeness, abstract reasoning, and professorial aura. Of what interest could such verbalizations have been to military adventurers the likes of Röhm and Goering? Even philosophers such as Glockner who were sympathetic to the movement felt on the defensive. While the "actionism" these men had to battle against was philosophically unprincipled, it was not free-floating and aimless. Actionism is not a pragmatic willingness to do what is reasonable and practical at the moment. It is moved by extreme convictions and moods. What distinguishes it is, first, that no further justification is sought for the convictions that are the motor of action and, second, that these moods change over time without affecting the depth of the commitment to action.

A political movement that relies on actionism needs no philosophical thinkers. Where it takes notice of them at all, they will be those who themselves emphasize action, determination, and will. Hence we have Hitler's and Rosenberg's attraction to Schopenhauer, who describes reality as a gigantic struggle of the will. Hence also the Nazi attraction to Fichte and Nietzsche, who in very different ways extol the primacy of action. Even this sense of affinity did not motivate the Nazi leaders to build their politics on philosophical foundations. Marxism had been the product of an earlier, more speculative, more "philosophical" age. It was clearly built on a philosophical system and was itself a reworking of such a system. National Socialism, however, was the child of a different time. It appeared in a period when the social and cultural role of philosophy was deeply shaken. In its disregard for philosophy, National Socialism was truly a movement of the new century. Hitler could associate himself with Nietzsche in a public gesture without having to claim any real familiarity with Nietzsche's thought. He could counter the Marxist claim to possession of a philosophically and scientifically grounded politics by declaring: we too can call on philosophical ancestors, if and when we consider it necessary to do so.

Over time National Socialism could, of course, not restrict itself to pure political action. As it grew, the movement had to justify and legitimate its claim to power, and so it needed an appropriate set of

ideas. By the 1920s Hitler and his followers were speaking of their own distinctive understanding of the world as the principle that guided all their policies. They generally called this understanding their *Weltanschauung*—a term first used by Kant in his *Critique of Judgment* to refer to the subjective appearance of the thing-in-itself. The worldview to which the Nazis began to lay claim at the time was meant to be more than a political program or ideology. It was, as the word suggested, conceived as a coherent and comprehensive account of the world from the standpoint of a single perspective. The Nazi worldview was meant to generate a single picture of the world—a unique *Weltbild*—which would encompass all aspects of German life. Such a claim was often made in the political confrontation with the Marxists. In 1925 Hitler told a crowd in Stuttgart, for instance: "The Marxists have at least a worldview. We must set against them the folkish view of the world."[17] The words indicate that he thought of the folkish worldview strategically as a counterweight to Marxist ideas, but they also reveal that he considered that counter-view insufficiently defined and not fully accepted. In the same year Goebbels also acknowledged the unresolved character of the Nazi worldview, for he predicted that "an intellectual battle is going to erupt in our own camp between the nationalists and the socialists, and it is only the result of this battle which will produce the final form of National Socialism."[18]

As the Weimar Republic sank into chaos after 1930, the Nazis presented themselves increasingly as those who could restore social and political order. The order they had to offer was not simply the restoration of an old system but entirely new, and not an arbitrarily new system but "the true order." The Nazi worldview can indeed be described as a doctrine of order or, more precisely, as a jumble of various principles of order. The dissolution of the Weimar Republic had signaled the end of a major epoch. A break was imminent, a major crisis under way. There would follow a new order, to last a thousand years, an order encompassing life and culture and politics. The world war had revealed as well chaos on the international scene, a jostling of nation states for power, a struggle of empires for domination. Here too in this geopolitical space there was need for a true order. Germany, until now deprived of its true place in the world, had to become the central power in Europe. The false international order established by the Treaty of Versailles and the League

of Nations must be abolished. In the new order Germany would share the world with the other great empires, in particularly Britain, in an equitable arrangement that would assure Germany its proper place in the sun.[19]

Like all principles of order, the Nazi worldview promised stability, regularity, and predictability in social relations, a division of the world into familiar, recognizable, and dependable classes. It also offered a ladder of hierarchies, distinction between higher and lower. There were higher and lower people, cultures, nations, states, and races. The worldview thus formalized and enshrined that noisome human tendency to compare, assess, and rank, to see human life as a constant struggle between superior and inferior, between winners and losers. The affirmation of hierarchy was also a principle of governance. There were leaders and followers. There was a hierarchy of leaders, at the top of which stood the Führer himself. There were leaders of the German regions, the *Gauleiter,* leaders of such party organizations as the SA and the SS, leaders of the youth movement, leaders of the workers' corps. The universities had their leaders in the rectors. The professors were leaders of the students, and the students were future leaders of Germany. This hierarchical ordering of society was described in military terms. The citizens of the old democratic order (or rather disorder) were from now on to be "political soldiers" organized in the structured hierarchy of a great army, and, as in any army, order was to come from above, from the leaders and from the leaders of those leaders and ultimately from the Führer himself. "The *Führer* and he alone is the present and future reality and its law," as Heidegger put it in 1933. The Nazi view of the world separated and ranked and ordered the German people themselves into those who were truly German and those who were not, those who were fully Jewish, or Jewish of the first, second, third, or fourth degree, into Germans who were blond, blue-eyed, and tall and those who were dark haired, brown-eyed, and stocky, into Nordic, Western, Dinaric, and Alpine types. The worldview had its own order of knowledge. It determined what was true science and what was not, what was fundamental in human knowledge and what was not. It determined that the science of race and that of German folkdom were basic disciplines to be instituted at all universities; it promoted geopolitics, military science, and new priorities in the study of history and literature.

The worldview, in particular, claimed to be fundamental, comprehensive, coherent, and unified. It revealed the inner coherence of world history, of the human condition, of Germany's past, present, and future. It unified what without it would have been dispersed and hence chaotic in knowledge and action. For all its rhetorical insistence, the Nazi worldview had none of this. It was not fundamental in any sense, but derived from a multiplicity of murky sources. It was not comprehensive, but a hodgepodge of accidentally assembled convictions. It was certainly not coherent and unified.

That it lacked coherence was, no doubt, linked to the fact that during the years before 1933 the power structure of the party was multicentered and often verged on anarchy. Hitler himself, Rosenberg, the Strasser brothers, Röhm and his SA, Himmler and his SS, Goebbels, Goering, all represented distinctive centers of power and stood for different political attitudes and aspirations. Each of them contributed his bit to the formation of the Nazi worldview, and as a result that view was as many-sided as the thinking of those who had put it together. After power was achieved, the Nazi worldview became enshrined as the official ideology of the Reich but received no further elaboration. Ideologists like Rosenberg were quickly pushed aside while technicians of power like Bormann and Speer gained influence. With the preparations for war after 1936, the increasing subjection and persecution of the Jews, and the actual outbreak of war, the hastily assembled worldview reduced itself very quickly to crude antisemitism and an imperialist drive to the east.[20]

The Nazi worldview was never more than a jumble of incompatible ideas. Nationalist and populist, conservative and radical, traditionalist and at the same time fascistic, devoted to German custom while promoting revolutionary change, elevating the simple peasant life while advancing technological and military superiority, the worldview encompassed a multiplicity of discordant beliefs. It was never a coherent doctrine, but a field of beliefs with more or less clearly defined boundaries. Within that field a number of incompatible assumptions could coexist. At the same time, there persisted the belief that both the worldview and the system of power were unified, closed, and complete. The belief in such closure was an important element in the system's self-stylization.

This peculiar combination of characteristics suggests that the no-

tion of the German worldview played an essentially symbolic function in the Nazi system, just as the notions of crisis, nation, and leadership did. What mattered was not that the worldview should actually be defined but that, on the contrary, it should be determinable and interpretable in various ways and thus serve as a unifying principle for a large and diverse group of people. What mattered was the *appeal* to the worldview rather than the worldview itself. The result was that, though this view was regularly called upon to legitimize the Nazi system, it always remained in need of determination and interpretation.

PHILOSOPHY AND WORLDVIEW

This was where the philosophers could be engaged in the political process. They could consider it their task to elaborate, justify, and ground the Nazi worldview. Such involvement was not, however, entirely unproblematic. Did it mean that philosophy was from now on subjected to the needs and demands of the state? Were philosophers meant to abandon their age-old questions or modify them according to political need? Were they supposed to reinterpret the traditional problems of ontology, epistemology, and logic in political terms? Were they meant to be handmaidens to the political process? At stake was the freedom of inquiry that philosophy had jealously guarded since its escape from the theological fetters of medieval scholasticism. At stake were the autonomy and self-understanding of philosophy.

Even philosophers who were fully committed to the Nazi cause felt a need for reassurance. In 1934 Arnold Gehlen, one of the DPG's bright young men and one of the great hopes of Nazi philosophy, argued in his inaugural lecture at Leipzig that philosophy would from now on have to consider the question of political existence as a natural object of inquiry, but he tried to convince himself and his colleagues that such a turn was not imposed from without. In the past, the central concern of philosophy had been the problem of the existence of an objective spiritual order, expressed most decisively in the religious question of the existence of God. That concern had lost its meaning. It could no longer reach "the point of greatest concentration" of human life, and so philosophy had been marginalized and needed to go back to its innermost self. That could

be found in National Socialism, which had given the German people new impulses for living and a new order of existence. Gehlen considered the Nazi movement entitled to force philosophy into agreement with the new reality. The redirection was not being imposed from without but corresponded to the reflection that philosophy was carrying out by its own means.[21] These were calculated and cautious formulations. Gehlen was saying that National Socialism should direct philosophical thought, but only because it was itself a philosophical movement. National Socialism and philosophy were united in the goal to define a new order of human existence. If philosophy would have to concern itself with the questions of political existence, that was due not to outside pressure but to a self-reflection that philosophy itself had been engaged in.

Three factors made philosophical engagement with the Nazi worldview problematic. The first and most important was that the worldview itself claimed to be providing a comprehensive understanding of the world, claiming for itself part of the function that philosophy previously maintained as its own. The Nazi worldview laid claim to be the final measure for all questions of knowledge and understanding, the ground on which everything stood: the nation, the state, the universities, all the academic disciplines. But the thought that philosophy should be measured by the standards of the Nazi worldview was difficult to accept for most German philosophers, since it conflicted with their deeply held belief that only philosophy could provide such a grounding. The Nazi belief in the primacy of the political was therefore a direct challenge to an understanding of philosophy that even the Nazi philosophers shared. This potential source of conflict, however, had to remain hidden from view, if the philosophers were not to lose out in the struggle with the political authorities. The philosophers were, moreover, saved from confronting it because, after the Nazis had come to power, appeals to the German worldview became more and more ritualistic, and the question of its priority never came to be tested.

The second factor that made the relation between philosophy and the Nazi worldview problematic was that the latter was philosophical only in the most general sense. It was meant to provide a comprehensive framework for coping with reality, but it was not a worked-out and reasoned expression of a system of ideas. A worldview is, as the name says, meant to be intuitive rather than

discursive, a vision of the world rather than a theory. This indicated for its exponents an important difference from the systems of traditional philosophy and marked it as superior to such academic and abstract constructions. The German worldview was something all could share. Peasants and housewives could grasp it just as much as sophisticated philosophers. With this conception went another belief that philosophers found difficult to swallow. It was the perspectivism inherent in the idea. A worldview is, as the name also suggests, always a view of things particular to a location, a view held by a particular individual or group of individuals. The German worldview was thus said to be appropriate for German-Germanic-Aryan man, not one that would be appropriate for everyone and for all nations and races. Philosophers have, on the other hand, generally claimed universal validity for their ideas and insist on the objectivity of truth. Though perspectivism has had its defenders in the history of philosophy, and not least in Nietzsche, most philosophers would suspect it of leading to relativism and skepticism. Hence the concern of philosophers, such as Wundt and Bauch, to show that perspectivism could after all be reconciled with objective truth. One needed to show, they thought, that the German view of the world is at the same time the right one, that views of the world are relative only in their form, not in the validity of the ideas expressed, or that the specific sign of the German worldview was the belief in the objectivity of truth. To most Nazi believers, such fine distinctions were probably of little importance. They were content with the assurance of superiority. They were like religious believers whose sacred book assures them of its own truth, little bothered by the thought that other people might have their own sacred book that also assures them of its truth. For the philosophers, however, the intuitive and perspectival character of the worldview remained a serious problem.

The third factor that made the relation between philosophy and the worldview difficult was that the latter had its origin in nonphilosophical sources, and so other authorities could claim to be more qualified to speak than the philosophers. The sources of the worldview included not only nineteenth-century romanticism and utopianism, popular mythological and mystical beliefs, and in general an irrational antimodernism;[22] they also included a number of more or less established, more or less respectable sciences, intellec-

tual disciplines other than philosophy. As one philosophical author put it in 1942: "National Socialism sought the foundations of its worldview to begin with in the area of a number of individual sciences such as history, geopolitics, theories of race, the biology of inheritance, characterology, and folklore," and not in philosophy.[23] Hitler, for one, had seen himself primarily as a student of history and politics. He also prided himself on his grasp of psychology and biology and was moved by artistic interests. The same thing was true of Rosenberg. He too was motivated by historical and artistic concerns. Both elaborated their visions in other than philosophical terms.

In assuming that they had a special calling to elaborate the German worldview, the philosophers thus found themselves in conflict with the representatives of other established or aspiring disciplines. They were once again caught in a struggle that went to the roots of philosophy. When philosophy first appeared in the Greek world, it found itself in competition with existing accounts of the world: mythological descriptions encoded by poets and writers like Homer and Hesiod. The struggle between philosophy and religion continued later under different conditions. Eventually another conflict broke out between the claims of philosophy and those of science. That struggle, whose origins also went back to the ancient world, took on a new shape in the nineteenth century, when old sciences like astronomy and physics and biology began a period of accelerated growth and when a whole series of new disciplines, from organic chemistry to experimental psychology, began to develop. Fields formerly part of philosophy began to acquire their own disciplinary status. The psychological and social sciences gained recognition as specialized fields. Economics and politics became established academic disciplines.

All of this forced philosophers to rethink their own place in the continuum of human knowledge. One new formula on which many of the philosophers of the second great epoch of German philosophy agreed was produced by the neo-Kantians of the last quarter of the century. Drawing on Kant's distinction between empirical and *a priori* truths, they argued that it was not the task of philosophy to compete with the empirical sciences in the elaboration of a concrete picture of the world, that its task was rather to ground empirical inquiry by means of logical, metalogical, and method-

ological investigations. Another formula that went back to Dilthey had it that there was a fundamental distinction between the natural and the interpretive sciences and that philosophy was not a natural science, that it was, instead, the premier hermeneutic discipline. But such formulas were proving themselves increasingly insufficient by the 1930s. The natural sciences were by that time freeing themselves of the last residues of philosophical tutelage. This was clear, for instance, in physics with such new theories as relativity. This theory challenged not only the conviction that the character of space and time were subjects of philosophical debate, but it even defined its own methodological standards and, hence, denied any role for philosophy in justifying physical theory. These developments seemed to threaten the first of the formulas that late nineteenth-century philosophers had used to define the relation of their discipline to other parts of human knowledge. The emergence of empirical, experimental, and even quantitative procedures in the study of psychological and social sciences threatened, moreover, the distinction between the natural and the hermeneutic disciplines.

There was, in any case, a great deal of uncertainty among philosophers in 1933 about how they should understand themselves and about the position of philosophy in relation to other claims to knowledge. This uncertainty was magnified by the fact that they found themselves in a problematic relationship with a politically motivated worldview, which had some of its sources in other disciplines. The philosophers might very well claim that, since theirs was the task to ground all disciplines, they could claim some authority over the ideas that made up the worldview. This struggle is illustrated by the confrontation between Heidegger and the psychologist Erich Jaensch. The two had been colleagues at Marburg in the 1920s in an institute that still contained both philosophers and psychologists. Even then they were in conflict. While Heidegger was at work on his hermeneutics of *Dasein*, Jaensch was developing an empirical theory of psychological types. Starting from the observation that some people rely strongly on visual images while others do not, Jaensch worked out a typology that tried to explain why some people lean toward an epistemological idealism and others toward an epistemological realism. Heidegger was from the start opposed to any such naturalistic treatment of epistemological and

philosophical issues. To Jaspers he wrote at the time that Jaensch's philosophy would be "primitive even for an elementary school teacher."[24] Jaensch, on the other hand, was convinced that Heidegger's teaching at Marburg had a "disastrous effect" and was spreading "like an infectious psychic disease" among his students.[25] By 1933 Heidegger was promoting his hermeneutic-existential philosophy as the proper foundation of the National Socialist worldview; Jaensch was claiming the epistemic superiority of Germanic man on the basis of his psychological typology. Insisting on a difference between two fundamental psychological types, a synaesthetic S-type that tends toward disintegration and an integrative I-type, Jaensch tried to show that the German represented the ideal form of the latter. Jaensch's ambitious attempt to found the Nazi worldview on this empirical theory brought him inevitably into conflict with Heidegger's philosophically oriented project. In a secret memorandum to the Prussian ministry of education he denounced Heidegger as a decadent, a friend of Jews like Löwith, an antinational, and above all (in terms of his own theory) as a disintegrative psychological type "on the borderline between mental health and sickness."[26] That such conflicts were afoot in 1933 reveals how precarious the situation of philosophy was with respect to the question of claiming authority over the Nazi worldview. The political engagement of the philosophers in 1933 was not simply a gratuitous act, but one necessitated also by a potent threat to philosophy itself.

THE LEGITIMATION OF ORDER

In this struggle the German philosophers had one strong advantage. They could argue that empiricism, positivism, and scientism were thoroughly un-German forms of thought. Materialism was a characteristically French idea, and the biological theory of evolution was the invention of the English. To be truly German did not mean to reject the conclusions of empirical science but to realize that science was unable to ground itself, and that it fell to philosophy to provide the necessary foundations for both science and the German worldview.

More important, however, was the consideration that only philosophy could provide the legitimation of the new order of life that

the Nazis were trying to establish. Any particular political order is, of course, optional. There are always choices to be made in defining, setting up, and preserving a particular system of order. In the period after the First World War, the Germans were faced with the choice between monarchy, democracy, communism, and national socialism. Each of these systems could, moreover, be realized in a number of ways. Whichever was adopted, there was the choice between variations. When these had been determined, further choices needed to be made about who was to fill the newly defined positions. Actions and policies within the system had to be coordinated. Each of them had to be weighed as to how it would affect the system of political order. Political order is thus in constant need of being explained, justified, and legitimized. There exists, so it seems, a constant demand to spell out principles, rules, and norms by which the political choices might be assessed. The Nazis could draw on their worldview to supply such principles, but once a chain of reasoning is initiated, it cannot be broken off arbitrarily. If actual choices need to be justified by reference to some principle, then the question will inevitably be how those principles are, in turn, to be justified. The chain of justification will be continued until some ultimate ground is struck.

The philosophers could reasonably think of themselves as most qualified to provide such grounding. The empirical sciences might be able to settle all conceivable questions of fact, but they were not authorized to pronounce on political norms. The Nazi worldview might state such norms, but it could not provide the chain of reasoning required to justify them. From the Greeks on, philosophers argued that objective orders were not optional, not human creations, and that only those political systems of order that corresponded to those objective orders were legitimate and true. They also maintained that theirs was the science that could determine these objective orders. Plato, as so often, had given a paradigmatic exposition of this philosophical argument. He described in the *Republic* how the philosopher will first turn his face away from politics and contemplate the order of the Ideas themselves outside space and time. Returning to the political realm, he will then be able to act in the light of his vision of the Ideas. The world is a system of resemblances in which one thing can reflect another, in which the order of the Ideas can be reflected first in the order of the soul

that sees the Ideas and then in the political order of the state. Aristotle modified the account by arguing more straightforwardly that there exists a natural order in the soul which the philosopher can determine, an order in which reason is the master, desire the servant, and animal nature the dumb slave; the true political order would have to create this tripartite division.[27] Christian philosophy was later to speak of a city of God as the model on which a true political order should be based, or of an order within the trinity itself, of an order of heaven and earth, of a natural order of the created world, of the order of life in paradise, the order in the natural family as models on which the true political order was to be grounded. To the constructive and mechanical imagination of seventeenth-century philosophers, it was obvious that a well-ordered political system would have to be like a house with foundations and stories, a house built and maintained by a single architect, the absolute ruler, or that it would have to be like a machine with its differently functioning parts all moving together according to fixed and rational laws. In the nineteenth century some philosophers discovered that the true political system was the one that corresponded to Darwin's competitive struggle of nature. Others saw the abstract movements of Hegel's dialectical logic as the model of the well-ordered state.

All these speculations assumed some order of being and postulated a correspondence between it and the political system. They often assumed that the ontological order that was to serve as the grounding of the political could only be determined by philosophical reflection and even where, as in the case of Social Darwinism, they took the description of the grounding ontological order from somewhere else, they insisted that it was by means of philosophical reasoning and reflection that one could see the need for the political to reflect the ontological. Such beliefs are far from obvious. They rest on a conflation of philosophy and politics that wants to treat politics as applied philosophy. It fails to see how pragmatic, optional, and temporary all political choices are, including the choice of a system of politics. But an admitted distinction between philosophical and political concerns may be difficult to accept, for both philosophers and politicians. It would deprive, so it seems, the philosophers of any influence on the political domain, and it would deprive the politicians of any philosophical legitimation of their actions.

Neither the German philosophers nor the Nazi leaders were ready to accept such a separation of their ways. The philosophers, already involved in a struggle over their place in the continuum of knowledge, felt that they could not afford to let the moment pass without getting involved in what promised to be a total reorganization of German life. Some thought it imperative to get involved in order to restore past German philosophy to its rightful place. Others thought it equally urgent to assure a place for their own new thinking. They all set out to show that they and they alone could define the ontological order on which the emerging political order could be grounded. While they all stuck to the old idea of the need for a correspondence between philosophy and politics, they differed over the nature of the ontological base and over who was most qualified to explore it. Nazi politicians had their own reasons for preserving the link between philosophy and politics. While they may have had little natural inclination to philosophy, they believed, first of all, that all German life had to be one great unity and the philosophers could not be allowed to go their own unpolitical way. But they were also, second, interested in the legitimacy that philosophy could provide to their regime, given the important role it was still playing in German culture.

THE UNITY OF PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

In the debate over the relation between philosophy and politics, Hans Heyse tried once more to play a clarifying role. Where he had tried to mediate between the philosophical factions in 1933 by arguing that the concepts of idea and existence, the philosophical tradition and the new concern with existing life, were at bottom united, he now argued that the same formula could assure the unity of philosophy and politics.

In *Idee und Existenz* he wrote in 1935 that the idea was inseparable from actual human existence and that only a false dualism had sundered them apart. By the idea one was to understand "the true forms of human *Dasein* and existence . . . the essential forms of order, the primordial values and orders of values, in which and according to which human existence occurs" (p. 11).[28] Such orders needed to be recognized, but it was important to understand that the idea conceived in this manner could not be detached from actual being. For the idea was, in effect, the expression and the form

of existence. Insofar as philosophy was concerned with the idea, one could say that philosophy and life were united in their roots. Hence it followed that philosophy's abstract concern with the idea had immediate practical and political implications. In summarizing his book he wrote:

> Our theme is not the idea and the essence of history "as such," just as little as it is the examination of universal, universally human ideas and ideologies. It is the idea as problem of the organization and reorganization of our German historical existence, of the obtaining of our own German forms and values of existence in tune with and in connection with the eternal orders of being. The thought of such an organization and reorganization is to be found everywhere: in the idea of a new social order, of a new economic and political order and finally—and this we regard as the real task of these investigations—in a radically renewed idea of the spirit, of philosophy and science. (p. 14)

In support of his thesis of unity, Heyse drew on the Greek philosophers, in particular Plato. The Greeks provided "a paradigm of the basic forms and values of our own German existence which are primordially related to the Greek ones" (p. 95). They still had an "existential claim" on us. That was true, above all, of Plato. Heyse rejected the orthodox reading of Plato—whose origin he found in Augustine—according to which Plato had taught the existence of two different worlds. Plato had not been a dualist, and the belief in another world, in the immortality of the soul, in the formation of the world through a creator, had not been the central parts of his philosophy, as the Christian tradition had made it seem. Even before Heyse there had been attempts to modify the impression that Plato's teaching consisted in a metaphysical theory, that he had taught the existence of another world, of a world of Ideas separated from temporal reality. After Kant, metaphysical doctrines of this sort were generally dismissed as dogmatic and unphilosophical. To save Plato from such criticism, Hermann Lotze had proposed in 1874 that "Plato asserted only the eternal validity of ideas, not their real existence." The Platonic ideas were not actual, only objective.[29] Heyse went one step further in his existential interpretation of Plato's doctrine. According to him, the Plato of the *Republic* had

taught "the unity of knowing and doing, of spirit and power, of philosophy and politics, of idea and existence" (p. 70). Only by grasping that unity could one understand that "the will and the passion to renew the state out of the idea of the logos, to grasp and shape the given historical existence through the idea, is the driving motive of the Platonic development" (pp. 58–59).

This Platonic affirmation of unity of philosophy and politics had been an expression of the primordial Germanic spirit of the Greeks. It had been forgotten when Christianity, an alien, un-Germanic religion of Mideastern origin, spread over Europe. Christianity separated the world of God from the world of man, and thereby separated philosophy from politics. A whole series of false ideologies concerning the relation of the idea of order to actual historical existence originated from this Christian tradition. "Oriental strangers" had claimed to solve "the Nordic-Greek problem of existence" without having really "seen and experienced that problem" (p. 111). It was left to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to recognize the problematic character of the union of antiquity and Christianity which lay behind modern thought. It was now possible to subject the whole western system of ideas and ideologies to a critique. With this a whole new form of human *Dasein* was coming into existence and into a new historical epoch. "This turning of the axis is the principle of world history, a new beginning and origin in which a new age, a new destiny is preparing itself" (p. 253).

It was possible now to return to the unity of idea and existence. The idea provided the values by which each people could make sense of its concrete, historical existence. Every type of man and every race indeed had their own specific form of the idea. For the Greeks and the closely related Germans, the specific form was that of a metaphysical and political totality, the idea and reality of the Reich. It was "that idea in which the deepest forces of our being and our history come to rise to their full life, in which the thousand-year-old hopes and promises of Germanic-German mankind light up and through which they are taking on shape" (p. 6). This Reich, Heyse said, was "the most sacred task to which in all of history men and nations have tied their existence and their destiny." This Reich promised not welfare, security, and happiness but the possibility of a heroism illuminated by a primordial knowledge rooted in tragedy. At the beginning of western history stood the

great decisions of Greek thought and politics. Later there followed new decisions that had obscured the old realities for more than a thousand years. A third great moment of world-historical decision was at hand. A new order was possible, a unity of philosophical and political order, new values were appearing and with them new forms of human existence, values no longer directed toward another world but to a philosophical and political existence in this one.

> We are standing at a decisive turning point at which we loosen ourselves from the age of the West and a new world age emerges. It realizes itself in the primordial and fundamental values through which the idea, that world law, is drawn into the lives of nations with new sacrifices and with the exemplary understanding of a highest form of humanity. That is: a humanity which rises up in the idea and the reality of a new, of a Third Reich. (p. 351)[30]

When Gerhard Lehmann in 1943 reviewed the development of German philosophy from the perspective of National Socialism, he concluded his book with a chapter on political philosophy in which he dealt successively with Rosenberg, Krieck, Baeumler, and Heyse. He gave Heyse the most prominent place at the end of his book. Predicting a point of transition from its current state to an entirely new form of philosophy, Lehmann wrote of Heyse that his transformation "of the existential and existential-ontological problematic into a folkish worldview or rather into the structure of the worldview of National Socialism is not only of paradigmatic but of conclusive significance and opens at the same time new avenues for philosophizing" (p. 539).[31] Heyse had understood that the long-standing crisis in philosophy concerned a "struggle for a genuine national community" and he grasped the idea from the beginning "as a wholeness and as a principle of order for our existence."

Heyse himself tried to live this unity of philosophy and politics. In 1935 he became editor of *Kantstudien*, taking the journal over on behalf of the Nazis. In an editorial he made it clear that the journal would from now on be in tune with political realities. He also wrote that there was a "new will in which German life and German spirit are coming to take hold of their deeper essence." The task of the journal would be to help that spirit "break through in the funda-

mental as well as in the specialized problems of philosophy and science."[32] In 1936 Heyse relinquished his chair and the rectorate at Königsberg and moved to Göttingen, where he taught at the university as well as founded and directed an ideological training center for academic teachers (the Akademie der Wissenschaften des NS-Dozentenbundes). At his de-Nazification trial after the war, he explained his philosophical efforts in these words: "It was not the meaning of this work to justify an established ideology, but, on the contrary, to ground the ideas through which the National Socialist movement might have been able to attain intellectual and historical rank."[33]

9

The True Order Debated

There is still too much talk of a crisis in the worldview when the time is, in fact, one of purposeful construction on all fronts. So Hermann Glockner complained in 1934. "One is in a crisis," he wrote, "when everything is pressing inexorably toward a decisive turning point and everything is uncertain except one conviction: that things cannot go on much longer as they do" (p. 272).[1] Now, after the great national revolution, just the opposite was the case. The German people had once again found themselves. They once again had a worldview, a spiritual ground plan to determine their action and being and to integrate their individual existences into a meaningful, all-encompassing order. "The time of the crisis of worldview is behind us," Glockner declared. If some were still going on about it, they were merely giving in to old-fashioned diseased thinking.

From such a false sense of crisis, Glockner went on, one had to distinguish a true and deeper feeling of crisis that was characteristic of modern philosophy:

> There is here no question of a quickly accelerating climax soon to be followed by a decision. On the contrary. There is here a state of metaphysical insecurity in which philosophy has found itself since the time of medieval nominalism (i.e., for circa 600 years). Nothing indicates that philosophy will soon overcome that condition.

To take this sense of crisis away from philosophy and to inject it dogmatically with a philistine view of the world would do a disservice to the German people. The crisis of philosophy, understood

in this way, was "the permanent fate of the modern mind" (p. 273).

More specifically, German philosophy was caught in a crisis in that its relation to the National Socialist worldview was not yet completely clarified. Glockner found it necessary to warn against premature resolutions of this problem. "Nothing stands as much in the way of a final clarification as the false eagerness with which some representatives of the humanities offer their services and thereby continue the struggle over 'methods' and 'schools' at a level where it could be disastrous, since the real issue is now the recognition and order of the whole." Nazi Germany was not being served by "overeager and self-promoting hustling," which fought as much as it could against other directions and methods. The task was now to bring together all the positive forces, in philosophy as elsewhere. Whether somebody inclined more to one philosopher or another, whether he applied the methods of the natural sciences or those of the humanities, was only a personal decision. "The main thing is that together we form and maintain the front of the German worldview. Here no fraternal strife must separate us" (p. 274).

Such exhortations were timely. After the excitement of the first year of Nazi rule, German philosophers had settled down to their usual business, and that meant their usual fractiousness. Neither Heyse's nor Glockner's calls for cooperation could overcome the divisions between them. By 1934 the temporary alliance between Baeumler, Krieck, and Heidegger had collapsed, and from now on they passed each other by or, occasionally, sniped at each other. What remained was only their shared hostility toward the DPG and what it stood for. The DPG also continued more or less on the same track. Though at Magdeburg it had solemnly proclaimed its willingness to explore the German worldview and had promised to do so with new energy, no new impulses or ideas came out.[2] Apart from Heidegger's history of Being, no new philosophical conception emerged in the period between 1933 and 1945, and even that had its roots in Heidegger's pre-Nazi thought. Despite all protestations that a radical break had occurred in German life, there was a deep continuity in German philosophy across the threshold of 1933.

BETWEEN REVOLUTION AND REACTION

What was continued as well was the old battle between the philosophical radicals and the philosophical conservatives. One of its

most important aspects was the fight over the bearing of traditional idealism on the new age.

There was a war going on over the question of idealism, wrote Hermann Glockner in 1935, himself an idealist, a member of the DPG, and one of Bauch's allies in the battle. The war, he wrote, was on the whole to be welcomed, for even in the area of philosophy war was the father of all things. There was at the same time a great danger that the battle over idealism might deteriorate into wild and useless turmoil. The term "idealism" was becoming a slogan. "All parties use it; a free-for-all develops; everybody strikes out at everybody else; nobody understands the others any more; the fur flies; self-preservation becomes everything" (p. 98).[3] What Glockner missed was the realization that idealism is an eternal problem of philosophy. In order to clear the air, he thought it necessary to distinguish between idealism as a human attitude, common philosophical idealism, and the philosophy of the German idealists. The possession of human ideals was indeed important, but if one considered idealism simply as a particular human attitude, one was in danger of psychologizing and relativizing it. Karl Jaspers had fallen exactly into that trap when he treated idealism simply as one possible psychological outlook among others in his *Psychology of World Views*. His work was "one of the most disastrous philosophical aberrations of the post-war period" (p. 100). Common philosophical idealism was also problematic, since it tended toward a separation of idea and reality, of formal structure and thing-in-itself. What deserved defense was German idealism with its "heroic faith in the meaning and unity of the world" (p. 107). Such an idealism was by no means passive, but was willing to fight to the point of total decision. This idealism stood against the materialism "which has been declared the official world view in Russia." Even there it was becoming evident that the materialist road was unpassable. The more serious enemy of German idealism was therefore the "irrationally grounded conviction" that men have to live a life "thrown fatefully into this world" (p. 109). Kierkegaard was responsible for that belief, and he was thus the decisive opponent of idealism. Unfortunately he was having a great influence on contemporary German philosophy.

Glockner's campaign on behalf of the idealist tradition was soon joined by Adolf Gehlen, who was also a member of the DPG. In his sequel to Glockner's essay Gehlen wrote:

> Since Kierkegaard and the whole theological movement that began with him and since, on another front, nineteenth-century positivism unrolled its flags against idealism . . . the once uncontested world-wide recognition of German philosophy has continuously declined in influence. (p. 323)[4]

Gehlen went on to depict the whole nineteenth century as a falling away from the insights of German idealism. That century ended in a crude materialism in which treasures gathered in centuries of German culture had been thrown overboard and the German people had become "unfaithful to their own essence" (p. 326). It was now time to take up the struggle against the nineteenth century and to move to the side of idealism, its old enemy. Idealist philosophy contained the means and methods needed to spell out a total worldview. National Socialism had produced precisely such a total view of the world with which it wanted to permeate all areas of life and bring them into accord with its own perceptions. German idealism was needed to work out that worldview. Had Adolf Hitler himself not written in *Mein Kampf* that "purest idealism coincides unconsciously with deepest understanding"? That statement was entirely true and could be extended to say that a realist attitude in philosophy could lead only to individual, separate, and distorted results.

Glockner's and Gehlen's remarks were a challenge to those who considered idealism an unacceptable philosophical base for the new reality. Baeumler, who had previously demanded a critique of the idealist tradition, let it be known that he could accept Fichte and the rest of idealism only insofar as they prefigured Nietzsche's heroic voluntarism. The most determined counterattack, however, came from Krieck, that old warrior. In response to Gehlen's essay, he wrote that it was presenting an "adulterated, confused, restricted form of National Socialism which looked both forward and backward, and thus stood between revolution and reaction" (p. 446).[5] National Socialism represented a "folkish political realism" and, if second-rate idealists failed to understand what it was, they should not undertake to discuss and judge it. When the Führer spoke of idealism, he had of course meant the life-giving, practical idealism of sacrifice, heroism, will, struggle, and labor, not philosophical idealism. Let those philosophical idealists read Hitler's book and not simply quote single sentences from it. Gehlen was trying to sell a

pleasant, weak tea as National Socialism. He was trying to sell it as an alternative to nineteenth-century materialism, which had itself been a product of the flight from reality that the idealists had initiated. The whole system of nineteenth-century thought could be overcome only by the holistic doctrines of National Socialism built on a folkish reality. "No, Herr Gehlen," Krieck wrote, "the 'spirit' is for 'us' no living center. That service is provided for 'us' only by holistic life itself and its realization we find in the wholeness of the Volk."

Gehlen responded by complaining about the whole tendency and form of Krieck's attack.[6] Krieck failed to see that the National Socialist worldview demanded completely new foundations in thinking. Krieck's own views were, in contrast, purely programmatic. He was trying to declare a summary end to a crucial debate. But a grounding of the new worldview demanded a working through of "the tradition of German philosophy." The "energy of the questions of German idealism, the wealth of themes that were living in it, and its determination to find new beginnings" had to be explored. The construction of a National Socialist philosophy called above all for an examination of idealist philosophy. This idealism had taught the unity of thought and action; its realization was the job of every National Socialist; and the task of the philosopher was precisely to reflect on it. Since the decisive form of action was political action and since there existed a real unity of action and thought, there had to be "a political philosophy in which the principles of action are philosophically thought through" (p. 561). He, Gehlen, had worked hard and honestly on such a project, relying on scientific argumentation and the insights of German idealism, whereas Krieck had resorted to an incomprehensible polemic.

THE ORDER OF OBJECTIVE VALUES

Despite persistent attacks from Baeumler, Krieck, Heidegger, and their followers, Bauch and the DPG continued to promote their reworking of the idealist assumptions, specifically their theory of organic wholeness and objective values as the appropriate philosophical foundation for National Socialism.

In 1935 Bauch finally published his often-announced book on ethics, in which he set out to apply his "fundamental investiga-

tions" to the "concrete questions of moral life" (p. iv).[7] The book was a disappointment and must have been so even for Bauch's most devoted disciples and his most ardent political allies. Not only did it contain little that was new, but it was written in Bauch's most unctuous style. He could declare it his purpose to serve "the immediate present and its great tasks filled with eternal meaning in deepest reverence and with convinced dedication" (p. v). For any one interested in drawing political conclusions from Bauch's philosophical discussions, the book fell far short. Agreeing with Glockner's criticism of philosophers who were overeagerly trying to get involved in the issues of the time "with journalistic speed and dexterity," Bauch insisted that philosophy had to remain concerned with eternal problems. Any connections to the problems of the age in his work had to grow organically and could not be externally manufactured.

Bauch wrote that ethics could be characterized, in short, as "the doctrine of the meaning of life" (p. 2). But life had meaning only insofar as it was related to values and under the assumption of an objectively existing totality of values. There existed "two regulated orders—one presupposed and the other dependent," and in their interrelation there was an "all-encompassing order as a web of two webs of relations" (p. 5). The purposes and goals of life had objective significance always only in the service of values. These were values above and independent of time. "For all that, they are not separated from time but gain their concrete shape always in a concrete present which is therefore a concrete eternity in which we are enabled and destined to work and act" (p. 324). Bauch argued furthermore that some values found their expression primarily in individual life, even though all had "overindividual significance" (p. 303). Yet there were values that applied specifically to human communities. "Man is destined to live in a community, he is not a whole completed man if he does not live in a community," he quoted Fichte approvingly (p. 190). Community itself was an ideal and therefore a task to be accomplished by existing social groups, such as the family, the state, the nation, the school, the social classes, and the professions. Individual life could attain full meaning only by integrating itself into larger groupings, by participating in the life of the nation and the state.

Though Bauch devoted a long chapter to the ethics of social asso-

ciations, his discussion remained for the most part at a determinedly abstract level and had little bearing on political reality. Closer to that reality were a number of essays on nation and race that he published in those years. In 1934 he discussed what he called "living folkdom" as the most concrete synthesis of nature and spirit.[8] As a natural formation, he argued, a people was primarily a racial structure.[9] Admittedly, most nations on earth were built up from several races, but it was never arbitrary from which races they were built and how those races were blended. "A wild, random mishmash of races would completely destroy any cultural life" (p. 116). It was crucial to recognize here that blood and culture, nature and spirit, were not sharply separated. Such a strict dualism depended on a wholly mistaken "materialist" conception of race and blood. A nation was both a natural, racial community and a "meaning-structure." To speak of such meaning-structures presupposed the existence of objective values. What distinguished one nation from another were the powers and abilities with which it realized the nontemporal values in its culture:

> Only on the assumption of values that hold overindividually, generally, and objectively can one speak of the meaning of a folkdom, of a nation as a meaning-structure, can one distinguish between superior and inferior races and nations, can one even make the distinction between good and bad genetic endowments. (p. 122)

All meaning we might find in life derived from the eternal values that expressed themselves in the life of the nation as a whole. It was therefore important to surrender oneself to that life.

The denial of eternal, objective values would rob the folkish idea of all meaning and inevitably lead to a relativism of values, Bauch also wrote. Such relativism was an aftereffect of liberalism and individualism. Unfortunately, the denial of values all too often threatened and befogged contemporary thinking. Just as Gehlen had sought support for his defense of idealism in Hitler's words, Bauch now sought it for his defense of objective values. Had Hitler not repeatedly declared that only eternal values could provide goals for the human struggle? Had he not acknowledged the importance of the spirit and of those who worked for the spirit when he said that all genius and energy of the leader was for nothing "if the theoreti-

cian of the spirit does not define the goals for the human struggle"? He had recognized the supreme leadership of spiritual labor which was seeking to identify the eternal values that alone could give the human struggle its meaning. The task of the philosopher was, indeed, not to be the trainbearer of politics but "to carry the torch of truth ahead of it."

A year later Bauch turned to the question of whether the appeal to blood and race was not inherently materialistic and naturalistic. That question was often asked by German students and was often made the basis of criticism by opponents of the folkish idea, he said. But there was a simple and direct answer. Nature could not be understood as something separate from the mind but only determined by general laws and "the laws of nature are themselves laws of the spirit" (p. 544).[10] Physiologically blood was nothing but a "liquid tissue" and as such it could not be considered the basis of meaning and value in life; the physiological perspective, valid as it was in its own domain, provided only a partial view of things. Taken on its own, it led to a materialist naturalism with respect to race. From a properly "metaphysiological, metaphysical, and holistic perspective," however, blood and race also represented metaphysical structures. It required a proper, idealistic theory of knowledge to understand that nature and spirit belonged together. On that basis the racial idea was "*in principle* capable of the *principally strictest* justification and the appeal to it warranted on *strictly scientific* grounds" (p. 546).[11] With a critical eye to Rosenberg's mysticism of race, Bauch added that race and blood were certainly not "mystical entities and pseudo-entities" (p. 547).

Bauch returned to the same issues once more in 1941, a year before his death. He wrote that genetic endowment alone could not account for the actual development of an organism, since its innate capacities always requires realization through the process of education. Nature and nurture were not in conflict with one another, but complementary. "Family and nation are therefore in two ways decisive for a man's whole existence. They determine and condition it before birth through the genetic endowment of his ancestors and race. They are, on the other hand, the most decisive forces in his environment for his whole physical and spiritual development" (B 15:51–52). All education had its necessary foundation and its limits in the genetically given endowment. Bauch concluded:

> From the perspective of biology we can therefore not only accept Nietzsche's word that "Everything good is inheritance"; we can even understand it more precisely and exactly than Nietzsche himself meant it. We must, however, supplement it by the other thought that everything evil is also inheritance. Anyone to whom this is still unclear can have it demonstrated *ad oculos* by our present race policies and race laws, for these rest on the basic facts of genetic biology. Our race policies and our race legislation are not dead paragraphs; they rest on the spirit of nature itself. (B 15:59)

Bauch added that before 1933 there had been "the abysmal danger and the historical mistake of neglecting the facts of genetic biology." To help positive genetic endowment achieve its potential was the highest goal of education. "Against existing negative endowments there is no easy remedy; against them no educational instruction, however wise, can help; there is only the drastic educational cure of excluding them from further entry into the gene pool so that their transfer to future generations is cut off" (B 15:60).

Bauch concluded his essay by pointing out once more that racial doctrine required the assumption of a realm of objective, timeless values. Racial theory involved a distinction between what was valuable and what was valueless, between what was of higher value and what was of lower value *(minderwertig)*. Such valuations remained groundless and subjective without the assumption of objective values. One could, in other words, not be a good racist and a steadfast antisemite without a belief in such values. Indeed, "Without their nontemporal, nonhistorical validity the whole of temporal, historical life would fall prey . . . to individualism, to a radical relativism, to a complete nihilism of meaning" (B 15:68).

THE ORDER OF PRIMORDIAL QUESTIONING

Heidegger responded to Bauch's assertions with increasingly bitter counterattacks. In 1935 he told the audience in his lectures on metaphysics:

> The works being peddled about nowadays as the philosophy of National Socialism—but have nothing to do with the inner truth and greatness of this movement (namely the encounter

> between global technology and modern man)—have all been written by men fishing in the troubled waters of "values" and "organic unities."[12]

It has occasionally been surmised that these words were directed against Ernst Krieck and Alfred Baeumler. It has also been said that they were meant to express a critique of the Nazi worldview. Neither claim is correct. Krieck and Baeumler had no commitment to the theory of value, and in 1935 Heidegger still believed in National Socialism. The target of Heidegger's criticism was Bauch and his DPG and their attempt to make the theory of value the official philosophical basis of the German worldview. This controversy contributed to Heidegger's increasing preoccupation with Nietzsche and with the question of nihilism. In summary he later wrote that the term "nihilism" was often "only a catchword and slogan and frequently also an invective intended to prejudice." Not everyone, he declared, who appealed to "some metaphysical conviction or other stands on that account definitely outside nihilism. Conversely, however, not everyone who troubles himself with thoughts about Nothing and its essence is a nihilist" (p. 62).[13] Heidegger now claimed that to think of everything in terms of values was itself the ultimate nihilism. Those who ridiculed the realization that there were no absolute values had "abolished thinking and replaced it with an idle babbling that detects nihilism wherever it considers its own opinion endangered" (p. 112).

In opposition to the claim that the new political order had to be built on a system of objective values, Heidegger argued that it could be founded only on original thinking and questioning. A new political start required above all a return to historical origins, he said in his lectures on metaphysics in 1935. "Precisely because we have embarked on the great and long venture of demolishing a world that has grown old and of rebuilding it authentically anew, i.e. historically, we must know the tradition" (pp. 125–126).[14] The origin to which it was necessary to return was the thinking and speaking of the Greeks. Poets like Sophocles and thinkers like Parmenides and Heraclitus needed to be called on once again. This was not a turn to something primitive and backward. "The beginning is the uncanniest and mightiest. What comes afterward is not development but the flattening that results from mere spreading out"

(p. 155). The "founders of all thinking," Parmenides and Heraclitus, had necessarily stood in the Being of beings. They had grasped that Being as one, unique, complete, "the permanently manifested power through which shines perpetually the appearance of the one-and-many-sided" (p. 136). To return to the original power of their thinking meant to return to the question of the nature of Being itself. That return could not take the form of mere repetition but only that of a more primordial recovery, thoughtful of its primordialness (p. 191).

The history of the west, Heidegger said, had been the story of a long decline in which the original question of Parmenides and Heraclitus was forgotten. In the course of history a number of new interpretations were superimposed on that question. Plato described Being in terms of ideas, and this had been the completion of early Greek thinking. Christianity subsequently interpreted the Being of beings as createdness. The modern world interpreted it as presence and Nietzsche as will to power. Each of those interpretations, however, had failed to maintain the original question of Parmenides and Heraclitus. They had all characterized things that are and failed to see "the question before" all such concerns, how it stands with Being itself. This sober question, Heidegger told his students, might sound utterly useless at first, but it might also determine "the spiritual destiny of the Western world" (p. 37). Was it not likely that "nations in their greatest movements and traditions are linked to Being"?

Germany as the most central and most metaphysical nation was now threatened by Russia and America, which stood for "the same dreary technological frenzy, the same unrestricted organization of the average man" (p. 37). They stood in fact for a spiritual decline of the earth and a dawning of spiritlessness. To escape their pressure, Germany would have to move itself "into the primordial realm of the powers of Being":

> Our questioning brings us into the landscape we must inhabit as a basic prerequisite, if we are to win back our roots in history. We shall have to ask why this fact, that the word "being" is no more than a word and a vapor, should have arisen precisely today . . . We must learn to see that this fact is not as harmless as it seems at first sight. What matters ultimately is

> not that the word "being" remains a sound and its meaning a vapor, but that we have fallen away from what this word says and for the moment cannot find our way back. (p. 40)

The recovery of the original question of Being would decide Germany's destiny. The Greeks had understood that Being and appearance belonged together and that it was necessary "to wrest Being from appearance and preserve it against appearance" (p. 105). The great age of Greece had been "a single creative self-assertion amid the confused, intricate struggle between the powers of being and appearance" (p. 106). Only by enduring these tensions had the Greeks been able to bring forth "the Gods and the state, the temples and the tragedy, the games and philosophy" (pp. 105–106).

It was in these terms that Heidegger wanted to interpret the political conditions of his time. There had to be a recovery of that spirit of self-assertion with which the Greeks had originally set up their Gods and their state. The new German state would find secure grounding not in values but in a new unconcealment of Being, a new truth of Being:

> We know from Heraclitus and Parmenides that the unconcealment of Being is not simply given. Unconcealment occurs only when it is achieved by work: the work of the word in poetry, the work of stone in temple and statue, the work of the word in thought, the work of the *polis* as the historical place in which all this is grounded and preserved. (p. 191)

The polis was the place in which all *Dasein*, all being-there, found itself historically. To this place belonged "the gods, the temples, the priests, the festivals, the games, the poets, the thinkers, the ruler, the council of elders, the assembly of the people, the army and the fleet" (p. 152). The polis was the envelope for all historical human existence. This city could rise and maintain itself only through the use of power; it demanded violent men who would dedicate themselves wholly to being poets, thinkers, and rulers. These men, these leaders, would be at once "lonely, uncanny, without escape in the middle of what is, at the same time without statute and limit, without structure and order, because they themselves *as* creators must first create all this" (pp. 152–153). The question of how it stands with Being, Heidegger concluded, proved itself as the question of

"how it stands with our being-there in history, the question whether we *stand* in history or merely stagger" (p. 202). There were those who maintained that the question of Being created nothing but confusion, that it was destructive and nihilistic. The question of Being indeed included that of "the limits of nothingness," but as such it represented the first and only promising step to overcoming nihilism. The forgetfulness of Being that had manifested itself in the history of the west in so many forms, and which had taken as one of its recent forms the belief in a realm of values, was the true and fundamental form of nihilism.

Where Bauch and others proclaimed the hierarchy of values as the order on which the political system of the new state should be modeled, Heidegger proclaimed an order of origin, a return to the primordial question of the meaning of Being as the philosophical ground for the new reality. But in his 1935 lectures he held few illusions about the power of philosophy over politics. He told his students:

> Philosophy is essentially untimely *(unzeitgemäss)* because it is one of those few things that can never find an immediate echo in the present. When such an echo seems to occur, when a philosophy becomes fashionable, either it is no real philosophy or it has been misinterpreted and misused for ephemeral and extraneous purposes. (p. 7)

All genuine philosophical thinking will, in some way or other, be at odds with its time because it is either "far in advance of its time, or because it connects the present . . . with what originally was." Being untimely, philosophy was never immediately useful, and hence it was constantly subject to misunderstanding. Speaking perhaps of himself as well, Heidegger said: "Every essential form of the spirit is marked by ambiguity. The less commensurate it is with others, the more it is misinterpreted" (p. 8). What was useless might, however, still be a force, "perhaps the only real force." It could still be bound up "with a nation's profound historical development." The task of philosophy was never to be a mere reflection of its time, but to set its measure. Admittedly, philosophy could not directly "provide a foundation on which a nation will build its historical life and culture"; it could not "directly supply the energies and create the opportunities and methods that bring about a his-

torical change." But it would be wrong to say that "because metaphysics did nothing to pave the way for the revolution, it should be rejected." The important thing was to understand that thinking "breaks the paths and opens the perspectives for the knowledge that sets the norms and hierarchies, for the knowledge in which and by which a people fulfills itself historically and culturally" (p. 9).

As time went on, Heidegger became more and more doubtful that National Socialism could fulfill the promise it had once held for him. After 1936 and as preparations for war got under way, he came to think that it might itself turn out to be part of that forgetfulness of Being which manifested itself in technological frenzy. Capitalism, communism, and national socialism were in effect the same, the same limitless overorganization of the average man. In his lectures he turned more and more to a critique of technological thinking, and this included a critique of the Nazi system.[15] Even then, however, his criticisms remained cautiously veiled behind the curtains of elusive language. Heidegger never denounced Nazism in open terms. He never officially broke with the Nazi system and even in old age could believe that National Socialism had once held the promise of a fruitful encounter with the question of planetary technology—but "those people were much too limited in their thinking to gain a really explicit relationship to what is happening today."[16]

EXISTENTIALISM VERSUS PARAEXISTENTIALISM

Even some of Heidegger's closest friends were not sure that he would be able to provide adequate philosophical foundations for the Nazi worldview. One of these was Oskar Becker, who proposed his own modification of Heidegger's thought, "paraexistential" philosophy, as a more adequate grounding for National Socialism.

Becker, born in the same year as Heidegger, began his career as a student of mathematics and was drawn to philosophy by Husserl. Later as Husserl's assistant, he struck up a friendship with Heidegger. For a while Husserl had considered the two as collaborators on his own philosophical projects, with Heidegger developing a phenomenological ontology of man and history and Becker a comple-

mentary ontology of mathematics and science. Both men instead pursued their own philosophical goals, though in a spirit of friendly competition.[17] In 1933 Becker, by then a professor in Bonn, joined Heidegger in supporting the Nazi cause. For Löwith, who knew both men well, Becker's step proved even more bewildering than Heidegger's. He saw Becker as a fragile, fearful aesthete whose sudden enthusiasm for the SA and the Nordic race had an almost comical side. Later he would write of Becker that he "had no immediate and direct contact to his own real existence" and that his political move was "merely a reaction against the fragility of his own being."[18]

The disagreements that emerged after 1933 between Becker and Heidegger about the foundations of National Socialism had their source in an earlier dispute over the foundations of art. In an essay in a Husserl festschrift, Becker had argued in 1929 that Heidegger's philosophy could not give an adequate account of art. The problem lay in an overly narrow understanding of human existence. Heidegger's existential analysis of human *Dasein* was essentially "idealistic and hermeneutic," Becker wrote, and as such continued "the line of Edmund Husserl's transcendental-idealistic phenomenology" (p. 25).[19] According to Heidegger, human *Dasein* was that kind of being which possesses the ability to understand being. Becker objected that, as far as an understanding of art was concerned, "an existential analytic which is focused on 'authentic' existence and interprets this as 'historical' uncoveredness (an uncoveredness which is conscious of itself and authentic toward itself) cannot serve as the formal, methodological framework for the given task" (p. 27). The question, he thought, was really whether the aesthetic could be understood as a purely historical phenomenon.

Becker concluded that art would have to be seen as arising from a synthesis of freedom and nature. The distinction, taken from Schelling, marked the difference between the conscious and the unconscious aspect of the artistic act, the difference, as he put it, between "the free historical spirit" and "the nonhistorical, 'natural' in man" (p. 24). Art could never be produced through conscious effort alone, but required the unconscious and "the free favor of nature" (p. 32). The existence of the artist could not be explained entirely in terms of the "thrownness" (being thrown into the world) that, according to Heidegger, characterized all facticity and

all historical existence. In order to account for the artist, one would therefore have to recognize an additional category of being, that of the paraexistential, which could not be reduced to the existential aspects of human life that Heidegger had identified. With this criticism Becker certainly identified a blind spot in the philosophy of *Being and Time*. Focused on man's historical existence, the book had nothing to say about the natural, bodily, and physiological aspects of life (such as human sexuality). Becker considered this lacuna decisive in Heidegger's inability to address the topic of art. Art could not be understood completely in terms of the historical aspects of human existence. It was tied essentially to man's natural existence in the world. To speak of him as thrown into the world, as Heidegger did, was insufficient for any theory of art. One would have to recognize also the paraexistential fact of the artist's "being carried" *(Getragenheit)* by nature.

This criticism of Heidegger's existential ontology in the problem of art was to serve Becker again after 1933. In an essay on "Paraexistence" Becker argued in 1943 that human existence could not be fully understood in Heideggerian terms, but this time he did so in order to show that Heidegger was unable to accommodate such crucial political concepts as those of nation and race. Becker wrote:

> Existential analysis is completely correct within its own area . . . There rule, however, at the same time other powers that are inseparably intertwined with the structure of existing *Dasein*—powers which cannot be understood through such an analysis and completely escape the (hermeneutic-phenomenological) interpretation of being. (B 17:85)[20]

By concentrating on a hermeneutic analysis of *Dasein*, on the human being insofar as it is concerned with the question of its own being, Heidegger had failed to pay attention to the fact that "man does not exist merely spiritually and historically, but is bodily present" (B 17:63). In addition to speaking of human *Dasein*, it was necessary to recognize a human *Dawesen* in which the paraexistential features of human existence were contained. Heidegger's philosophy characterized the human being "as someone torn out of the mother soil and—precisely because he is *Dasein*—as isolated and hence prey to anxiety, as someone altogether annihilated *(nichtiger)* and 'guilty'" (B 17:86). In this view,

> the original (though not authentic) human communities which are essentially rooted in nature are short-changed and obscured in their true being: kinship group, tribe, nation, and race find here no philosophically adequate interpretation—despite the fact that they are basic phenomena and equal to that other great basic phenomenon: the isolated, authentically existing self. (B 17:86–87).[21]

Becker did not take notice in this discussion of the fact that Heidegger had in the meantime produced his own account of art, where he essentially accepted Becker's earlier criticism and tried to accommodate political criticism of the kind that Becker was soon to direct at him.[22] In his essay Heidegger located the origin of the work of art no longer in the deliberate action of the artist but in what he called Earth. Earth, so conceived, was the ground in which all creative inventions have their origin. It was thus "paraexistential" in Becker's sense. Heidegger said, moreover, that the state itself had the same kind of origin and was thus paraexistentially grounded. Becker probably was not familiar with that essay when he raised his criticism, since it did not appear in print until 1949. Even so, he would probably not have been satisfied, since nothing Heidegger said in that piece would have helped to ground the notions of nation and race.

Taking up Bauch's charge that Heidegger's philosophy was nihilistic and therefore unsuitable for the new age, Becker applied it to Heidegger's inability to come to grips with these two central notions of Nazi politics. In a review of Heyse's *Idee und Existenz,* he first called Heidegger's position "existential nihilism" and then repeated the charge in an essay on "Nordic Metaphysics," published in the journal *Rasse: Die Monatsschrift der Nordischen Bewegung (Race: The Monthly of the Nordic Movement),* where he spoke of it as "nihilistic transcendentalism" (p. 88).[23] In that essay Becker also wrote: "The deeper reason for the strange failure of 'existential philosophy' to come to terms with the questions of race, folk, and state is its pointedly directed position toward nothingness." Heidegger's concern with nothingness was out of tune with the philosophical and political moment. Becker concluded:

> The heroic attempt of the last Germanic people of today to preserve themselves paraexistentially in their last hour and to

> renew themselves as a people, to turn their destiny, our destiny, once again around—the Nordic Idea as an intellectual movement and as a political force—that is one form of the deepest essence of the Nordic race itself. (p. 91)

This act of self-preservation could be accomplished only by the great political leader who—like the artist in Becker's early essay—was able to rise above the mere historical existence of the isolated self and achieve harmony between *Dasein* and *Dawesen,* between freedom and nature (B 17:95). Becker also wrote that Hans Heyse had recognized the political shortcomings of Heidegger's philosophy. He had replaced "the ultimate loneliness of the soul that is open and ready for anxiety with the Reich (the polis) as the decisive form of existence of an authentically existing historical *Dasein*—a *Dasein* that fights a perpetual struggle against chaos [and] for order (cosmos)" (B 17:87). But Becker remained skeptical as to whether Heyse's work could resolve the problems of existential analysis. In order to do that, he was convinced, one needed his own notion of paraexistence.

THE UNRESOLVED STRUGGLE

The struggle between the various philosophical factions continued throughout the Nazi period. The dispute over which philosopher could uncover the philosophical order to legitimize the political system was never resolved. The differences between the philosophical radicals and the philosophical conservatives remained. And that struggle proved to be not only over ideas but also over recognition, influence, and academic position.

In these disputes Alfred Baeumler soon became the most powerful figure on the side of the philosophical radicals. Neither Heidegger nor Krieck could match his influence. Convinced that his rectorate had been a failure, Heidegger quickly withdrew into teaching and his own thoughts. He did not, of course, vanish entirely from the scene. *Being and Time* was reprinted twice during the Nazi period, the second time with its dedication to Husserl deleted but still containing a laudatory footnote. Otherwise he published little, and though he complained after the war that he had been stopped from doing so, he probably made little effort on his own. He had aban-

doned plans for a second volume of *Being and Time*, his thinking was changing, and what was new matured only after the end of the war. Krieck, once touted as the great National Socialist philosopher, soon lost his reputation and influence. Even in party circles he was considered something of a liability. Officially respected as the party's expert on questions of education, his ideas and his main work, the *Folkish Political Anthropology* of 1935, were generally ignored.

Of the three who had formed the radical front in philosophy in 1933, only Baeumler managed to hold a position of influence. Soon after his arrival in Berlin, he resumed his acquaintance with Alfred Rosenberg, whom he had known since 1929 from the National Socialist Cultural Association. Rosenberg had in the meantime become the party's official spokesman on matters concerning the Nazi worldview and established an Office for the Surveillance of the Whole Intellectual and Ideological Education and Training.[24] He made Baeumler the head of the office's division for academic and intellectual questions. In this capacity Baeumler hoped to be able to influence the philosophical scene. He could recommend philosophers or counsel against them, could advise for or against publication of philosophical texts.[25] Through his office Baeumler also tried to stimulate new work in philosophy. At a number of conferences he brought younger philosophers together in the hope of "questioning radically the whole philosophical tradition."[26] Over the years he gained considerable influence on Rosenberg. Where Rosenberg had initially had only a slim interest in Nietzsche's philosophy, it began to flourish under Baeumler's skillful tutelage. Rosenberg in turn came to trust Baeumler more and more. Increasingly excluded from the centers of political power, he confided his innermost thoughts to no one but Baeumler. Since he knew of Baeumler's historical interests, he also put him in charge of writing an official German history from the Nazi point of view. Baeumler was glad to undertake the project, though it came to nothing in the end. In 1942 Rosenberg gave Baeumler the task of planning a model university. The institution was meant to be organized on entirely new lines, with no concessions to existing traditions; it would pursue its teaching and research according to the strictest standards of National Socialism; and it was to be staffed entirely by a new generation of politically and philosophically reliable teachers. Rosenberg hoped the new institution would eventually serve as a model for reforming all universities. This project, too, came to nothing.

These projects forced Baeumler eventually to resign as head of the academic division in Rosenberg's office. The position was now taken over by Heinrich Haertle, the author of *Nietzsche and National Socialism*, who despite the fact that he shared Baeumler's interest in Nietzsche was not on good terms with his predecessor. So Baeumler's ability to influence appointments in philosophy, to permit, suppress, and censor philosophical publications and, more generally, to steer the development of philosophy, was all of a sudden sharply curtailed. By this time Baeumler must have realized that Rosenberg and his office were not as useful in this respect as he might have hoped. Though Rosenberg had been one of Hitler's closest associates before 1933, he quickly lost access to Hitler after the Nazis came to power and slipped from the inner circles of power. Others such as Himmler, Goebbels, and Bormann proved themselves more adept at operating the levers of power. The official assignments Hitler now gave Rosenberg were of ever-diminishing importance, and his grandly named office turned out to be a mere tributary in the stream of power. Rosenberg's many attempts to recapture his former influence proved unsuccessful. When he asked Hitler in 1939 to put him in charge of unifying Nazi philosophy, he was brusquely told that such an appointment was inopportune for political reasons. Baeumler had no other venues for pursuing his own plans. He had joined the party only in April of 1933 and was generally considered an outsider by the party faithful. In retrospect Baeumler noted: "I had no Party connections except through Rosenberg."[27]

What also diminished the influence of Rosenberg and Baeumler was the fact that throughout the Nazi period responsibility for educational questions were distributed across a number of offices and organizations. Apart from Rosenberg's office, there were the ministry of education, Himmler's SS with its vast ambitions, the Association of National Socialist University Teachers in Munich, and the Nazi student organization. All of these could exert influence on policy decisions and appointments. Individual party members who were sufficiently highly placed as well as officials at various levels of governments could also make a difference at times. Baeumler, Heidegger, Krieck, and the philosophers united in the DPG used all these channels to promote their associates and students and to advance their particular visions of philosophy.

In the continuing struggle between the philosophical factions, the DPG did extremely well because it had a large, tightly knit orga-

nization. Its leading members managed to maintain and enhance their academic positions and influence. One exception was Felix Krueger, who was forced to resign his professorship at Leipzig in 1938. As a conservative Krueger had been sufficiently sympathetic to the Nazis to endorse them even before the collapse of the Weimar Republic. In 1933 he welcomed Hitler's rise to power in enthusiastic words and, while he had given up the presidency of the DPG, became the new president of the German Society for Psychology. In 1935 he was, in addition, made rector of the University of Leipzig. Everything seemed set for a successful career. What precipitated Krueger's fall was that he had some qualms about the strident antisemitism of the Nazis. Shortly after he became rector at Leipzig, he decided to speak up for what he called "noble Jews" like Spinoza, Mendelsohn, and Heinrich Hertz. The decision quickly cost him his position as rector, and he was accused of being a friend of the Jews, possibly Jewish himself. Not even his many influential friends could save him. After protracted proceedings he was finally made to retire in 1938. Still loyal to the regime, Krueger remained in Leipzig until 1944, when he was allowed to move to Switzerland in order to live out his retirement away from the destruction of the war.[28]

Apart from this mishap, the DPG managed to promote its supporters very effectively, as is evident from the case of Arnold Gehlen. Gehlen was one of the younger members of the DPG and generally regarded as one of its most promising figures. After Bauch's death in 1942, he became the DPG's new (and last) president. By then he had already occupied chairs in Frankfurt, Leipzig, Königsberg, and Vienna. Within months after the Nazis had come to power, the DPG managed to place him in the position opened as a result of Paul Tillich's dismissal at Frankfurt, though Gehlen was at the time only twenty-nine years old and had published only two minor articles. A year later he manipulated his move back to Leipzig to the chair of his former teacher Hans Driesch. Four years later he went to Königsberg, where Konrad Lorenz was teaching and where his old Leipzig friend Gunther Ipsen, also active in the DPG, had established himself. When the eastern front began to crumble and Königsberg was increasingly threatened by the Soviets, Gehlen and Ipsen succeeded in moving to safer positions at the University of Vienna. Such a dizzying career would not have been possible in

the Nazi years without substantial political backing. In the case of Gehlen's appointment at Vienna, research has shown that the DPG pulled all its strings to obtain the position.

Still, none of these maneuverings could assure final victory for one or the other of the philosophical parties. When Gerhard Lehmann and Walter Del-Negro surveyed the philosophical scene late in the war, they were both forced to admit that the divisions of German philosophy lingered on. Both thought that eventually a unified Nazi philosophy would emerge, but when they tried to predict its outlines, they ended up with very different conclusions. Their disagreement showed once more how deeply divided the philosophical field remained.

Lehmann was certain that "there is once again a struggle over the idea of philosophy, over its claim to lead the sciences, over the nature of man—in other words, over the final presuppositions of philosophy."[29] He was sure that this renewed activity meant a renaissance in philosophy and that a single dominant form would result. On Lehmann's account that would most likely be an existential philosophy with a realist, personalist, and political orientation. Even though he appreciated the political loyalty of men like Bauch and Wundt, the work of the philosophical conservatives was for him either just part of a past or a transitional phenomenon. Looking back over the last century, Lehmann thought that he could distinguish two different strands of existential thinking. One could be traced back to Kierkegaard and the other to Nietzsche, but only the latter had raised the problem of existence in a way that was relevant to the present. The problem with Kierkegaard was not that he had been a Christian, but that he interpreted the concept of existence idealistically. Kierkegaard had thereby obscured the rudiments of a realistic notion of existence that could be found in the work of Feuerbach, Stirner, and Gruppe. Though Nietzsche had spoken of existence much less frequently than Kierkegaard, he did so more profoundly by turning his attention to the body. In that orientation consisted Nietzsche's link with Feuerbach. It was an expression of his realism, which was unfortunately misinterpreted by some as biologism. In this realism also lay Nietzsche's "difference from Kierkegaard and the whole idealist existential philosophy of today" (p. 198).

Lehmann's account made it clear that he considered Jaspers and

Heidegger as the main heirs of the Kierkegaardian tradition. But this strand was not the one that foreshadowed the future Nazi philosophy. That philosophy he characterized in terms that referred back to Baeumler and Heyse. Lehmann's projected Nazi philosophy was, in fact, a heroic realism of the sort that Baeumler had proclaimed. His reading of Nietzsche relied heavily on Baeumler's "realistic-political Nietzsche interpretation." Throughout the period Baeumler was one of Lehmann's main supporters, and it is not surprising that Lehmann should describe him as "one of the leading political thinkers of the present day." At the same time, Lehmann was drawn to Heyse's more conciliatory view of heroic realism. Like Heyse, he thought it important that the new system have its own realistic and political values and that the idea of the Reich should become the central notion of the Nazi philosophy. So he finished his survey of German philosophy with a discussion of Heyse's work as the decisive step toward the coming unification.

Del-Negro's prediction differed radically from Lehmann's. While he too foresaw an eventual unification in the philosophical field, he admitted that "we cannot know today how many of those doctrines and what in them will stand up" (p. 119).[30] He was certain, nevertheless, that existential philosophy in all its variations represented a product of philosophical decay that had to be overcome. Existentialism was an expression of the subjectivism, irrationalism, and individualism of a past age. The coming Nazi philosophy would have to seek its foundations elsewhere; it would have to be a metaphysics that combined what was valid in both realism and idealism. It would involve

> the rejection of speculative idealism as much as of positivism, of the philosophy of the unreal spirit as much as of the irrationalist, anti-intellectual philosophy of life; the absolute exclusion of what is racially foreign . . . finally a general closeness to reality and arising from that a close link to politics. (p. 118)

That prescription, like Lehmann's, is remarkable for its lack of specificity.

Lehmann's and Del-Negro's claims for an emerging renaissance in German philosophy were belied by the fundamental continuity of the philosophical scene from the Weimar Republic through the Nazi period—a continuity in both persons and concepts—by the

continued competition of different philosophical movements and schools, and by the failure of any new philosophical ideas to emerge. What we see instead is the persistence of philosophical diversity—but coupled now to the ideological demand for unity. The actual toleration of different philosophical viewpoints went hand in hand with the ideological demand for the unification of the German worldview. In consequence, the political system encouraged an intensified confrontation between the different schools. The same phenomenon can be observed in other academic disciplines. Wherever ideological considerations could be made to appear relevant, the internal struggles within these fields came to be redefined in political terms. The parties involved in these disagreements availed themselves of the politicized climate to promote their own professional interests and influence. Such struggles went on in the humanities, but extended even into the natural sciences. In mathematics, physics, chemistry, and pharmacology, ideological demands could be used to advance individual interests. The notorious history of "German physics" illustrates both the initial success and the eventual failure of one group of scientists to take over a discipline in the name of ideological correctness.[31] The coexistence of diverse schools with the political demand for unity was bound to generate tensions within the philosophical field. Such tensions are readily observable in both Lehmann's and Del-Negro's accounts of the overall state of German philosophy and in the utterances of the philosophers themselves. The result was a climate of intensified struggle between the philosophical schools over which of them represented the true philosophy of National Socialism, which of them had properly identified its inner truth and greatness.

The persistence of such struggles and the continued existence of different philosophical schools have been overlooked by recent interpreters. They have taken the ideological claims of the system at face value and described it as a totalitarian system in which only one philosophical view could be accepted. This line of reasoning is involved when Nietzsche or Heidegger are singled out as the philosophers of National Socialism. It fails to see that Nazi ideology had many sides to it and could connect with many different philosophical schools. National Socialism was not a philosophical system; it was not based on a coherent set of philosophical assumptions but

drew opportunistically on whatever served its purposes. Interpreters who connect National Socialism uniquely with Nietzsche and Heidegger fail, for instance, to notice the movement's pervasive conservatism in social questions (concerning, say, the family and the role of women), in questions of style and aesthetics (where it emphasized classicist, antimodernist values), and even in politics (where it sought to renew community as against society). In these respects National Socialism found its natural equivalent not in radical thinkers like Nietzsche and Heidegger but in the conservative movements that emphasized traditional values. Some interpreters maintain that there was an essential link between Heidegger's philosophical "decisionism of empty resoluteness," that is, his rejection of transhistorical norms and values, and his political engagement. That interpretation fails to see that Bauch and his associates in the DPG were at the same time linking their own belief in objective values to the Nazi worldview.[32] Philosophical "decisionism" and philosophical "antidecisionism" thus came to be linked to the same political ideology, and they could be linked to it precisely because the ideology was itself so diverse. Because of that fact, it is impossible to take the political engagement of German philosophers as a touchstone for judging their ideas. Heidegger's decisionism cannot be dismissed because of his political engagement any more than Bauch's antidecisionism can be dismissed because of his activism. If we are to choose between these ideas, we have to do so on other, directly philosophical grounds.

THE VAIN SEARCH

If we want to fault German philosophers of the Nazi period, we must consider not their different individual views but what they shared in their political engagement. That was, first of all, the belief that the time was one of world-historical crisis, a crisis so deep that it was no longer a purely political event but a spiritual and philosophical one. The philosophers also agreed that this crisis affected, in particular, the German people and that the Germans had a special mission to resolve it. They also assumed that the spiritual crisis and the German mission demanded leadership—that of a great political leader as well as the spiritual leadership of a great philosopher. They, finally, also held that the task of the philosophers would

be to determine the foundations on which a truer form of existence could be built.

In retrospect we may wonder whether this search for a foundational order was not altogether misconceived. Do such orders even exist? Are philosophers qualified to find them? Is it their task to legitimize political systems by referring back to supposed philosophical orders? Can political actions and arrangements ever be justified in absolute terms? Must we not acknowledge that politics is part of a practical realm where reasons are always temporary, pragmatic, and opportunistic? Is it not obvious that the German philosophers falsely estimated their role and engaged themselves in quite useless efforts—such as the time in 1933 when Heidegger approached Hitler personally in order to bring the two leaders together? One is struck by how little the German philosophers thought about their own undertaking and about its relation to politics, how little they questioned the idea of philosophical order and the assumption that it was their job to ground political reality.

Of all the philosophers who engaged themselves at the time, it was only Heidegger who worried over such questions. He too remained caught in the circle of power, afraid of powerless thinking and hence drawn into the vortex of the political process. But of all the philosophers it was he alone who understood that philosophy is distinguished by its persistent questioning, by its restless probing, its pushing across all boundaries into what seems at times a black hole of nothingness. He understood that philosophical knowledge consisted in questioning, not in having ready-made answers. He distrusted the formulas of objective values and organic totalities, of heroic realism and populist holism, of the unity of philosophy and politics in the idea of the Reich. He rightly distrusted all these inventions and yet, because he wanted his thinking to have some effect in the political and philosophical struggle for power, he fell into the trap of inventing an original order on which one could ground and justify a political system. There was, he said, only questioning, but there was also a primordial questioning, a language in which such a primordial question could be asked, and a people who could ask it because they spoke a primordial language. On this principle of an origin, a primordial source, and a historical beginning still ahead, Heidegger hoped to ground the political order that was emerging in Germany in 1933. He should have seen how dubious

this assumption of a primordial question would be for any truly radical questioning. He should have seen that order itself, in the sense of an absolute first and the highest in a hierarchy, would be put in doubt by such questioning. If he had granted that much, Heidegger would have been forced to abandon more of that privilege which philosophy has always claimed for itself. He would have had to abandon the claims of thinking to a founding authority and instead accept its giddy freedom.

The philosophers' search for an order to ground the Nazi system was, in any case, all in vain. That much was already clear before the actual end of the war, when Alfred Rosenberg visited the Nietzsche archives in October 1944 to celebrate the philosopher's hundredth birthday. It was barely ten years since Hitler had gone there to have his picture taken, but the time was now very different. Since 1939 war had been raging and, though no one was allowed to say so in public, it had not been going well after the fall of Stalingrad in the winter of 1942. In the summer before Rosenberg's visit, a group of Hitler's own officers had tried to assassinate the Führer. The war was visibly coming to an end. It was to be lost, and the whole Nazi system with it, in the next six months.

Rosenberg had come to Weimar to celebrate the philosopher he had learned to appreciate more and more with the help of Baeumler. Rosenberg's mood was somber. Anticipating disaster, his speech on Nietzsche's birthday also became a philosophical epitaph on the whole Nazi period. Rosenberg spoke of Nietzsche's heroism in his struggle against the oppressive forces of a moribund culture and his inability to overcome that culture's deadening weight.[33] The founding of a new culture in the Germanic spirit had been left to another generation, and National Socialism had taken up the uncompleted task. There was a hint in Rosenberg's speech that National Socialism might also fail to complete the task it had set itself, just as Nietzsche had failed. The forces of the old order might triumph once more; the Nazi destiny might turn out to be Nietzsche's. German philosophy, which had found its strongest expression in Nietzsche, might again prove insufficient to overcome the false, hostile orders. In the meantime there was only the struggle. The heroic realism that Rosenberg now saw at the heart of Nietzsche's philosophy could help to interpret the movement's threatened downfall, so he seemed to say. It could make sense of the political

struggles that had brought the Nazis to power, of the endless political fights, of the endless wars between philosophical factions. Nietzsche had finally understood, as Baeumler said much earlier, that the world "inexhaustibly produces figures . . . that fight one another, maintain themselves in struggle or go under."

10

The Aftermath

"We were six: Augstein, Wolff, the photographer, a stenographer, a technician, and I. Frau Heidegger welcomed us at the door, and, following her sign, I escorted the small group upstairs, where Heidegger was waiting for us at the door of his study."[1] It was September 23, 1966, and Heinrich Petzet, Heidegger's old friend, was bringing a group of journalists from the news magazine *Der Spiegel* to Heidegger's house. Twenty-one years after the Second World War and the collapse of the Nazi system, Heidegger had finally agreed to talk about his political involvement in 1933. Petzet knew that this was an anxious moment for Heidegger. "I was a little startled when I looked at him and noticed how excessively tense he was," he wrote later. "The photographs that were taken throughout the morning . . . clearly show his high tension: the swollen blood vessels on his temples and his forehead, the eyes slightly bulging in the excitement."

Although friends and former students had often urged Heidegger to speak up about his political past, he had resisted all such suggestions. When he finally agreed to this interview, he did so only on the condition that it would be conducted on his own terms and be kept under lock and key until after his death. Heidegger had always opposed the idea that he should make some kind of public confession, and he was not going to make one now. To Petzet he said that he "had a clear conscience and saw no reason to go on a humiliating penitential pilgrimage that would be a retrospective apology for his activities, especially for his thinking, and therefore an acknowledg-

ment that they had been wrong" (p. 71). He had also expressed his fear that any statement on those matters might kindle a debate that would stymie his hard-won ability to do philosophical work again. "It was this work and its slowly attained products that were most important to him during his old age" (p. 72). Heidegger also confided to his friend that he was most afraid of the possibility that such a debate would cause young people to "put his books aside with irritation and suspicion." Then the seeds he had sown would be fruitless.

Such self-serving justifications of his silence have understandably enraged Heidegger's critics, and so have the bias and inaccuracies of the account he gave to *Der Spiegel.* When one sets such concerns aside, another thing stands out in the interview which leads away from the facts of Heidegger's life to the more pressing question of the relation of philosophy and politics: it is Heidegger's determination not to be drawn back into politics. Where he had once asserted the congruence of philosophy and politics, he was now evidently keeping them sharply apart.

His reluctance to engage in any kind of politics permeated the whole interview. *Der Spiegel* was, after all, a political and not a philosophical publication, and so the interviewers understandably kept goading him with political questions. Right at the start they asked him: "What possibilities does philosophy have to influence reality, including political reality? Does this possibility still exist at all? And if so, what is it composed of?"[2] They suggested that these questions would provide the right setting for examining Heidegger's actions in 1933. Heidegger's response to that suggestion remained noncommittal, even evasive. "Those are important questions," he said. "Will I be able to answer them at all?" Then, without trying to respond further, he launched straight into his account of the events of 1933. That was not what the interviewers had in mind. They persisted in asking whether philosophy can ever guide an individual or a group to action. Heidegger said that this brought them back to their initial questions, which he would now answer "quickly and perhaps somewhat vehemently." His answer was that "philosophy will not be able to bring about a direct change of the present state of the world." (pp. 56–57). The interviewers persisted and reminded Heidegger that philosophy had in the past influenced new political and cultural currents. They referred to Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and

Marx. Heidegger responded that philosophy in the old sense had come to an end and that only a new kind of thinking could possibly have an effect on the conditions of the world, but even then only an indirect one. The contours of this new thinking were still only dimly discernible. *Der Spiegel:*

> We, politicians, semi-politicians, citizens, journalists, et cetera, constantly have to make some decision or other . . . We expect help from the philosopher, even if, of course, only indirect help, in roundabout ways. And now we hear: I cannot help you. (p. 60)

Heidegger: "I cannot." *Der Spiegel:* "That has to discourage the non-philosopher." Heidegger: "I cannot because the questions are so difficult that it would be contrary to the meaning of the task of thinking, to make public appearances, to preach, and to distribute moral grades." Even that did not stop the interviewers from asking once more at the end of the conversation whether a thinker could not give advice, if only as a by-product of his thinking. Could he not say that a political system needed to be replaced or that certain reforms were necessary? "Is it not rightly expected of the philosopher that he give advice on what he considers possible ways of living?" they asked. Heidegger remained as firm and curt as before, replying simply: "In the realm of thinking there are no authoritative statements" (p. 64).

Even though Heidegger announced in such words his complete disengagement from politics, he allowed himself in passing a whole series of political judgments. These were uniformly negative and critical in character. He said that neither democracy nor the Christian worldview nor the constitutional state can "genuinely confront the technological world" (p. 54). He added that he no longer believed that the Nazis had come to grips with the problem of technology. They had perhaps made some tentative moves in that direction but had, unfortunately, been much too primitive to understand the problem. He still considered communism a tool of planetary technology, just as he had done in the thirties, and he still maintained that nothing was to be expected from the United States as long as it was mired in pragmatic-positivistic thinking. Even when he got to talk about what mattered most to him at that time, "the planetary movement of modern technology," he did not put forward a posi-

tive program for political action. He was not, as some readers have thought, outlining ecological politics but merely a philosophical and critical attitude toward technology.

The Heidegger of the postwar and post-Nazi period was disillusioned with the political process and now believed only in the power of poetical thinking. Such thinking, he assumed, would not necessarily generate overt action. It might instead lead to detachment and silence, and if it had any effects, they might take hundreds of years to show themselves. Thinking was not essentially inactive, but it was, as he put it, a building of narrow bridges that did not reach all that far. Whether we would succeed even in such a limited undertaking depended in the end not on us. "Only a god can still save us," Heidegger said toward the end of the interview. "I think the only possibility of salvation left to us is to prepare, through thinking and poetry, for the appearance of the god or for the absence of the god during the decline" (p. 57).

The disillusionment that shines through these words was not, of course, without political significance. Like all forms of pessimism, it went hand in hand with a deeply conservative outlook on everyday life. But this was not a conservatism that believed in the positive worth of tradition or the existing order of things. It was rather a suspicious and bitter and, hence, fickle and untrustworthy conservatism. That was, indeed, the essence of Heidegger's belated antipolitical politics. He no longer believed in change and reform or political revolution; his was, rather, a politics of letting be, of accepting what is there while hoping and searching for radical and still inconceivable transformations. This conservatism revealed itself most specifically in the fact that Heidegger could at this late date still see politics in terms of the quadrilateral of the world-historical crisis, the German mission, philosophical leadership, and a political order based on the primordial question of being. Only now these themes were muted. Where they had once justified Heidegger's active political engagement, they now served to justify his philosophical detachment.

Where the crisis had once seemed to him to have its climax in the political turmoil of 1933, it was now part of a history of being. Crises were, on this view, no longer momentary events but far-reaching, drawn-out happenings, and they occurred regularly and defined each time a new age of the world. Heidegger was no longer

preoccupied with the specific issues of contemporary politics. The crisis of which he was now thinking could not be overcome by momentous decisions or political actions. It had to run its inevitable course, which one could only learn to accept. Heidegger's past activism had given way to a politics of waiting. As before, Heidegger still thought that the Germans had a special role to play in the resolution of the current crisis. The problem of technology could be resolved only in the place it had come from in the first place. As Heidegger told his interviewers, "The help of the European tradition and a new appropriation of that tradition are needed for a change in thinking" (p. 63). Since the Germans occupied a central place in Europe, they were also centrally charged with bringing about such a change. The Germans had such a calling, Heidegger said once again, because they had a primordial language. This language tied them in special ways to the original thinking of the Greeks. To his interviewers he confided that Frenchmen had assured him that "when they begin to think, they speak German" (p. 63). At the same time, however, he saw Germany's destiny as part of a world-historical process. While he told *Der Spiegel* defiantly that "today, and today more resolutely than ever, I would repeat the speech on the 'Self-Assertion of the German University,'" he added that he no longer stood by its nationalism, since human society had now taken the place of the nation (p. 46). Heidegger also still believed in the leadership of the philosophical thinker. Very few people, he said, were capable of the insights that were needed, and even fewer had the ability to express them. It is clear from his words that he still believed himself called to such a task. What mattered was also that some questions were primordial and others were not. There was still in his thinking that old preoccupation with order. Where he had once tried to realize this order through political engagement, he was now certain that a concern with order demanded a withdrawal from political action. It is in any event clear that the old themes still existed in Heidegger's mind. But the structures through which he had once organized his political engagement were transformed, and could therefore motivate a wholly new attitude to politics and a wholly different assessment of the Nazis. It was by drawing attention to this shift in his thinking that Heidegger finally felt able to explain to his interviewers in what sense his political engagement in 1933 had been mistaken.

After the End

At the time he gave this interview, Heidegger's philosophical standing in Germany was probably higher than it had ever been during his lifetime. After a period of hesitation immediately at end of the war, he was accepted as Germany's greatest living philosopher. At the end of the war he was forced to undergo a de-Nazification trial and was barred from teaching, but in 1951 was officially restored to office, with the right to give university lectures. Throughout these years Heidegger kept busy publishing the essays he had written since the early 1930s. He also began to edit the notes for lectures from that period and to put them into print. His 1935 lectures on metaphysics appeared in 1953 and his Nietzsche lectures from 1936–1940 shortly after that. Heidegger's main work, *Being and Time*, was also republished in a number of new editions, and translations of the book began to appear along with some of his other writings. Heidegger's work thus achieved a new visibility in the postwar period in Germany and a new group of readers both in Germany and abroad.

In these years Heidegger also found time to elaborate on the direction his thinking had begun to take during the war. While barred from teaching, he lectured to small circles of admirers and afterward to large numbers of students about the dangers of technology, about the need for a new kind of thinking, about poetry and the new god. Heidegger's language, which had never been simple, gained in depth; it was full of intricate wordplay, adopted a poetical, religious, and even mystical tone, and occasionally even broke into verse. He had, as he declared, abandoned philosophy and with the help of poetry was on the way to a new kind of thinking. Still concerned with Being, he drew freely on such poets as Hölderlin, Rilke, and Trakl and on such mystical writers as Meister Eckhart and Angelus Silesius. To his theological friends at least, it appeared that he had finally returned to the religious sentiments of his youth. Heidegger's thoughts of this period reflected moods and attitudes that fitted well into the conservative and restorational climate of West Germany in the first two decades after the war. It was not surprising that he came to be celebrated as Germany's most profound thinker. By 1966, when he let *Der Spiegel* interview him, his triumph seemed complete, but appearances were deceptive. Two

years later the student revolution broke out in Germany as elsewhere, and this affected Heidegger's standing. More rebellious than the postwar generation, the students now turned to the left, questioned the Nazi pasts of established authorities, and abandoned philosophy in favor of politics and sociology. Heidegger quickly became a symbol of a past they were keen to reject. But the old man was not going to be beaten that easily. With astonishing resilience, he went on to prepare a complete edition of his writings and lectures in the expectation that the sheer volume of the material and the wealth of the philosophical thought would keep his name in philosophical memory. Still busy on this enterprise and confident that his philosophical achievements would outshine his political errors, he died in 1976, almost ninety years old.

Of the German philosophers who became politically active in 1933, Heidegger in the end fared the best. The destinies of the others were more mixed. On the side of the philosophical conservatives, Bruno Bauch died in 1942 still convinced of the triumph of the national revolution he had fought for. After the war, though, and with the dissolution of the DPG, his name was quickly forgotten. The same was true of most of the DPG's other prominent figures. Hermann Schwarz, the oldest of the group, lived to the end of the war extolling the virtues of Germanic faith in the last number of the DPG's journal in late 1944, but in the destruction and turmoil that followed, his traces were lost. Felix Krueger survived the war in his Swiss exile and died there unremembered in 1948. Max Wundt taught at Tübingen until 1945 and then, after losing his position, withdrew into silence until his death in 1963. Of the DPG's leading figures, only two managed to flourish in the postwar period. With the end of the war, Nicolai Hartmann left Berlin and took up a new position at the University of Göttingen, where he taught until his death in 1950. In the years immediately after the war, he became the most influential spokesman for a traditional conception of philosophy. His earlier writings on ethics and ontology were reprinted and for some years enjoyed considerable success. His sober way of pursuing philosophical questions, his concern with ontological order, stratification, and hierarchy, and his theory of objective value attracted the attention of the philosophical public. By the time he died in Göttingen in 1950, he was considered one of Germany's most influential philosophers, and nobody recalled his po-

litical past. By 1966, however, when Heidegger gave his interview, he was largely forgotten. The other member of the DPG's inner circle who managed to reestablish himself after the war was Arnold Gehlen. Connected to the new political regime through his cousin, General Konrad Gehlen, who became the head of West Germany's spy organization, he succeeded in obtaining a chair in sociology in 1947 at the academy of higher administration in Speyer; in 1951 he served a rector of that institution. In 1962 he moved to the technical university at Aachen. Gehlen's major work, *Man, His Nature and Position in the World,* originally published in 1940, was reprinted in a number of new editions after the war. The book, which developed a biologically based theory of culture, had abstained from a discussion of the idea of race even in its first edition, and Gehlen was thus able to republish it with few alterations. Even though he was never again fully accepted in academic circles, he could assure for himself a role as the main exponent of philosophical anthropology. As such he was remembered when he died in 1976.[3]

On the side of the philosophical radicals, the life histories were just as diverse. Ernst Krieck survived the war, only to die as a prisoner in an American detention camp in 1947. Hans Heyse lost his position at Göttingen at the end of the war, but continued to live there in obscurity until his death in 1976. Like many of the others he too was quickly forgotten. Oskar Becker was eventually allowed to resume his career, but the Nazi experience seems to have given him a sense of extreme philosophical caution. He published little after the war, and most of what he did put into print concerned technical problems in the philosophy of mathematics. He had in a sense returned to his intellectual beginnings, but he had also left his most inventive and speculative thought behind him. Becker's influence remained restricted to a small number of students with whom he discussed issues in formal logic and the intricacies of Heidegger's later philosophy. Apart from Heidegger himself, Alfred Baeumler had probably been the most interesting and creative of the philosophical radicals. Like many of the others, he also disappeared from view in 1945. Unlike most, however, he did not give up his philosophical efforts.

Baeumler's diary reveals that he had kept faith in National Socialism until the very moment of defeat. Then, in April 1945, he reversed his assessment, all within a single week.[4] It was almost as if

blinders had fallen from his eyes. But in front of his de-Nazification tribunal, he proved just as defensive as Heidegger.[5] He argued that he had been apolitical until 1933 and had only joined at that time because he was deceived by Hitler and his movement. He said that Rosenberg had been his only link to the party and that he had no important role or great influence in the Nazi system. He also maintained that he had always conducted his teaching "under scientific not political auspices" and that he had never had more than sixty students in his classes. "If I had taught a cheap worldview designed for the Hitler Youth or the SS, there would have been 300 every semester" (p. 199). Above all he claimed that he had never been the philosopher of National Socialism and pushed all responsibility onto Krieck, who was dead. "The philosopher and pedagogue of National Socialism was Krieck and not I," he firmly declared (p. 201). In private, though, Baeumler spoke, quite unlike Heidegger, of his "blindness," his "aberration," and his "political guilt." He could admit that he had "belonged to a system of aggression and force" and that the genocide was "repulsive and that which most contradicts the order of things." He declared his former allegiance to National Socialism "an error and a madness," and spoke of what he had written about Christianity and the Jews as "an incredible darkening" and an "aberration of the mind." He also said finally that he did not intend to escape the consequences of his actions, "even if it meant to be condemned to silence to the end of my life."[6] Baeumler did not, however, withdraw completely from politics after 1945. In the 1950s he published a series of critical studies of dialectical materialism and Soviet communism under the pseudonyms of Alfred Baumeister and Johannes Lanz. Privately Baeumler also resumed his philosophical work, even though he published nothing of this new material apart from an essay on Spengler.[7] Largely forgotten at the time of his death in 1968, he has recently been brought to public attention again by the efforts of his widow, who is still intent on publishing his last philosophical writings.

The Nazi period marked, in effect, the end of the second great epoch of German philosophy. The period had begun with the neo-Kantians, with Nietzsche, Frege, and Dilthey, and was given new energy after the First World War by a host of new philosophical movements. It ended because the political circumstances of the 1930s prevented the free exchange of ideas, because economic up-

heavals, political uncertainties, and war drew philosophers away from their work, and because the Nazis hunted down their political and racial enemies, murdered them in camps, or drove them to seek refuge abroad. Their actions had a paradoxical effect in that those they drove out of Germany often became exponents of German philosophy and culture in other countries. Rudolf Carnap, Karl Popper, Hans Reichenbach, Karl Hempel, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ludwig Waismann, Hannah Arendt, and Herbert Marcuse all sought refuge in the English-speaking world and thereby redirected a whole stream of philosophizing outside of Germany. French philosophy also profited from the problems besieging German philosophy. Unencumbered by the hesitations and silences that fell over Germany after 1933 and lasted well into the postwar period, French philosophers could take Husserl and Heidegger, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, and rework their ideas in exhilarating new ways.

What followed after 1945 in German philosophy has invariably been in the nature of a reappropriation. Heidegger himself spent his final years rethinking, in ever new and more stylized ways, the history of Being first conceived in the 1930s. Others returned to the great idealist tradition in German philosophy, rediscovered Marx, reacquainted themselves with the achievements of logical analysis, took up the methods and styles of recent Anglo-American thought, or aped the latest fashions from France.[8] Much ingenuity, intelligence, and scholarship was spent on these efforts, but for all that they lacked the power and originality that characterized German philosophy between 1870 and 1933. In the years immediately after the war, the continuing struggle between philosophical radicals and conservatives seemed won by the latter. The public rhetoric of the time was certain that National Socialism had suffered from a lack of values, and so philosophical talk about values, hierarchies, and objective existence once again appeared important and attractive. In the conservative climate of the time, it was conveniently forgotten that Bauch and Hartmann and their followers in the DPG had once proclaimed the theory of value as the foundation of National Socialism. The DPG and its philosophical and political actions were wiped from memory, and Nietzsche as the critic of values was shunned as the philosopher of Nazism.

That German philosophy should have entered a period of recov-

ery and reappropriation after the war is understandable. But the process became at the same time a veil under which urgent and essential questions remained hidden. What stood in the way of vigorous philosophizing were ultimately the events of the Nazi period and the inability of German philosophy to learn from them. Great historical events can be the cause of great philosophical outpourings, as they were at the time of the French revolution and the Napoleonic conquest of Europe, but they can also lead to silence. The disturbances that shook the European continent in the first half of this century have failed to generate such an outpouring in German philosophy. It is as if the history of National Socialism and the fate of philosophy in it have defied philosophical analysis. Only some stalwart Marxists have blessed us with their accounts of the period. In spite of all the philosophical books and articles published in Germany since the end of the Second World War, there remained in the end only one long, ominous silence on questions that should have mattered more than all others. These concerned philosophy itself and its relation to the body politic. For the German philosophers who were left or were growing up in those years proved themselves unable to look at the Nazi system and ask themselves what it might reveal about the nature and role of philosophy, about its relation to politics, and the possibilities and limits of philosophical politics.

Heidegger's actions and inactions in those years were symptomatic of the condition of the whole of German philosophy and, indeed, of the state of German society. "The paucity of his explanations, the absence of any disavowal, and his silence on the Extermination (and the responsibility of Germany and Europe),"[9] which remain a great question mark, were in fact characteristic of a whole society. To anyone growing up in those years with a sense of curiosity about the recent past, those were familiar and foreseeable evasions. An entire society had devoted itself to the task of forgetting, and the philosophers were only too willing to participate in the communal act of erasure.

The philosophical chances missed in 1933 were not recovered after the end of the Nazi regime in 1945. Driven not by a will to understand but by moral shame, German philosophers set out to forget their earlier political activities. They cut the ties with their own past and resumed their old business. In their eagerness to for-

get, German philosophers failed once again to reflect on the problematic relation of philosophy and politics, on the intersection of truth and power, and on the use they had made of the concepts of crisis, nation, leadership, and order. Missing a unique chance to learn from their own mistakes, they found themselves instead forced into ever new, ever more elaborate, and ever more predictable evasions and denials.

PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

The connection between philosophy and politics is always complex and precarious. The Greeks understood this when they spoke of the varied relations of their own philosophers to the politics of their time. They recounted how Heraclitus withdrew from politics in order to watch the children play dice, hoping to learn the secret of a universe in flux. They talked of philosophers who had been lawgivers and of others who had been persecuted by their fellow citizens. They described how Socrates had abstained from public office but had nevertheless engaged in politics through his incessant questioning. They spoke of Diogenes who, unencumbered by a desire for political power, had been able to tell the emperor Alexander to step out of the sun. Their manifold stories were illustrations of the peculiarly intricate relation they perceived to obtain between philosophy and politics. The gist of those stories was that the relation is neither one of absolute independence nor one of unconditional unity.

Philosophy is surely not independent of politics. Like all discourse, it is of necessity placed within a political field and exists always under political conditions. Politics circumscribes, for one thing, who will be able to speak and what they can say, who will be published and who will be read, what texts will be censored and what books will be studied in schools. In Germany most creative philosophy after Kant was, moreover, produced by professors at public institutions, and politics determined who was appointed to speak with the authority of office. Of course, public opinions and attitudes impinge on philosophical thinking, and since they are managed and manipulated by political forces, these affect the philosophical discourse both directly and invisibly through the channels of accepted opinion. In search of appropriate concepts with which

to describe the nature of things, philosophers also draw frequently on political notions as metaphors. They characterize the soul as an internalized hierarchy of social classes and fashion the metaphysical structure of the world on the model of local political orders.[10] For all these reasons, it proves crucial that we should look at German philosophy in the 1930s in its political context. We will not understand what philosophers said about politics unless we see how their ideas were shaped by the political conditions in which they arose. Heidegger's crisis in 1933 was also the crisis of an age. To understand the one means to see how it reflected the other.

To consider Heidegger's statements in their political context is, however, not without danger. There suggests itself here a carelessly reductionist view of the relation between philosophy and politics. This argument holds that all thought and action belong to a world in which human beings live under political conditions. Hence, all search for truth must depend on the life process of which it is a part and must be determined by the process. It concludes that one should therefore be able to analyze the life process and derive from it those ideological reflexes and echoes that we call human thought. All such thought is accordingly a reflection of the "material conditions of life"; the products of conscious activity are sublimates of the material process. Material life determines consciousness, this reductionism proclaims, but consciousness does not determine life. I have paraphrased here words from Marx's *German Ideology*.[11] What they say, however, has been repeated again and again by later writers in the Marxist tradition.

Given these assumptions, it appears easy to explain the actions of German philosophers in 1933. Their thinking was a direct product of the social circumstances in which it occurred. This view finds nothing puzzling in the political engagement of the German philosophers, since it is certain that their thought must have been steeped in the life that determined it. All our questions concerning the relation of philosophy to the political realm are thus answered speedily and at once, since the relation between philosophy and politics is here one of complete dependence. Marxist analyses of the relations between German philosophy and Nazi ideology have, for that reason, tended to be one-dimensional and shallow. The reductionist assumption behind these accounts is, however, not confined to the Marxist tradition. It strongly appeals to the temperament of our time, since its fits our tough-minded, materialist view of society. It

is at the same time soothing, in that it excuses us from having to undertake the effort of philosophical thinking. It allows us to judge such thinking without having to reason with philosophers and without having to take their words seriously. To an increasingly illiterate society like ours, that is indeed a comfort.

Marxist reductionism and all similar forms of reductionism are, however, untenable. First of all, they treat consciousness and its products as purely epiphenomenal, whereas both are in fact part of the material world and its causality. The reductionist claim proves itself on closer inspection to be insufficiently materialist in that it adheres to the idea that consciousness is peculiarly ghostly and ineffective. Second, it draws wrong conclusions from the fact that consciousness belongs to this world. As part of the world, this consciousness is of course affected by all the forces that impinge on it. Yet these are not exclusively political or social in character. There is no reason to think that consciousness must necessarily and exclusively reflect the political and social conditions under which it operates. The reductionist account reifies, third, what it calls "social life," as if it were a single condition. Social life is in reality constituted by a network of relations, by the coexistence of multiple social fields and subfields. The thought produced at a particular time can reflect very different aspects of this varied domain and can combine those aspects in unpredictable ways.

A modified and more sophisticated form of reductionism has recently been advanced by Pierre Bourdieu. He argues that we must indeed recognize the existence of different social fields, that the philosophical search for truth defines one such field, and that we must distinguish the philosophical field from its surrounding political domain. According to Bourdieu, however, the philosophical field specifies only the form of the discourse generated within it; its content is still said to be completely determined by the political field. This new doctrine differs from the cruder form of reductionism, then, only in that it allows two social determinants of the philosophical discourse—one that governs its form and another one that governs its content. Actual philosophical discourse is to be considered the product of a compromise between an expressive interest and a repressive censorship, and philosophical assertions must be taken as euphemisms that hide their real (political) meaning.[12]

Bourdieu has applied these assumptions in an ingenious analysis

of the Heidegger case. His modified reductionist view of the relation of philosophy to politics is nevertheless still unsatisfactory. It relies, to begin with, on a wholly unexamined distinction between the form and the content of philosophical assertions. It also relies on a quasi-Freudian theory of repression that remains untested. Bourdieu's theory fails to explain, furthermore, why philosophers often address questions of politics openly and directly (since they ought to be hiding the political meaning of their assertions by producing "the illusion of independence"). The account is even less able to explain why philosophers sometimes engage directly in politics and do so in the name of their own philosophy. Like all forms of reductionism, the account finally fails to recognize the fact that the philosophical discourse, like any other discourse, can define its own domain. We certainly grant to the authors of literary fiction the power to invent their own worlds. The same power should be granted to philosophical authors. To argue that a philosophical discourse that declares itself to be about X must "really" be concerned with Y is always questionable. When Plato spoke of the Idea, he was specifying a domain of objects he clearly identified within his own discourse. He was not "really" speaking of political things in a repressed and euphemizing form. That does not rule out the possibility of correspondences between Plato's ontology and his politics. But those are not explained by Bourdieu's reductive account. An adequate analysis must acknowledge the existence of different discourses; it must recognize that these discourses are not necessarily linked by relations of social determination; and it must finally try cautiously and patiently to identify the various sorts of relations that actually exist between them.

In opposition to reductionism, one must point out that it is not only true that philosophy is dependent on political circumstances, but also that politics in turn is influenced by philosophy. Politics is not simply a domain of sheer action but a field in which ideas, words, and questions of truth and falsity are of supreme importance. Though it is true that philosophers often borrow their metaphors from politics, it is equally true that politicians borrow their metaphors from philosophy and envisage political change in terms of philosophical ideals. Politicians use philosophy to legitimize their endeavors. It is difficult to imagine the emergence of democracy without consideration of the culture of argumentation fostered by

the Greek sophists. From Aristotle to the present day, philosophers have served as educators of politicians, supplying them not only with a general view of the world but, more important, with the discursive skills of their trade.

Such considerations have given rise within philosophy to its own kind of reductionism. Again and again philosophers have argued that politics is reducible to philosophy. The fact that there should exist two such countervailing claims does not surprise us, since philosophy and politics both tend to globalize their concerns. Where philosophers have tended to assume that all questions, theoretical as well as practical, are ultimately philosophical in nature, politicians have been inclined to declare all concerns, the practical and the theoretical, ultimately political. Today the philosophers' form of reductionism is not as generally held as the politicians'. The idealist metaphysics that would support the former has far fewer adherents than the materialism that goes with the latter. For all that, both forms of reductionism are unsatisfactory. Despite all the connections between them, there remain profound distances between philosophy and politics. The two enterprises clearly belong to different domains; they define different social fields in which different languages are spoken, different authorities are invoked, different concerns and strategies are pursued. In its search for truth, philosophy often concerns itself with abstract long-term questions, whereas politics is concerned with practical problems of the here and now. Philosophy can endure a questioning that goes without answers; in politics we must be content to suspend questioning at times and accept answers that are temporary, pragmatic, and fallible.

These facts give rise to yet another simplifying myth: philosophy and politics have nothing in common, and there exists a deep, unbridgeable gulf between them. This view derives plausibility from the fact that there are obvious philosophical concerns worlds apart from politics. When philosophers think about the foundations of mathematics or physics, they seem to be dealing with issues that have no bearing on political matters. In our century, moreover, there has appeared a philosophizing that stresses its scientific character, that claims to have omitted all questions of values, and that occasionally sees itself as entirely unconcerned with the human condition.[13] It may also be said that there are certain practical, organizational, and empirical problems that are utterly remote from

philosophical reasoning. These observations may be misleading. It is in fact remarkable how the most abstract parts of philosophy and those most removed from practical life can give rise to political conclusions, and remarkable how the most concrete political questions can quickly turn into philosophical disputes. When we consider, for instance, the fact that Gottlob Frege aligned himself with the Nazis in 1924, we may at first consider this unrelated to his work on the foundations of mathematics. Still we cannot rule out the existence of connections between politics and mathematics. The Pythagoreans certainly believed in such links and constructed both a philosophy and a political system on that belief. Plato's philosophy seems to envisage a similar congruence between thinking about mathematics and thinking about politics. The German philosophers who engaged themselves politically in 1933 and who did so in the name of philosophy had, for the most part, no political theory and acted on the basis of their metaphysics and ontology. The politicians who called for help from the philosophers had, in turn, no real understanding of philosophy but wanted to draw on philosophical concepts to buttress specific policies. Though the concerns of philosophy and politics sometimes seem far apart, an unexpected linkage is sometimes established over apparently large distances.

Hannah Arendt has spoken of the gulf separating philosophy from politics.[14] On her account, that separation was due to a single event, the death of Socrates at the hand of his Athenian fellow citizens. Arendt assumes that for Socrates the relation of philosophy to politics was intimate and undisturbed, but that Plato steered philosophy away from politics as a result of his disillusionment over the death of Socrates. The conflict broke out because Socrates wanted to make philosophy relevant to the Athenian polis at a time when its political life was in rapid decay:

> The conflict ended with a defeat for philosophy: only through the famous *apolitia,* the indifference and contempt for the world of the city, so characteristic of all post-Platonic philosophy, could the philosopher protect himself against the suspicions and hostilities of the world around him.[15]

For Plato himself, philosophy became a speechless wondering, a concern with a realm of pure ideas that lay outside the habitual place of human politics. Politics, if it were a concern at all for

the philosopher, would from now on have to be measured by absolute philosophical standards. In Heidegger, Arendt thought she could discern the same apolitical condition. He too tried to take up an abode in philosophical wondering. As a result of their separation from the actual world of men, Arendt argues, Plato and Heidegger proved vulnerable when they turned back to politics. Trying to deal with human affairs, they naturally turned to tyrants and Führers. "This should be imputed not just to the circumstances of the times and even less to preformed character, but rather to what the French call a *déformation professionelle.*"[16]

Such claims are much too simple to be helpful. If a gulf separates philosophy from politics, it surely did not happen in a single rupture. The distance and alienation that no doubt exist between philosophy and politics were produced and reproduced over time in ever new ways, and were also bridged in ever new ways. It is not even true that a gulf opened up only with the death of Socrates; it was there from the beginning of philosophy. From the moment the first Greek thinkers began to ask their questions, they isolated themselves from the political realm and withdrew from the demands of everyday life. They concerned themselves with the natural world as a whole and set aside the human world and its needs. They pursued their questions, moreover, as men freed from the responsibilities of public office and from the burdens of life. Later Greek philosophers took a turn back toward politics and became advisers and authors of constitutions for the new democratic states. Still later they turned away once more from the turbulent world and set out to measure the political realm against the ideal standards of an absolute philosophical truth. Finally, they came to provide a whole empire with an ideology that separated philosophical reflection from political pursuits and gave it, instead, the task of searching for inner perfection. In each of these phases, the relation of philosophy to politics was different. As both the philosophical field and that of politics changed, their relation was constantly being redefined, always in new and unforeseen ways.

The relation between philosophy and politics, then, cannot be explained in reductive terms, nor can we treat philosophy and politics as wholly distinct. The historical facts we have explored reveal a complex and varying pattern of relations between them. There is no single and simple line of dependence, but rather a family of scat-

tered, interweaving relations, of connections and dissociations. That much is clear from looking at German philosophy in its relation to National Socialism. What I have described does not even fully reflect the complexity of the actual facts. The field has been explored only in part. We might have considered other philosophers and philosophical writers. We might have used an examination of Carl Schmitt, the legal philosopher, or Ernst Jünger, the writer, to throw further light on the Heidegger case. Their philosophical views were in many respects similar to Heidegger's, and it seems plausible to assume that Heidegger's critique of technology profited greatly from their work. Schmitt's career under the Nazis was also similar to Heidegger's. After an initial period in which he hoped to steer the Nazi revolution his way, Schmitt, too, became disillusioned and withdrew into a private world in which he was quietly tolerated by the Nazis. Our understanding of the Heidegger case might also have gained from a discussion of the case of the philosopher Hans Alfred Grunsky, whose political commitment to Hitler's cause was so extreme that his Nazi colleagues in Munich engineered his removal from the academic position he held. We might also have profited from a comparison between the conditions in which philosophy and other disciplines (such as psychology, anthropology, and history) operated in the Nazi period. We might have talked at greater length about the institutional, psychological, and personal connections between the politics and philosophy in that period. We might have gained a more rounded picture of the relation between the two, if we had studied the philosophers who were driven out by the Nazis or murdered by them (such as Theodor Lessing and Kurt Huber). We could have compared the Heidegger case with that of Jaspers, who had been his personal and philosophical friend but went a very different political route in 1933. We could have contrasted Heidegger's complicity with the actions of his former Jewish students Hannah Arendt, Herbert Marcuse, and Helen Weiss. We could have studied the writings of Marxist, liberal, and Jewish philosophers in order to understand how they looked at the political turmoil of the time. All this would surely have given our account greater depth. It would have revealed to us new intricacies in the web that ties philosophy and politics together. Even so, it will be apparent how finely that web is spun.

What we still seem to lack at this point is a single model for de-

scribing this manifold of relations. I have proceeded in a narrative manner, depicting as faithfully as possible a sequence of specific events, describing them in informal terms. Perhaps this procedure came from more than personal preference. Looking back over the ground covered, one begins to suspect that no theoretical framework would ever account for the tangle of facts that has concerned us. This suggests a skeptical conclusion. It is that the relation between philosophy and politics cannot be described once and for all by means of any grand scheme, that their relation is intrinsically historical and understandable only in its narrative uniqueness.

Both philosophy and politics speak, in fact, with voices that change over time. The objects, concepts, strategies, and forms of organization that characterize each domain are forever in motion. In philosophy conceptual issues and questions arise and fade away, schools and traditions prevail and disappear, certain ideas are said to be truly philosophical at one time and not at all philosophical at another. In politics regimes rise and fall apart, parties speak up and become silenced, different kinds of needs are perceived and forgotten, new sorts of political discourse are invented and discouraged. And this twofold instability leaves the relation between the two domains correspondingly unstable and fluid over time.

TRUTH AND POWER

It is sometimes thought possible to explain the interactions of philosophy and politics in terms of a general theory of truth and power. Nietzsche projected such a theory, and Foucault has recently reformulated it. All these attempts remain problematic.

Nietzsche developed his theme by elaborating a new kind of metaphysics. Drawing on Schopenhauer's account of the metaphysical will, he constructed a picture of a world driven to new self-realizations through the will to power. Intriguing as that picture may be, he did not manage to support it with authoritative arguments. His account of the will to power remains a free-floating invention, a seductive metaphor, an artistic vision. Foucault's doctrine proves, on closer examination, to be just as seriously flawed as Nietzsche's. Power becomes, in his hands, a peculiar fluid draining invisibly through the capillaries of human society. Though he sees himself as a critic of metaphysics, he falls back on *a priori* construc-

tions that are evidently metaphysical in nature and that the acid bath of skeptical positivism can easily dissolve. As in Nietzsche's case, the explanatory force of the central metaphor is imaginary. It contributes little to our understanding of the historical contexts to which Foucault seeks to apply it.

Nietzsche's and Foucault's accounts remain problematic because they treat power (or the will to power) as a single, mysterious substrate. What we call power is, in fact, an ensemble of diverse relations of dependence and interdependence that include natural relations of cause and effect as well as social and political relations, relations of spatial and temporal order as well as institutional, logical, and symbolic relations of dependence. What we call the web of power is made up of all these criss-crossing interconnections. Thus power is no metaphysical substance, no universal energy or drive, no magical fluid in the veins of reality, but a field in which natural life exists. When we define power in this way, we are entitled to say that all human thinking, understanding, and knowing, including the search for truth that is philosophy, are enveloped within the web of power. We are entitled to say that truth is produced and maintained by relations of power and that it generates, in turn, new relations. Truth and the search for truth are not outside the web of power and cannot be fully conceived apart from it. Truth and power, we can conclude, are inseparable even though an idealist tradition declares them to be separate.

These assertions are very abstract and interesting only insofar as we can flesh them out. Nietzsche's and Foucault's reflections on truth and power do little in this respect. They are embarrassingly anemic, and the same can be said of other general theories of power, other attempts to ground a metaphysics of truth and power. If we are to make any sense of the thematic of truth and power, we can do so only by speaking of it in historical terms. It would be pleasing to think that a metaphysics of power might provide us with an encompassing framework for speaking of the interference between philosophy and politics. We have, instead, been forced to fall back on historical narrative. Just as we find ourselves unable to describe human nature without referring to human history, we also prove ourselves unequipped to trace the interplay of truth and power without considering its specific historical instantiations. No formula will help us here, no general reflection on power and truth,

no grand model—the historical facts must speak for themselves. Even Nietzsche and Foucault could not, in the end, do much with the general theme they had proposed. What they said about the link of truth and power comes to life only when they start to speak concretely of the history of morals or the history of sexuality. Their failure gives rise to skepticism about our ability to formulate any systematic theory of truth and power, and everything we have learned about the political entanglements of the German philosophers reinforces that conclusion.

Yet another conclusion suggests itself here: we cannot determine how philosophy *ought* to bear on politics. The relation between the two is a shifting pattern. No general lesson can be drawn, no prediction of what the pattern will look like in the future, no regulating principle for normalizing the pattern.

That does not prevent us from assessing particular interactions between philosophy and politics. We can certainly say that the German philosophers who engaged themselves so whole-heartedly in politics in 1933 failed their country calamitously. Instead of urging their fellow Germans to take a cautious and questioning stand toward the competing parties, they encouraged them to support a shaky, suspect, and self-destructive political movement. Their failure was not merely one of political judgment, nor was it simply a moral failure. It was above all a philosophical failure. The philosophers who became so involved never asked (at least, not seriously enough) how they should be acting at this "decisive" moment. They wanted to be spiritual leaders and never wondered whether this was the right way. In particular, they never looked critically at the devices and concepts by which they maneuvered their transition from philosophy to politics. They assumed naively that their most useful contribution was to help speed along the political revolution. They wanted to be "constructive" thinkers and failed to see that their most positive gift to the politics of the moment might be the gift of relentless questioning.

Is the proper role of the philosopher in politics then merely that of critic and judge? That would be a rash conclusion. In the conditions that obtained in Germany in 1933, the philosophers might have done well to use their critical powers. Yet critique is not necessarily always productive or appropriate. That too is surely illustrated by the events we have explored. Many of those who got involved in

1933 had indeed prepared themselves for this act by their vindictive critique of the Weimar Republic. Heidegger's critical dismissal of politics after the war betrays the same unyielding mentality that had once driven him into the arms of the Nazis.

Critique needs at all times to be tempered by good sense. Philosophers cannot rest comfortably in the belief that their relation to politics is essentially antagonistic. There is in reality no simple formula that can define how they should approach the political realm. Although the philosopher's critical skill may sometimes be of use in politics, there is also room for his inventiveness and imagination, for his ability to map out new forms of political and social association. Foucault once said that the essential problem for the intellectual is "that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth." The problem is to change "the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth."[17] That may indeed be the most urgent cause for the contemporary intellectual and the philosopher. But it does not provide a *general* formula for how philosophers ought to relate to the political realm. Such prescriptions would, in any case, be futile given the philosopher's legitimate insistence on his freedom of thought.

We live at a time when philosophy and politics have, on the whole, little to say to each other. Our philosophizing prides itself on its abstractness, our politics on its pragmatic cunning. Does this signify a permanent alienation, a parting of the ways? We cannot say what their relations may be in the future. Both philosophy and politics may yet take on unimagined realizations. That possibility constitutes exactly what we call freedom of thought and political freedom. The shifting patterns of interference between philosophy and politics are unforeseeable precisely because of that freedom.

Notes

1. Heidegger's Moment of Decision

1. My account is based on a series of contemporary newspaper reports reproduced in Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger. Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern: n.p., 1962), pp. 49–57.

2. These data are derived from Thomas Laugstien, *Philosophieverhältnisse im deutschen Faschismus* (Hamburg: Argument, 1990), pp. 205–206.

3. Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger,* p. 16. Until the Nazis promulgated their law on the reorganization of the universities, rectors were elected to yearly terms by the members of the academic senate and served both as representatives and as highest administrative officers of the institution. After the new law was adopted, rectors were appointed by the political authorities to serve an indefinite period in office and were given the additional task of political leadership in the university.

4. Ibid., p. 23.

5. Ibid., p. 27.

6. Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger. Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1988), p. 191.

7. Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger,* p. 53.

8. Ott, *Martin Heidegger,* p. 164. The economist Walter Eucken, who made this remark, was the son of the philosopher Rudolf Eucken.

9. Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger,* p. 57.

10. In order to quell brewing faculty unrest over this final demonstration, Heidegger informed his colleagues somewhat disingenuously that it was meant only to signal adherence to the new state and not to the Nazi party. Ott, *Martin Heidegger,* p. 149.

11. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991), p. 96.

12. Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 83.

13. Karl Jaspers, Karl Löwith, Georg Lukács, and Pierre Bourdieu exemplify these four different types of motivation.

14. This factionalized debate is flawed, in particular, by suspect standards of interpretation. In order to determine the link between Heidegger's thought and his political action, interpreters fall back on a hermeneutics of suspicion which allows them to conclude that Heidegger's words must mean precisely what they do *not* say.

15. This refusal to be drawn into a moralizing attitude must of course include a refusal to idolize Heidegger.

16. Tom Rockmore, *On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 72.

17. The figures reveal that it was by no means compulsory for a German philosophy professor to be a party member. But membership in the party or one of its organizations (such as the National Socialist Teachers' Federation) was generally deemed to be essential for an academic career. Of the German philosophers who joined the party, all but two remained members until 1945. The two were Johann Baptist Rieffert, who was expelled from the party, and Kurt Huber, who was executed as a member of the resistance group The White Rose.

18. Bourdieu, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*, p. 84.

19. Gerhard Lehmann, *Die Deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart*, (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1943), p.11.

20. Walter Del-Negro, *Die Philosophie der Gegenwart in Deutschland* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1942), pp. 1–2.

21. Adolf Hitler, *Monologe im Führerhauptquartier, 1941–1944*, ed. Werner Jochmann (Hamburg: Albrecht Knaus, 1980), p. 410.

22. Werner Rings, *Neue Schweizer Rundschau*, new series, vol. 13, (Zurich, 1945), p. 466, cited from Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, p. 264.

23. This and the following reference are to Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," in Gunther Neske and Emil Kettering, *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism* (New York: Paragon House, 1990).

24. This and the following two references are to Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. R. Mannheim (New Haven: Yale UP, 1959).

25. Heidegger, "Self-Assertion," p. 5.

26. This and the following two references are to Heidegger, *Introduction*.

27. In *Introduction* Heidegger explicitly rejects the interpretation of *Geist* as intelligence (pp. 46–47) and associates his use of the term with German idealism (p. 45).

28. Heidegger, interview with *Der Spiegel* in Neske and Kettering, *Heidegger and National Socialism*, p. 54.

29. Heidegger, "Self-Assertion."

30. These and the following references are to Heidegger, *Introduction.*

2. Fichte, Nietzsche, and the Nazis

1. Ernst Bergmann, *Fichte und der Nationalsozialismus* (Breslau: Ferdinand Hirt, 1933), p. 7.

2. Arnold Gehlen, *Deutschtum und Christentum bei Fichte* (Berlin: Junker and Dünnhaupt, 1935), pp. 1, 15.

3. Hermann Lübbe, *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte* (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1963).

4. This conclusion is suggested by a comparative analysis of the two texts and receives confirmation by a later remark made by Heinrich Wiegand Petzet, one of Heidegger's personal friends, in *Auf einen Stern zugehen. Begegnungen mit Martin Heidegger 1929 bis 1976* (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 1983), p. 37.

5. Varnhagen von Ense, *Denkwürdigkeiten,* 1832, quoted in Erich Fuchs, ed., *J. G. Fichte im Gespräch* (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1987), vol. 4, p. 73.

6. Ibid.

7. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe,* ed. R. Lauth and H. Jacob (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1962), vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 298.

8. Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

9. Quoted from Peter Rohs, *Johann Gottlieb Fichte* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1991), p. 157.

10. Such thoughts are by no means unique to Fichte. Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* of 1805 delineates a similar structure of history in which a first turning point is marked by the birth of Christ and a second and final one by Schelling's own system. Hegel also saw himself and his work as such a world-historical turning point, and when Marx reconstructed the Hegelian system he took over this aspect of it, unaware of its roots in the subjectivist view of the world.

11. This reference and the following ones are to Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation,* ed. George Armstrong Kelly (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).

12. Quoted in Gehlen, *Deutschtum und Christentum bei Fichte,* p. 7.

13. Richard Oehler, *Friedrich Nietzsche und die deutsche Zukunft* (Leipzig: Armanen-Verlag, 1935).

14. Heinrich Haertle, *Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1937, 1943), p. 10.

15. Alfred Baeumler, "Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus," *Studien*

zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1937), p. 294.

16. Edgar Salin, *Jakob Burckhardt und Nietzsche* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1948), p. 69.

17. Jacob Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom: Reflections on History,* ed. James Hasting Nichols (New York: Pantheon, 1943); page references are to this text. While Burckhardt recognized that crises generally produce uncertainty and anxiety (p. 290), that they have climaxes and turning points (pp. 279, 280), and that they involve decisions between fundamental alternatives (pp. 260, 289), he spoke of them for the most part as processes of world-historical acceleration and as a destabilization of the fixed order. Thus he included social and political upheavals, wars, and revolutions, which are not crises in the narrower sense.

18. Nietzsche wrote this to his friend Gerstdorff. The remark is quoted in Werner Kaegi's introduction to Jacob Burckhardt, *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (Bern: Hallwag, 1941), p. 31.

19. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* (1872), in Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, eds., *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), vol. 3, pt. 2., p. 241.

20. Henning Ortmann, *Philosophie und Politik bei Nietzsche* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), p. 102.

21. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power,* trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1967), preface, sec. 2, p. 3. In passages like these Nietzsche often spoke indiscriminately of Europe or *Abendland,* a term generally translated as "the West."

22. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human,* trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), book 1, sec. 475.

23. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power,* secs. 748, 49.

24. Ibid.

25. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo,* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1969), "Why I Am a Destiny," sec. 1.

3. The Politics of Crisis

1. Rudolf Pannwitz, *Die Krisis der Europaeischen Kultur* (Munich: Hans Carl, 1921, orig. pub. 1917), p. iii.

2. Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), and George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology* (New York: Schocken, 1981).

3. Ralf Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland* (Munich: Piper, 1966).

4. Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1969).

5. Oswald Spengler, "Pessimismus?" *Preussische Jahrbücher,* 184 (1921), p. 79.

6. Oswald Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1961), p. 34.

7. Heidegger actually lectured on Spengler in 1920. The text of his talk is unfortunately not available. Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, *Briefwechsel 1920–1963* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann; Munich-Zurich: Piper, 1990), pp. 15, 221.

8. Alfred Rosenberg, *Krisis und Neubau Europas* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1934), p. 23.

9. Ernst Nolte, *Der Europäische Bürgerkrieg, 1917–1945. Nationalsozialismus und Bolschewismus* (Frankfurt-Berlin: Propyläen, 1987).

10. This and the following quotation are taken from Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939).

11. Rosenberg's *Mythus* will be quoted here from the translated selections printed in *Race and Race History and Other Essays by Alfred Rosenberg,* ed. and intro. Robert Pois (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

12. Rosenberg conceives of the notion of race only partially and derivatively as a biological one. Race is for him the same as soul. "Soul means race viewed from within. And, vice versa, race is the externalization of the soul" (p. 34). Rosenberg is, in fact, no admirer of nineteenth-century Darwinism, which remains for him only "the first great, if purely bestial, protest against lifeless and empty ideals" (p. 36). Later on, in his *Memoirs,* he will say, "When I took up this chain of thought, I knew little about modern biology. My starting-point was my own artistic experience." Alfred Rosenberg, *Memoirs,* with comments by Serge Lang and Ernst v. Schenck, trans. Eric Posselt (Chicago: Ziff-Davis, 1949), p. 126.

13. Rosenberg, *Krisis und Neubau Europas,* p. 5. The following page references are to the same text.

14. Ludwig Wittgenstein examines how concepts can sometimes serve an empirical function and at other times a constitutive one in *On Certainty* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

15. The notion of the historical *a priori* is introduced in Michel Foucault, *The Archeaology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), pt. 3, ch. 5.

16. Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?", in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), p. 40.

17. Reinhart Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise. Ein Beitrag zur Pathogenese der bürgerlichen Welt* (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 1959). Koselleck points out that the political use of the term can already be found in England in the seventeenth century and that it became widespread during the American war of independence (pp. 224–225.) He also says that the modern notion of crisis can be traced back to Rousseau.

18. Rousseau, *Oeuvres completes,* vol. 3, pp. 347–348.

19. Dieter Henrich, "Französische Revolution und klassische deutsche Philosophie," in *Eine Republik Deutschland* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990).

20. I am following here the reading of Nietzsche's breakdown offered by Lou Andreas-Salome in *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken* (Vienna: C. Konegen, 1894).

21. Jakob Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom: Reflections on History*, ed. James Hasting Nichols (New York: Pantheon, 1943), p. 273.

22. Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, sec. 501, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982), p. 204.

23. Kurt Rudolf Fischer, "Hitlers Nationalsozialismus als 'Experiment,"' in *Nietzsche und das 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Verlag des Verbandes der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreichs, 1986).

24. Michel Foucault, *Foucault Live (Interviews, 1966–84)*, trans. John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e), 1989), p. 251.

4. The German Mission

1. Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral. Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1969). Also Klaus Böhme, ed., *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975).

2. Hermann Lübbe, *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland*, ch. 4, "Die philosophischen Ideen von 1914." Lübbe points out that English and French philosophers also adopted a stridently nationalistic tone and attempted to define the war as one of diametrically opposed cultures. But he rightly adds that this in no way excuses the German philosophers and that, in any case, they were often more radical in their language than their foreign colleagues.

3. Paul Natorp, *Der Tag des Deutschen. Vier Kriegsaufsätze* (Hagen: O. Rippel, 1915).

4. Paul Natorp, *Krieg und Friede. Drei Reden* (Munich: Dürerbund, 1915), p. 39; Natorp, *Der Tag des Deutschen*, p. 55.

5. Max Scheler, *Der Genius des Krieges und der Deutsche Krieg* (Leipzig: Verlag der Weissen Bücher, 1917), p. 306.

6. This and the following references are to Alfred Weber, *Gedanken zur deutschen Sendung* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1915).

7. Hermann Schwarz, *Fichte und Wir* (Osterwieck/Harz: A. W. Zickfeldt, 1914), p. 111.

8. Alois Riehl, "1813—Fichte—1914," in *Deutsche Reden in schwerer Zeit* (Berlin: Carl Heymanns, 1914), p. 202. Riehl, like his colleagues Natorp and Eucken, considered himself a political liberal and a Kantian humanist and could therefore argue that his emphasis on Germanness was not

meant to deny the value of other cultures. He wrote, "If we demand: out with foreignness! that does not at all mean that we should stop complementing our own intellectual life with the spiritual life of other cultural nations" (p. 208).

9. Weber, *Gedanken zur deutschen Sendung*, pp. 89–90.

10. Riehl, "1813—Fichte—1914," p. 203.

11. This and the following references are to Rudolf Eucken, *Die weltgeschichtliche Bedeutung des deutschen Geistes* (Stuttgart-Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1914).

12. Ibid., pp. 23, 5.

13. Riehl, "1813—Fichte—1914," p. 209.

14. Scheler, *Krieg und Aufbau* (Leipzig: Verlag der Weissen Bücher, 1916), p. 20.

15. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Krieges Anfang," in Böhme, *Aufrufe*, p. 59.

16. This page reference and the following ones are to Scheler, *Der Genius des Krieges*.

17. This and the following references are to Weber, *Gedanken zur deutschen Sendung*.

18. Böhme, *Aufrufe*, p. 125.

19. Karl Löwith, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1986), p. 1.

20. The date 1914 was part of the society's name and was meant to be a reminder of the popular enthusiasm of the beginning of the war. The society was actually founded in 1917. The announcement of its foundation can be found in *Der Panther* 5 (1917), pp. 559–562. The following page references are to this text.

21. This and the following quotations are taken from a short review of the first issue of *Wege zu Fichte. Blätter zur Pflege und Vertiefung deutsch-idealistischer Geistesart* in *Der Panther* 5 (1917), pp. 563–565.

22. An earlier version of this account of the DPG appeared in *Le Messager Européen* 3 (1989).

23. Bruno Bauch in Richard Schmidt, ed., *Die Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen* 9 (Leipzig: 1929), p. 14.

24. Bruno Bauch, "Nationale Freiheit," in *Fr. Manns Pädagogisches Magazin*, no. 1342 (1931), p. 8.

25. My account is based on Bruno Bauch, "Mein Rücktritt von den 'Kant-Studien': Eine Antwort auf viele Fragen," in *Der Panther* 5 (1917), pp. 148–154.

26. Bauch in *Die Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*.

27. *Blätter für Deutsche Philosophie* 16, p. 1.

28. The statement is taken from the back cover of *Beiträge zur Philosophie*

des Deutschen Idealismus, vol. 1, no. 1. The bloated political pathos of these and the following remarks is noteworthy, since it clearly signals how far political rhetoric has penetrated into the supposedly philosophical language.

29. *Beiträge* 2, no. 3/4, inside front cover. Note the use of the term *deutsche Eigenart* (German uniqueness), which was soon to become a Nazi code word.

30. *Blätter für Deutsche Philosophie* 1, no. 1/2, inside back cover.

31. References of the form "(A n:m)" are meant to refer to page *m* of volume *n* of *Beiträge zur Philosophie des Deutschen Idealismus*. References of the form "(B n:m)" will refer here and in the following to page *m* of volume *n* of *Blätter für deutsche Philosophie*.

32. Hoffmann worked in collaboration with Horst Engert.

33. The journal was initially conceived as a quarterly, but in September 1933 the publisher announced that it would appear six times a year. The note concluded: "We hope in this way to serve successfully the main function of the journal: the collaboration on the ideological formation of the new Reich" (separate sheet inserted in the journal). The plan never came to fruition.

34. In 1934 the journal castigated the multiplicity of philosophical viewpoints represented at the International Congress of Philosophy in Prague as a sign of "a pathological state of mental anarchy" and as part of a process of dissolution (B 8:447). Its report concluded that "philosophy as a dialectical game, as *'philosophie pour philosophie,'* must come to an end now, and only he who philosophizes with blood is from now on philosophizing with spirit" (B 8:447–448).

35. Of particular interest in this connnection are two pieces by Otto Friedrich Bollnow defending philosophical anthropology against its existentialist critics. The immediate target of Bollnow's critique was Jaspers, but elsewhere he makes clear that Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein* was also included in the attack. Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Das Wesen der Stimmungen* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1943).

36. The article was by Max Hildebert Böhm, who was to have a long and notorious career and managed to flourish even in the post-Nazi period.

37. Bruno Bauch in Hermann Schwarz, ed., *Deutsche Systematische Philosophie nach Ihren Gestaltern* (Berlin: Junker and Dünnhaupt, 1931), vol. 1. The following page references are to this text.

38. Wilhelm Windelband, *Präludien* (first ed., 1883); Heinrich Rickert, *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis* (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1892); and Gottlob Frege, "Über Sinn und Bedeutung," *Zeitschrift für Philosophie u. Philosophische Kritik*, 100 (1892). In his writings Bauch frequently refers to Fregean ideas such as his characterization of the notions of concept and object,

his definition of concepts as functions, his idea of incompleteness or unsaturatedness, his theory of sense and reference, his definition of number, his context principle, and his notion of truth-value.

39. Bruno Bauch, *Wahrheit, Wert und Wirklichkeit* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1923), p. 534.

40. Ibid., p. 449.

41. Bruno Bauch, *Die Idee* (Leipzig: E. Reinicke, 1926), p. 141.

42. Erich Keller, *Bruno Bauch als Philosoph des vaterländischen Gedankens* (Langensalza: Hermann Beyer, 1928).

43. E. Keller, *Die Philosophie Bruno Bauchs als Ausdruck germanischer Geisteshaltung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1935).

44. Bruno Bauch in *Die Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, p. 38. There is no evidence that Bauch ever joined the Nazi party.

45. In the next chapter I return to a discussion of Bauch's philosophy and to the question of how he assessed its political significance.

46. My account of Krueger's life and work is based on Ulfried Geuter, "Das Ganze und die Gemeinschaft—Wissenschaftliches und politisches Denken in der Ganzheitspsychologie Felix Kruegers," in *Psychologie im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. C. F. Graumann (Berlin: Springer, 1985).

47. Jerry Z. Muller, *The Other God that Failed: Hans Freyer and the Deradicalization of German Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987), pp. 76–77.

48. Rickert's turn to the right led to a break between him and his former student Jonas Kohn, who taught at Freiburg until he was dismissed from his position in 1933 by his colleague Martin Heidegger. Margret Heitmann, "Jonas Kohn: Philosoph, Pädagoge und Jude," in *Juden in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. W. Grab and J. H. Schoeps (Stuttgart/Bonn: Burg Verlag, 1986), esp. p. 192.

49. Eckart Menzler-Trott, "Ich wünsche die Wahrheit und nichts als die Wahrheit. Das politische Testament des deutschen Mathematikers und Logikers Gottlob Frege," *Forum*, 36 (1989).

50. Georg Lukács, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1954). It is ironical that Lukács' belief in reason drove him straight into hardline Stalinism. The term *reason* has, unfortunately, become so malleable in the hands of philosophers that it has lost much of its analytical and descriptive function. It is often applied as a term of praise and just as often as a term of self-congratulation.

5. Nation and Race

1. Reinhard Buchwald, *Die Wissenschaft vom deutschen Nationalcharacter* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1917), and Walter Schmied-Kowarzik, *Die Gesamtwissenschaft vom Deutschtum* (Hamburg-Berlin: Deutschnationale Ver-

lagsanstalt, 1918). The latter was a publication of the Fichte Society of 1914.

2. Walter Schmied-Kowarzik, review of R. Buchwald (A 1:196).

3. Wilhelm Wundt, *Die Nationen und ihre Philosophie. Ein Kapitel zum Weltkrieg* (Leipzig: Kröner, 1918), and Heinrich Scholz, *Das Wesen des deutschen Geistes* (Berlin: Grotesche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1917).

4. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939), p. 420.

5. Ibid., p. 406.

6. Hitler, *Monologe im Führerhauptquartier, 1941–1944,* (Hamburg: Albrecht Knaus, 1980), p. 71.

7. It has been argued that the Nazi worldview was so amorphous that no belief was essential to it. That claim is most forcefully made in Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (New York: Oxford UP, 1944). I will return to this question in Chapter 8.

8. This and the following references are to Wundt, *Die Nationen und ihre Philosophie.*

9. Wilhelm Wundt, *Die Weltkatastrophe und die deutsche Philosophie,* suppl. vol. 6, *Beiträge zur Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus,* 1920.

10. Gerhard Lehmann, *Die Deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1943), pp. 470–477 and pp. 567–568.

11. This and the following quotations are taken from Schwarz's own summary account of his philosophical views in *Deutsche Systematische Philosophie nach Ihren Gestaltern,* ed. Hermann Schwarz (Berlin: Junker and Dünnhaupt, 1931), vol. 1.

12. This and the following references are to Hermann Schwarz, *Christentum, Nationalsozialismus und Deutsche Glaubensbewegung* (Berlin: Junker and Dünnhaupt, 1934).

13. Hermann Schwarz, *Zur philosophischen Grundlegung des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Junkr and Dünnhaupt, 1936).

14. Hermann Schwarz, *Grundzüge einer Geschichte der artdeutschen Philosophie* (Berlin: Junker and Dünnhaupt, 1937), p. 17.

15. Max Wundt, *Deutsche Weltanschauung. Grundzüge völkischen Denkens* (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns, 1926), p. 75.

16. *Wer ist's?* (Berlin: Hermann Degener, 1935), p. 1769.

17. This reference and the following one are to Max Wundt, *Volk, Volkstum, Volkheit* (Langensalza: Hermann Beyer, 1927), p. 6.

18. This reference and the following ones are to Wundt, *Deutsche Weltanschauung.*

19. This obviates, however, in no way the relativistic implications of Wundt's position, since other national worldviews might include similar claims.

20. Max Wundt, *Die Wurzeln der deutschen Philosophie in Stamm und Rasse* (Berlin: Junker and Dünnhaupt, 1944).

21. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1327, b 29–33.

6. The Philosophical Radicals

1. Arnold Zweig, "Rückblick auf Barbarei und Bücherverbrennung," in Thomas Friedrich, ed., *Das Vorspiel. Die Bücherverbrennung am 10. Mai 1933* (Berlin: LitPol, 1983), pp. 43–45.

2. Joseph Goebbels, speech to the bookburners, in Hermann Haarmann, Walter Huder, and Klaus Silberhaar, eds., *"Das war ein Vorspiel nur . . ." Bücherverbrennung Deutschland 1933: Voraussetzungen und Folgen* (Berlin/ Vienna: Medusa, 1983), p. 197.

3. This page reference and the following ones are to Alfred Baeumler, "Antrittsvorlesung in Berlin," in *Männerbund und Wissenschaft* (Berlin: Junker and Dünnhaupt, 1933).

4. Alfred Baeumler, "Meine politische Entwicklung," in Marianne Baeumler, Hubert Brunträger, and Hermann Kurzke, eds., *Thomas Mann und Alfred Baeumler* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1989), p. 193.

5. Ibid.

6. Wölfflin, himself a Swiss citizen, was also an early member of the DPG and clearly identified himself with its nationalism.

7. Baeumler has sometimes been dismissed as a philosophical charlatan. Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1969), p. 442; and Walter Kaufmann's introduction to Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage, 1967), p. xiii. Lewis White Beck has, by contrast, praised Baeumler's book on Kant's third Critique as an important contribution to the history of aesthetics.

8. Frederick M. Barnard, "Johann Jakob Bachofen," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), vol. 1, pp. 234–235. When Thomas Mann discussed Baeumler's views on these matters in his *Pariser Rechenschaft*, he accused him of aligning himself with certain obscurantist political tendencies. This led to a break between the two men, who had been on close terms with each other. Baeumler, who considered himself a democrat at the time, felt deeply offended by Mann's comments, which in retrospect have proved to be prescient.

9. This reference and the following ones are to Alfred Baeumler, "Der Sinn des Grossen Krieges," in *Männerbund und Wissenschaft*.

10. Introduction to Baeumler's 1930 edition of Nietzsche's works, reprinted in Alfred Baeumler, *Studien zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte* (Berlin: Junker and Dünnhaupt, 1937), p. 280.

11. Baeumler, "Nachwort," to vol. 6 of his edition of Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke* (Leipzig: Alfred Kröner, 1930), p. 699.

12. Baeumler, *Nietzsche, der Philosoph und Politiker* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1931), p. 15.

13. Ibid., p. 80.

14. Baeumler, "Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus," in *Studien zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte*, p. 292.

15. Ibid., p. 294.

16. The phrase *Einheit des Volkes der Arbeit* occurs at the beginning of Krieck's inaugural address *Die Erneuerung der Universität* (Frankfurt: Bechold Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1933), p. 5.

17. Ernst Krieck, "Völkische Bildung," *Volk im Werden* 1 (1933), no. 1, p. 7.

18. This and subsequent page references are to Krieck, *Die Erneuerung der Universität.*

19. Ernst Krieck, *Volk im Werden* (Oldenburg: Stalling, 1932), p. 27. In 1933 Krieck founded a journal, named after this book, which he used to promote his particular "folkish" conception of National Socialism. The journal was mainly concerned with pedagogical and political rather than philosophical questions.

20. Krieck, like some other writers, sought to distinguish between *Volk* and nation. The latter was for him an idealist concept implying a distinction between an educated elite as the bearer of the idea of the nation and the rest of the people. The notion of *Volk*, on the other hand, he took to express the populist idea of a great unity of all classes and professions. I have not always tried to keep the two terms sharply separate.

21. *Volk im Werden* 1 (1933), no. 1, p. 1.

22. Krieck, "Die neuen Aufgaben der Universität," *Volk im Werden* 1, (1933), no. 4, p. 28.

23. Herbert Marcuse, who had been Heidegger's student, was to say that "neither in his lectures, nor in his seminars, nor personally, was there ever any hint of his sympathies for Nazism. . . So his openly declared Nazism came as a complete surprise to us." Marcuse, "Heidegger and Politics: An Interview with Frederick Olafson," in R. Pippen et. al, eds., *Marcuse: Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia* (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey, 1987). Karl Jaspers was similarly surprised by Heidegger's decision.

24. Karl Löwith, "Les implications politiques de la philosophie de l'existence chez Heidegger," *Les Temps modernes* 2 (1946), pp. 345–346.

25. Ibid., p. 348.

26. This reference and the following ones are to the numbering of the German edition of *Being and Time*, which is reproduced in the margins of

the English translation by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

27. The standard translation of *eigentlich* as "authentic" obscures the individualistic connotations of Heidegger's term.

28. Rendering *Entschlossenheit* simply as "resoluteness" obscures the double meaning of the original term.

29. I translate Heidegger's *Geschehen* here as "happening."

30. My summary account of Heidegger's political engagement is largely based on Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger. Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1988).

31. Michael Zimmerman has explored this aspect of Heidegger in *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990), particularly chapters 4–6.

32. Karl Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (Berlin-Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1932).

33. Ott, *Martin Heidegger,* p. 141.

34. Heidegger, interview with *Der Spiegel* in Gunther Neske and Emil Kettering, *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism* (New York: Paragon House), p. 46.

35. Ibid., p. 53.

36. Heidegger, "Die Idee der Philosophie und das Weltanschauungsproblem," in *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie, Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1987), vol. 56/57.

37. Quoted in ibid., p. 43.

38. Ibid.

39. Heidegger, "Was ist Metaphysik?" *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1967), p. 18.

40. Ibid.

41. Heidegger, interview with *Der Spiegel,* p. 45.

42. Martin Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," in Neske and Kettering, *Heidegger and National Socialism.*

43. Ott, *Martin Heidegger,* p. 160.

44. Quoted in Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger. Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern: n.p., 1962), pp. 149–150.

45. Ott, *Martin Heidegger,* pp. 30–31.

46. Heidegger explicitly mentions his friendly relations with Krieck in the fall of that year. Ott, *Martin Heidegger,* p. 190.

47. For evidence of Heidegger's continuing interest in this question, see also Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, *Briefwechsel 1920–1963* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann; Munich-Zurich: Piper, 1990), pp. 57–58.

48. How much Heidegger saw himself as an outsider to established academic philosophy is made very clear in his correspondence with Jaspers.

The two thought of themselves even in the early 1920s as spearheading a philosophical renewal.

49. Walter Huder, introduction to Haarmann, Huder, and Silberhaar, *"Das war ein Vorspiel nur . . .,"* p. 8.

50. Goebbels, in ibid., p. 198.

51. Gerhard Sauder, "Der Germanist Goebbels als Redner bei der Bücherverbrennung," in Horst Denkler and Eberhard Lämmert, eds., *"Das war ein Vorspiel nur . . .,"* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1985), p. 78.

52. This page reference and the following ones are to Krieck, *Die Erneuerung der Universität.*

53. This reference and the following one are to Heidegger, "Self-Assertion."

54. Baeumler, "Antrittsrede."

55. This and the following references are to Baeumler, "Fichte und Wir," *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 8 (1937).

56. This and the following references are to Krieck, "Der deutsche Idealismus zwischen den Zeitaltern," *Volk im Werden* 1 (1933), no. 3.

57. This and the following reference are to Krieck, "Völkische Bildung," *Volk im Werden* 1 (1933), no. 1, p. 8.

58. Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* trans. R. Mannheim (New Haven: Yale UP, 1959), p. 45.

59. Baeumler, Brunträger, and Kurzke, *Thomas Mann und Alfred Baeumler,* p. 242, n. 9.

60. Ott, *Martin Heidegger,* p. 139.

61. Ibid., pp. 194–195.

7. The Philosophical Conservatives

1. For reasons explained in the next chapter, I prefer not to translate *weltanschaulich* as "ideological." This sometimes requires, as it does in this passage, a paraphrasing of the original German.

2. The speaker seems to have been unaware of the fact that the philosophers united in the DPG had little affection for Nietzsche and that there existed a tension between them and the Nietzschean philosophers in Germany.

3. It is instructive to compare the DPG's own account of the meeting with the one that appeared in *Kantstudien* 39 (1934), p. 100. That journal, which was not taken over by the Nazis until 1935, completely ignored the political aspects of the event and confined itself to a sober analysis of the philosophical content of the talks and discussions. It said, for instance, nothing about the political parts of Bauch's speech and instead complained

that his presentation had been too popular, too much directed to a non-philosophical audience.

4. Other speakers at Magdeburg pursued related ideas. Karlfried Graf von Dürckheim, for instance, emphasized the ideal of a folkish wholeness of life. He descried a purely technological, purposive thinking, which, he said, would dissolve the living community of the nation into a multitude of selfish individuals. Instead, the being of the whole should guide the will of its members. What was good for the whole should be the law for the individual. Friedrich Alverdes promoted a similar holism from a biological viewpoint. Life processes, he argued, did not fall apart into unrelated elements but formed a meaningful whole. There could, as result, be no sharp dividing line between human beings and the organic world. Human mentality needed, in consequence, to be seen as integrally connected with the human body. For Manfred Schröter it was evident that the sense of technology had to lie outside itself and that the goal was to control technology through a new organic consciousness. Wilhelm Vershofen, finally, was certain that the meaning of economics lay not in the satisfaction of the needs of individuals and classes but in the total interest of the people. "The meaning of economics is the nation," he said (B 8:70).

5. Robert Heiss, "Nicolai Hartmann," in Heinz Heimsoeth and Robert Heiss, eds., *Nicolai Hartmann. Der Denker und sein Werk* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1952), p. 18.

6. Details on Hartmann's life can be found in Frida Hartmann, "Biographische Notizen zu Nikolai Hartmann (1882–1950)," in Frida Hartmann and Renate Heimsoeth, eds., *Nicolai Hartmann und Heinz Heimsoeth im Briefwechsel* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1978), pp. 317–321. During the first World War Baltic Germans under the leadership of the theologian Richard Seeberg had formed an influential pressure group favoring the expansion of the war and a policy of annexation. After the war the Baltic Germans found their most influential spokesman in Alfred Rosenberg.

7. The journal, which was founded in 1917, also had Hinrich Class, the leader of the Pan-German movement, and a number of well-known intellectuals of the extreme right, such as Georg von Below, Dietrich Schäfer, and Richard Seeberg, on its editorial board. Max Wundt, Hartmann's fellow activist in the DPG, was also a member of that group. The magazine welcomed the formation of the DPG early on as designed to save German philosophy from the danger of internationalization (vol. 2, 1918, p. 445). It had previously taken the opportunity of Bruno Bauch's break with the Kant Society to deplore the supposedly overpowering Jewish influence in German philosophy (vol. 2, 1918, pp. 215–218). In the same issue the journal carried an article by Max Wundt that dismissed "the parliamentary system, the removal of class differences, and 'expressionism' in

art and life" as un-German. According to Wundt the German idea of the state and the democratic idea were entirely incompatible. The German idea was that of a monarchical bureaucracy and of class representation; anything else was the product of "foreign spirit" (Ibid., pp. 199–202). Among the avid readers of *Deutschlands Erneuerung* was Gottlob Frege, whose political views in later life were strongly colored by its opinions.

8. Hartmann and Heimsoeth, *Nicolai Hartmann und Heinz Heimsoeth im Briefwechsel.*

9. Heiss, "Nicolai Hartmann," p. 23. Such caution was not without a touch of opportunism, and one may suspect that opportunism was also to some extent at work in the talk Hartmann gave at Magdeburg. One can, perhaps, summarize Hartmann's own attitude to his address in the proposition that "the clever man is the one who knows how to help himself in a situation and to whom all kinds of things come to mind," which he had discussed extensively with his students in the months preceding the conference (Ibid., p. 256).

10. Heidegger was to undertake a similar critique of neo-Kantianism soon afterwards, and for that reason the two philosophers came to be linked in the philosophical debate in Germany.

11. Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1921).

12. Hartmann, *Der Aufbau der realen Welt* (Berlin-Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1940).

13. This reference and the following ones are to the summary that Hartmann gave of his own philosophical work in Hermann Schwarz, ed., *Deutsche Systematische Philosophie nach ihren Gestaltern* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1931), vol. 1.

14. Hartmann in Schwarz, *Deutsche Systematische Philosophie,* p. 327.

15. This and the following references are, once more, to Hartmann's essay in Schwarz, *Deutsche Systematische Philosophie.*

16. Though the philosophical conservatives sought to speak with a single voice at Magdeburg they were, in reality, just as divided among themselves as the philosophical radicals.

17. Hans-Joachim Dahms, "Aufstieg und Ende der Lebensphilosophie: Das Philosophische Seminar der Universität Göttingen zwischen 1917 und 1950," in H. Becker et al., eds., *Die Universität Göttingen unter dem Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1987), p. 186.

18. I discuss *Idee und Existenz* in the following chapter.

19. Hans Heyse, *Die Idee der Wissenschaft und die deutsche Uni versität* (Königsberg: Gräfe und Unzer, 1935), p. 3. The following page references are to the same text.

20. The idea is restated also in the essay "Philosophie und politische Existenz" with which Heyse introduced the *Kantstudien* after he had taken over its editorship (vol. 40, 1935, p. 1).

21. Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," in Gunther Neske and Emil Kettering, *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), p. 5. In his need for identification with the Führer Heidegger even reshaped his moustache to make himself look more like Hitler.

22. Quoted in Willy Hochkeppel, "Heidegger, die Nazis und kein Ende," *Die Zeit* (May 6, 1983).

23. Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1961), vol. 1, p. 196.

24. In 1933 Heidegger also told Jaspers that the present generation of professors was unsuited for the tasks ahead and would have to be replaced by better prepared ones and that there were altogether too many philosophy professors in Germany. Two or three, he said, were enough, but when Jaspers asked which of them he was referring to, Heidegger remained silent. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophische Autobiographie* (Munich: Piper, 1977), p. 101.

25. That Heidegger did not yet occupy the singular position in philosophy which he came to have later on is shown by the fact that the 1935 edition of the German *Who Is Who? (Wer Ist's?)* contained no biographical entry for him, but did so for Hartmann, Heyse, and even Edmund Husserl. Heidegger's name appears only in the first postwar edition of the work in 1958.

26. Kurt Sontheimer describes the role of this "call for a leader" in the antidemocratic thinking of the Weimar period in *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1968), part II, chapter 5.

27. Hans Kelsen, *Vom Wesen und Wert der Demokratie* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1929).

28. Kläre Becker, "Führerschaft," in *Deutschlands Erneuerung*, 4 (1920), p. 564. Quoted in Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*, p. 218.

29. Julius Binder, *Führerauslese in der Demokratie* (Langensalza: Hermann Beyer, 1929), p. 51. Quoted in Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*, p. 219. Binder was one of the prominent figures of the DPG.

30. This reference and the following ones are to Krieck, "Der Führer," *Volk im Werden* 3, (1935).

31. Reinhard Höhn, "Der Führerbegriff im Staatsrecht," *Deutsches Recht*, 1935.

32. This reference and the following ones are to Plato, *Republic*, book V, trans. Paul Shorey.

8. Ideology after 1933

1. Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hitler wie ihn keiner kennt. 100 Bilddokumente aus dem Leben des Führers* (Berlin: Zeitgeschichte Verlag, 1938), p. 108. The copyright page lists the size of the edition as 420,000.

2. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Franz Eher, 1932), pp. 253 and 335. For a discussion of the philosophical influences on Hitler's thinking see Werner Maser, *Adolf Hitler: Legende, Mythos, Wirklichkeit* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne, 1971), pp. 187–190.

3. Adolf Hitler, *Monologe im Führerhauptquartier 1941–1944*, p. 411. Erich Sandvoss argues in *Hitler und Nietzsche* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1969) for a multiplicity of parallels between Hitler's and Nietzsche's thinking without claiming the existence of a direct link between them.

4. Albert R. Chandler, *Rosenberg's Nazi Myth* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1945), pp. 61–94.

5. Alfred Baeumler, "Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus," in *Studien zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte* (Berlin: Junker and Dünnhaupt, 1937), p. 281.

6. It is not surprising then that the Nazis had a special fondness for Nietzsche's early writings, where he is closest to Schopenhauer.

7. Hitler, *Monologe*, p. 411.

8. Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Hoheneichen, 1934), pp. 323–344.

9. Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hitler wie ich ihn sah. Aufzeichnungen seines Leibfotografen* (Munich/Vienna: Herbig, 1974), p. 232. Hitler himself was keenly aware of the power of photography. At the beginning of his political career he had tried to prevent being photographed altogether in the hope of creating a mystique around the invisibility of his person. When that proved impossible, he hired Hoffmann as his photographer, in order to control what images would be accessible to the public (Hoffmann, pp. 19ff.)

10. Hitler was now for Elisabeth "our wonderful chancellor" and "our deeply venerated Führer." To the Swedish banker Ernest Thiel, who had been her main financial support for many years and whose Jewish background had never bothered her despite her earlier enthusiastic antisemitism, she wrote that she regretted the persecution of the Jews but that it was due only to the excesses of a few misguided minor party members. She added, "Believe me, Fritz would be enchanted by Hitler, who with incredible courage has taken upon himself the entire responsibility for his

people." H. F. Peters, *Zarathustra's Sister: The Case of Elisabeth and Friedrich Nietzsche* (New York: Crown, 1977), p. 221.

11. When Elisabeth died in the fall of 1935 the news made the front page of Rosenberg's *Völkischer Beobachter.* The paper celebrated her for having preserved the works of her brother, a man who had profoundly influenced the rebirth of Germany.

12. This and the following references are to Richard Oehler, *Friedrich Nietzsche und die deutsche Zukunft* (Leipzig: Armanen Verlag, 1935).

13. Many of Oehler's forebears and relatives, like those of the Nietzsche family, were Protestant pastors. Both families considered Nietzsche's attack on Christianity a scandal. Even Elisabeth had once thought of suppressing the manuscript of the *Antichrist* and changed her mind only after she realized that the book would sell briskly.

14. In 1943 he published a register of Nietzsche's sayings in which he explicitly referred to Nietzschean thoughts on "Antisemitism," "Germans," "Jews," and "Nationalism" that clearly contradicted his earlier assertion of identity with Nazi ideology. Richard Oehler, *Nietzsche Register* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1943).

15. This and the following reference are to Heinrich Haertle, *Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1937, 1943).

16. This and the following references are to Hermann Glockner, "Die Philosophie in der geistigen Bewegung des neuen Deutschlands," *Völkische Kultur* 2 (1934).

17. Quoted in Konrad Heiden, *Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1932), p. 208.

18. Ibid., pp. 213–214.

19. This trend is also evident in the development of legal thought in the period, which turned from a predominantly decisionist conception to terms of "concrete order and organization" *(konkretes Ordnungs- und Gestaltungsdenken).* The shift is exemplified in the work of Carl Schmitt, who before 1933 was one of the main exponents of decisionism, but later based his theory of law on order and organization. The development is discussed in Okko Behrends, "Von der Freirechtsbewegung zum konkreten Ordnungs- und Gestaltungsdenken," in Ralf Dreier and Wolfgang Sellert, eds., *Recht und Justiz im "Dritten Reich"* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989), pp. 34–79.

20. Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitlers Weltanschauung* (Tübingen: Rainer Wunderlich, 1969).

21. Arnold Gehlen, *Der Staat und die Philosophie* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1935).

22. These are the sources from which George Mosse derives the intellectual origins of the Third Reich in *The Crisis of German Ideology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981).

23. Walter Del-Negro, *Die Philosophie der Gegenwart in Deutschland* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1942), p. 1.

24. Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, *Briefwechsel 1920–1963* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann; Munich-Zurich, Piper, 1990), p. 50.

25. Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger. Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1988), p. 243.

26. Ibid.

27. Stuart Hampshire, *Innocence and Experience* (Cambridge: Havard UP, 1989).

28. This and the following references are to Hans Heyse, *Idee und Existenz* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1935).

29. Lotze, *Logik*, 1874, p. 516. The connection between this Lotzean interpretation of Plato and Frege's doctrine of objectivity is discussed in Hans Sluga, *Gottlob Frege* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 119.

30. Heyse's words strike us now as naive, but there can be no doubt of the honesty of his convictions. In *Idee und Existenz* he said that he was well aware of the promise and dangers of his personal confession. "And because we see both, we persist in this task with the strongest emotions and with intellectual alertness, with all our faith—hoping, and that means fighting—that this struggle may lead to the renewal of our existence and of the world's" (p. 15).

31. This and the following reference are to Gerhard Lehmann, *Die deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1943).

32. *Kantstudien* 40 (1935), p. i.

33. Hans-Joachim Dahms, "Aufstieg und Ende der Lebensphilosophie: Das Philosophische Seminar der Universität Göttingen zwischen 1917 und 1950," in H. Becker et al., eds., *Die Universität Göttingen unter dem Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1987), p. 185.

9. The True Order Debated

1. This and the following references are to Hermann Glockner, "Krisis und Aufbau in der Philosophie," *Völkische Kultur* 2 (1934).

2. The issues of the DPG's journal that appeared after 1933 look no different in either content or form from those that appeared before the Nazis came to power.

3. This and the following references are to Hermann Glockner, "Zum Kampf um den sogenannten Idealismus," *Völkische Kultur* 3 (1935).

4. This and the following references are to Arnold Gehlen, "Der Idealismus und die Gegenwart," *Völkische Kultur* 3 (1935).

5. This and the following references are to Ernst Krieck, "Halb und Halb!" in *Volk im Werden* 3 (1935).

6. This and the following references are to Arnold Gehlen, "Noch einmal: 'Der Idealismus und die Gegenwart,"' in *Völkische Kultur* 3 (1935).

7. This and the following references are to Bruno Bauch, *Grundzüge der Ethik* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935).

8. This and the following references are to Bruno Bauch, "Das Volk als Natur- und Sinngebilde," *Völkische Kultur* 2 (1934).

9. Bauch's obituary said that long before 1933 he had reached "the clear insight into the significance of race and the racial determination of the national character" (B 16:136). In 1923 he had already discussed the issue of the higher and lower values of different races. As biological groupings, he had argued then, races did not have positive or negative values in themselves, but they were capable to different degrees of performing valuable actions and, hence, that "there exists in this sense a difference of value between our race and that of the African negro is self-evident." *Wahrheit, Wert, und Wirklichkeit* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1923), p. 498.

10. This and the following references are to Bruno Bauch, "Ist die Berufung auf Blut und Rasse materialistisch-naturalistisch?" *Völkische Kultur* 3 (1935).

11. The emphases are Bauch's own.

12. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. R. Mannheim (New Haven: Yal UP, 1959), p. 199.

13. This and the following references are to Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead,"' in *The Question Concerning Technology and other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

14. This and the following references are to Heidegger, *Introduction*.

15. Silvio Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik am Nationalsozialismus und an der Technik* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1989), provides a useful though partisan account of this turn in Heidegger's thinking.

16. Heidegger, interview with *Der Spiegel* in Gunther Neske and Emil Kettering, *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), p. 61.

17. Otto Pöggeler, "Hermeneutische und mantische Phänomenologie," in *Heidegger. Perspektiven zur Deutung seines Werkes* (Cologne/Berlin: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1969), pp. 321–357.

18. Karl Löwith, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1986), p. 45, where Becker appears only thinly disguised as "Dr. B."

19. Oskar Becker, "Von der Hinfälligkeit des Schönen und der Aben-

teuerlichkeit des Künstlers," in *Dasein und Dawesen. Gesammelte philosophische Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1963).

20. It is worth noting that Becker, unlike Heidegger, contributed regularly to the DPG's journal; he was the only one of the Nazi existentialists to do so.

21. When Becker's collected papers were published in 1963 the reference to "kinship group, tribe, nation, and race" was eliminated from this passage; so were all references to Becker's essay "Nordic Metaphysics." Neither "Nordic Metaphysics" nor a 1943 lecture on the relevance of Nietzsche doctrine of rank to Nazi ideology was included in the collection, and they were not mentioned in the bibliography. The traces of Becker's politics were thus completely erased.

22. Heidegger, "On the Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

23. This and the following references are to Oskar Becker, "Nordische Metaphysik," in *Rasse* 5 (1938).

24. Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner. Zum Machtkampf im nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1970), p. 68.

25. Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger. Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1988), pp. 194–195, 271.

26. Thomas Weber, "Joachim Ritter und die 'metaphysische Wendung,"' in Wolfgang F. Haug, ed., *Deutsche Philosophen 1933* (Hamburg: Argument, 1989), p. 239.

27. Baeumler, "Meine politische Entwicklung," in Marianne Baeumler, Hubert Brunträger, and Hermann Kurzke, eds., *Thomas Mann und Alfred Baeumler* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1989), p. 198.

28. Ulfried Geuter, "Das Ganze und die Gemeinschaft—Wissenschaftliches und politisches Denken in der Ganzheitspsychologie Felix Kruegers," in *Psychologie im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. C. F. Graumann (Berlin: Springer, 1985), and Hans Georg Gadamer, *Philosophische Lehrjahre* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), p. 112.

29. Gerhard Lehmann, *Die Deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1943), p. 17.

30. This and the following reference are to Walter Del-Negro, *Die Philosophie der Gegenwart in Deutschland* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1942).

31. This topic is extensively discussed in H. Mehrtens and S. Richter, eds., *Naturwissenschaft, Technik und NS-Ideologie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980).

32. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), p. 141. In his preface to the German edition of the Farias book, Habermas substantially modifies his

analysis of the Heidegger case, but without abandoning the claim that there was an essential connection between Heidegger's decisionism and Nazi ideology.

33. Alfred Rosenberg, *Friedrich Nietzsche* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1944).

10. The Aftermath

1. Heinrich W. Petzet, "Afterthoughts on the Spiegel Interview," in Gunther Neske and Emil Kettering, *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), p. 73. The following page references are to the same text.

2. This and the following references are to Heidegger, interview with *Der Spiegel* in Neske and Kettering, *Heidegger and National Socialism.*

3. Gerwin Klinger, "Freiheit als 'freiwillige Aufgabe der Freiheit.' Arnold Gehlens Umbau des Deutschen Idealismus," in Wolfgang F. Haug, ed., *Deutsche Philosophen 1933* (Hamburg: Argument, 1989), pp. 188–218. A bibliography of Gehlen's writings can be found in Carol Hagemann-White, *Legitimation als Anthropologie. Eine Kritik der Philosophie Arnold Gehlens* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1973), pp. 247–251.

4. I owe this information to Dr. Christiane Schildknecht. Some of Baeumler's notes about Nazism from 1945 to 1947 have recently been published in *Der Pfahl. Jahrbuch aus dem Niemandsland zwischen Kunst und Wissenschaft* 5 (1992), pp. 159–204.

5. Alfred Baeumler, "Meine politische Entwicklung," in Marianne Baeumler, Hubert Brunträger, and Hermann Kurtzke, eds., *Thomas Mann und Alfred Baeumler* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1989), pp. 193–201. The following references are to this text.

6. Baeumler, letter to Manfred Schröter of March 24, 1950, in Baeumler, Brunträger, and Kurtzke, *Thomas Mann und Alfred Baeumler,* pp. 203, 204, 211, 212, and 210.

7. Baeumler, "Kulturmorphologie und Philosophie," in A. M. Koktanek, ed., *Spengler-Studien* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1965), pp. 99–124. Baeumler's widow is planning to publish his other philosophical writings of the postwar period.

8. I am speaking here of the development in West Germany because in East Germany philosophy became an endless memorial service at the graves of Marx and Engels.

9. I borrow the phrase from Pilippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger: Art and Politics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 105.

10. Stuart Hampshire, *Innocence and Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1989).

11. Marx, *Selected Writings*, D. McLellan, ed., (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977), p. 164.

12. Pierre Bourdieu, in *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991), writes: "Any adequate analysis must accommodate a dual refusal, rejecting not only the claim of the philosophical text to absolute autonomy, with its concomitant rejection of all external reference, but also any direct reduction of the text to the most general conditions of its production" (p. 2). At the same time, however, he slips back into social determinism by arguing that all philosophical ideas, even the most technical, are politically overdetermined. Hence his conclusion that "Heidegger's philosophy is political from beginning to end" (p. 96). Hence also his insistence that philosophical discourse "conceals heteronomy behind the appearance of autonomy" by means of "systematic distortions of common language" and produces "the illusion of independence by staging an artificial break" (p. 73).

13. Bertrand Russell, "On Scientific Method in Philosophy," in *Mysticism and Logic* (London: Longman's, Green, 1921).

14. Hannah Arendt, "Philosophy and Politics," *Social Research* 57 (1990).

15. Ibid., p. 91.

16. Hannah Arendt, "Heidegger at Eighty," in Neske and Kettering, *Heidegger and National Socialism*, p. 216.

17. Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), p. 133.

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