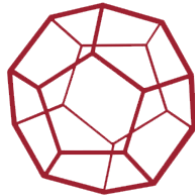


Thoughts During the Time of War

For Germans and those
who do not believe they must hate them.

GA 24



Thoughts During the Time of War

For Germans and those
who do not believe they must hate them.

GA 24 (Originally GA 19)

by

Rudolf Steiner

Berlin, 1915

Source: [Rudolf Steiner Archive](#)

First translated into English by Daniel Hafner in 2005

Table of Contents

1. Part 1

2. Part 2

3. Part 3

4. Part 4

Remark Added Afterward

Part 1

Unspeakable suffering, deep sorrow live in the souls of men of the present, side by side with the will to offer to this moment, incomparable in world history, the sacrifices of courage, of valor, of love, which it requires. The warrior is steeled by the awareness that he is fighting for a most precious good that the earth has to give to mankind. He faces death with the feeling that his dying is demanded by that Life which, as something higher than the single man, may lay claim even to his death. Fathers, mothers, and sons, wives, sisters, and daughters must, out of personal suffering, find themselves in the Idea that out of blood and death, the development of mankind will rise to aims for which the sacrifices were necessary, and which will justify them. The upward glance from individual experience to the life of mankind, from the transitory to that which lives in this transitory as the imperishable: this is demanded by the experiences of this time. The confidence rises up, from the sensation of what is happening, that what is experienced will be lifted up by the dawn of a new age of mankind, whose powers are to be ripened by this experience.

One would like to look with the understanding that seeks also to understand men's aberrations, upon the flames of hatred that are kindling. Too strong, for many a one, is the impression he receives when he compares what is currently being experienced with what seemed to him already achieved for the present by the development of mankind. Men who understood how to speak out about these achievements of mankind from a full inner participation, have found words to do so like those spoken by the fine German contemplator of art Herman Grimm, who died in the year 1901. He compares man's experience in earlier time with what the present brings to this experience. He says: "Sometimes it feels to me as if one were transposed into a new existence, and had taken along only the most needful spiritual hand-baggage. As if fully altered conditions of life were compelling one to fully new thought-work. For distances are no longer something that separates people. With the ease of child's play our thoughts circle the compass of the earth's surface, and fly from every single person to every other person, wherever he be. The discovery and exploitation of new forces of nature unites all peoples to incessant shared work. New experiences, under whose pressure our view of all things visible and invisible alters in uninterrupted change, force upon us new ways of observing, also for the history of the evolution of mankind." Before the

outbreak of this war, every European person had, in his individual way, such sensations in his soul. And now: what has been made, for the time of this war, of what stirred people to these sensations. Is it not as if mankind were to be shown how the world looks when much that is fruit of development ceases to take effect? And yet also: does the war by its horrors not show what the conflicts of peoples, fought out with the means brought by the newest developments, must lead to?

Confusing can be the sensations that arise out of the experiences. One would like to understand out of the presence of this confusion why it is that many people cannot comprehend that war itself brings war's horrors and suffering, and why they decry the opponent as a "barbarian" when a bitter necessity forces upon him the use of the means of battle created by the modern age.

Words of hate-filled condemnation of German essential being, now spoken by leading personalities among the peoples with which Germany currently lives at war: how do they sound to a soul that senses as true expression of German feeling what the already mentioned Herman Grimm, shortly before the entry of this century, characterized as a fundamental trait in the understanding of the life will of modern humanity. He wrote: "The solidarity of moral convictions of all men is today the church that connects us all. We seek more passionately than ever for a visible expression of this community. All really earnest strivings of the masses know only this one goal. Here the separation of nations already exists no longer. We feel that over against the ethical world view, no national difference prevails. We would all sacrifice ourselves for our Fatherland; but we are far from longing for, or bringing about, the moment when this could happen by war. The assurance that keeping peace is the most sacred wish of all of us is no lie. 'Peace on earth and good will to men' permeates us. The inhabitants of our planet, taken all together as a unity, are filled with a delicate sensibility understandable to all ... people as a totality acknowledge themselves as subject to an invisible court of judgment, throning as if in the clouds, before which they regard not being allowed to stand vindicated as a calamity, and to whose judicial procedure they seek to adapt their internal disputes. With anxious striving they here seek their right. How are the French of today at pains to make out their intended war against Germany to be a moral requirement, whose acknowledgement they demand from the other peoples, indeed from the Germans them selves." Herman Grimm's life work is grounded in such a way with all its roots in the German life of the spirit, that one can say: when he utters such a thought, it is as if he were permeated by the consciousness that he is

speaking on the spiritual charge of his people. That he is using words with which he would be allowed to have the certainty: if the German people as a whole could express itself, it would use such words to express its attitude as to how it conceives of its own willing within the entirety of mankind. Herman Grimm does not want to say that what is present of such an attitude in the present life of mankind could prevent wars. He does speak of having to have the thought that the French want a war against Germany. However, that this attitude will prove its power, even right through wars, that had to be Herman Grimm's conviction, when he brought to expression thoughts like those quoted. Opponents of the German people currently speak as if they held it to be proven that the only cause of this war lay merely in this: that the Germans lack the understanding for such an attitude. As if the result of this war would have to be that the Germans are forced to an understanding of such an attitude. As if among the Germans, authoritative minds had set themselves the task of obliterating this attitude in their people.

One now hears some names of German personalities spoken in a hate-filled manner. Not only by journalists, also by spiritual leaders of the peoples living at war with Germany. Indeed, such voices also come from countries with which Germany has no war. Among these German personalities is for example the historian of the German people, Heinrich von Treitschke. The Germans who form thoughts about the scientific significance and the essence of the personality of Treitschke pronounce the most divergent value judgments concerning him. From what points of view these judgments are passed, whether they are justified or unjustified, does not matter at this moment; concerning the voices of the opponents of the German essential being, quite another point of view is defining. These opponents want to see in Treitschke a personality who has affected the present German generation in such a way that the German people currently holds itself to be in all directions the most gifted of peoples, which therefore wants to force the others to subordinate themselves to its leadership, and sets the attainment of power above all justice. Were Treitschke still alive, and heard the judgments of the opponents of the German essential being concerning his person, he could remember words he wrote down in 1861, as the expression of his deepest sensibility, in the treatise on *Freeness*. He there spoke his mind about such people as set a limit right away to their respect and tolerance for alien opinions, when in such opinions something confronts them that does not please them. In such people — Treitschke opines — the thought conceals itself in a veil of passion, and he says: as long as such a manner of replacing judgment with

the cliché born of passion is still alive, "there is yet alive in us, even if in a milder form, the fanatical spirit of those zealots of old who used to mention alien opinions only in order to prove that their authors had earned themselves rightful claims to the Lake of Hell." A man who as Frenchman among Frenchmen, as Italian among Italians, had worked the way Treitschke did as German among Germans: he would not appear to the Germans as a seducer of the French or Italians. Treitschke was an historian and politician, who out of a strong, decided feeling sense, gave all his judgments an imprint that had the effect of sharpness. Those judgments too had such an imprint which he pronounced, out of love for his people, about the Germans. But all these judgments were carried by the feeling: not only his soul was speaking thus, but the course of German history. At the close of the Foreword of Part Five of his *German History in the Nineteenth Century* stand the words: "as surely as man only understands what he loves, just as surely can only a strong heart that senses the fortunes of the Father land like suffering and happiness of its own experience, give inner truth to the historical narrative. In this might of heart and mind, and not merely in the perfected form, lies the greatness of the historians of antiquity." Some judgments that Treitschke uttered about what the German people has experienced at the hands of other peoples sound like harsh condemnation of these other peoples. How statements of Treitschke's that go in this direction are to be understood, only he recognizes who also looks at the harshness of the judgments with which Treitschke often passes verdict upon what he finds reprehensible within his own people. Treitschke had the deepest love for his people, which was noble fire in his heart; but he believed it does no harm when one passes verdict most brusquely where one most loves. It would be thinkable that enemies of the German people could turn up who assembled from Treitschke's works a collection of pronouncements, then took away from these pronouncements the color of love they have with Treitschke, and daubed them with their color of hatred: they could thereby prepare word weapons against the German people. These word weapons would not be worse, either, than those with which they shoot at a distorted image of Treitschke in order to wound the German people. Herman Grimm, who knew how to appreciate Treitschke, and was well acquainted with him and his personal manner, spoke some time after his death the words: "Few have been so loved, but also so hated, as he." Treitschke was grouped by Grimm with the German historians Curtius and Ranke to a trinity of German teachers, about which he expressed himself thus: "They were friendly and confiding in their intercourse. They sought to further their listeners. They acknowledged merit where they met it. They did not seek to suppress their

opponents. They had no party and no fellow partisans. They spoke their minds. In their bearing lay something exemplary. They saw in science the highest flowering of the German spirit. They stood up for its dignity." There is a thorough discussion of Treitschke's *German History* by Herman Grimm. Whoever reads it must come to the recognition that Herman Grimm counted Treitschke among those who, regarding the relation the German people wants to have to other peoples, thought no differently from himself.

Whoever from an enemy country reviles a German personality such as lived in Treitschke, and brands him a seducer of the younger generation, lacks a judgment about how a German who sensed "the fortunes of the Fatherland like suffering and happiness of his own experience" had to speak to Germans who, for an understanding of their own history, have to look at experiences in the past that Herman Grimm (in his book on Michelangelo, 16th printing) characterizes with the words: "For thirty years Germany, which was unable to tip the scales as a nation of its own, was the battlefield for the peoples bordering around us, and after the foreigners who had thus waged war upon each other on our ground had finally made peace, the old indefinite situation returned." In Herman Grimm's Goethe book, there is about these experiences, with the same reference: "the Thirty Years' War, this terrible disease brought in to us from without and nourished artificially," made "all the young shoots of our forward development wilt and die off." What a short time had just elapsed since the German people had freed itself from the effect of the suffering that Europe had brought it through the Thirty Years' War, when in the beginning of the Nineteenth Century the other destiny experience came to pass, which coincided with a flourishing of German spiritual life. Were they the words of a man in whose heart the sufferings of his people resonated "like suffering of his own experience," or were they words of a seducer of the people, with which Treitschke spoke of the spirits whose working coincided with Germany's destiny experience of the beginning of the Nineteenth Century? He speaks about these spirits thus: "They guarded our people's very Own, the sacred fire of Idealism, and we have them pre-eminently to thank that there was still a Germany even when the German Empire had vanished, that in the midst of affliction and bondage the Germans were still permitted to believe in themselves, in the imperishability of German essential being. From the educational molding through and through of the free personality is sued our political freedom, issued the independence of the German state." Do the opponents of German essential being demand that Treitschke should have said: history teaches that the Germans "are permitted to believe in the imperishability of German essential being"

because for all the past and the future they can keep themselves convinced that French, English, Italians, Russians have never fought and will never fight for anything else than for "right and freedom" of peoples? Should the other Germans who are presently called Germany's seducers give the Germans the advice: build not on what in hard wars has gotten you "right and freedom;" you will have "right and freedom" because with those who surround you, the sense for "right and freedom of peoples" shines resplendent in bright light? Only, you must not believe that you are allowed to think of your "right as a people" other than in the sense of what you are deemed entitled to by the peoples who encircle you. You must only never call anything else your "freedom as a people" but what these peoples will show you by their behavior that you "as a people are free to do?"

Where the sensations are rooted which those who belong to "Europe's Middle" have in the present war, the author of this brief writing would like to state. The facts he wants to discuss are, in their general basic features, certainly known to every reader. It does not lie in the author's intention to speak in this direction about what is not yet known. He would only like to point toward certain connections in which what has long been known stands.

If opponents of the German people should perhaps read this brief writing, they will quite comprehensibly say: so speaks a German, who can naturally bring no understanding toward the opinion of other peoples. Whoever judges in this way does not comprehend that the paths the author of this contemplation seeks in order to discuss the coming about of this war are quite independent of how much of the essential being of a non-German people he understands or does not understand. He wants to speak in such a way that if the reasons he puts forward for what is claimed are any good, his thoughts can be right, even if he, with respect to an understanding of the special quality and the value of non German peoples, as far as they may be closed to a German, were the pure fool. When, for example, he refers to what a Frenchman says about the intentions of the French for war, and on that basis forms a judgment about the coming about of the war, then this judgment could be right, even if a Frenchman were to believe he had to deny in him any understanding of French special quality. When he forms judgments about the English political ideal, it does not come into question how the Englishman for himself thinks or senses, but what the actions are like in which this political ideal lives itself out, and what the German in particular experiences through these actions. For

himself, to be sure, the author is convinced that in this brief writing there will lie no occasion to judge what understanding he brings toward this or that non-German folk quality.

The author of the brief writing believes that what he allows himself to pronounce as a German about the feeling of "Middle Europe," he may say, for he spent the first three decades of his life in Austria, where he lived as an Austrian German by descent, nationality, and upbringing; and for the other — almost just as long — time of this life, he has been permitted to be active in Germany.

Perhaps someone who knows the one or the other of the author's writings will seek of one who stands at the vantage point of the science of the spirit, as it is meant in these writings, "higher points of view" in the following discussions than he finds. Especially those will be unsatisfied who expect to find here some thing about how the present war events can be judged "on the basis of the eternal, highest truths of all being and life." To such "disappointed ones," who will perhaps turn up precisely among the friends of the author, he would like to say that the "highest eternal truths" are of course valid everywhere, thus also for the present events, but that this contemplation was not undertaken in the intention of showing how one can bear witness to these "higher truths" with respect to these events as well, but in another intention, the intention of speaking of these events themselves. [The author hopes to be able to give other things about the present time and the peoples of Europe soon in a second brief writing. The thoughts written down here are concentrated from lectures the author held in several places in recent months.]



Part 2

Whoever has allowed Fichte's (one of the fathers of German nationalism, 1762-1814 -a) manner of spirit to work upon him, senses in all following time that he has taken something into his soul that has still an other effect entirely than the ideas and words of this thinker. These ideas and words transform themselves in the soul. They become a power that is essentially more than the remembrance of what was received directly from Fichte. A power that has something of the quality of living beings. It grows in the soul. And in it, the soul feels a never dwindling means of strength. If one senses the special quality of Fichte this way, one can never separate from this sensation the mental representation of the inner essential being-ness with which the German soul spoke through Fichte. How one stands toward Fichte's world view does not matter here. It is not the content, it is the power by which this world view is created. That power is what one feels. Whoever wants to follow Fichte as a thinker must enter into seemingly cold regions of ideas. Into regions in which the power of thinking must cast aside much that is otherwise dear to it, in order merely to find it possible that a man can put himself into such a relationship toward the world as Fichte had. But if one has followed Fichte thus, then one feels how the power that held sway in his thinking streamed into the life-giving words with which, in a destiny-bearing time, he sought to enflame his people to world-effective deed. The warmth in Fichte's *Speeches to the German Nation* is one with the light that shone for him in his energetic thought work. And the connection of this light with this warmth appears in Fichte's personality as that by which he is one of the most authentic embodiments of German essential being. This German essential Being had first to make Fichte into the thinker he was, before it could speak through him the penetrating *Speeches to the German Nation*. But after it had created such a thinker as Fichte, this German essential Being could not speak otherwise to the nation than happened in these speeches. Again it matters less what Fichte said in these speeches than, rather, how German-ness, through them, placed itself before the consciousness of the people. A thinker who in his world view is far removed from Fichte's trains of thought, Robert Zimmermann, must speak the words: "As long as in Germany a heart beats that is able to feel the shame of foreign tyranny, the memory of the courageous one will live on, who at the moment of deepest humiliation, in the midst of French-occupied Berlin, before the eyes and ears of the enemies, among spies and informers, undertook to raise the power of the

German people, broken from without by the sword, upright again from within by the spirit, and at the same instant when the political existence of this people seemed to be annihilated forever, to create it anew, by the enthusiastic thought of universal education, in future generations."

One need not have the aim of awakening sentimental feelings if, to characterize the special quality of how Fichte is connected with the deepest essential being of being German, one portrays the last hours in the life of the thinker. — Fichte's wife, the life companion who truly was not only worthy of him, who fully measured up to his greatness, had done hospital service for five months under the most difficult conditions, and had thereby contracted lazaret fever. The wife recovered. Fichte himself fell prey to the disease and succumbed to it. His son described the manner of Fichte's dying. The last report that the dying one received was that delivered by the son, of Blucher's crossing of the Rhine, of the advance of the allies against the French enemy. The soul wresting itself from the thinker's body lived entirely in the profound joy over these events; and as the formerly icy-sharp thinking passed over in the dying one into fever fantasies, he felt himself among the midst of the fighters. How the image of the philosopher stands before the soul, who — right over into the fever fantasies clouding the consciousness — is like the Entity, revealing itself, of the will and working of his people! And how in Fichte the German philosopher is one with every stirring of life of the whole man. The son hands the dying one a medicine. The dying one gently pushes back what is proffered; he feels himself entirely one with the world-historical working of his people. In such feeling he concludes his life with the words: I need no medicine; I feel that I have recovered. He had "recovered" in the feeling of participating in his soul in the experience of the elevation of the German essential Being.

From the upward glance to Fichte's personality, one is allowed to draw the power to speak about German essential being. For his striving was to make this essential being astir, as an actively working power, right into the sources of his special nature. And in the contemplation of his personality it comes clearly to light that he felt his own work of spirit connected with the deepest roots of the German essential being. These roots themselves, though, he sought in the foundations of the working of spirit which he beheld behind all of the world's outer, sense-accessible functionings. He could not conceive of German working with out a connection of this working with the spirituality illuminating the world through and through and warming it through and through. He saw the essential being of German-ness in the welling forth of the life expressions of the people from the primal source of the originally spiritually alive. And what he himself

understood as world view that issues from this primal source in the sense of the German quality, he spoke out about it thus: "It — this world view — glimpses time and eternity and infinity, as they come into being out of the appearing and becoming visible of that One that is in itself simply invisible, and only in this its invisibility is grasped, rightly grasped." — "All persistent existence appearing as not spiritual life is but an empty shadow cast from seeing, transmitted in multiple ways by nothingness, as opposed to which, and by whose recognition as nothingness transmitted in multiple ways, seeing itself is to rise to the recognizing of its own nothingness, and to the acknowledgment of the invisible as the only true being."

In his *Speeches to the German Nation*, Fichte seeks to grasp all truly German life expressions this way, out the source of spiritual life, and to receive out of this source the words themselves with which he speaks of these life expressions. — One will perhaps pause with special feelings at one passage in these *Speeches*, if from their tone and bosom depth, one has imbued oneself with the feeling perception: how this man stands with his whole soul within the viewing of the spiritual essential being of the world! How this standing with his soul within the spiritual world is for him such an immediate reality as for the outer man the standing within the material world by means of the senses! One may think how ever one does about the characterization of his time as developed by Fichte in the *Speeches*; if one hears of this characterization through his words, it cannot matter whether one agrees with what is said or not, but what a magical breath of human ethos one feels. — Fichte talks of the age he would like to help to bring about. He uses a simile. And this simile is where one is held fast with one's feelings in the sense hinted at. He says: "The age appears to me like an empty shade, who is standing above its corpse, which a host of diseases has just driven it out of, and lamenting, and is unable to tear its gaze from the once so beloved sheath, and despairingly tries all means of re-entering that housing-place of plagues. Though the enlivening airs of the other world, into which the departed has entered, have already received her, and surround her with warm breath of love, though secret voices of her sisters are already greeting her joyfully and welcoming her, though there is already a stirring and an expanding in her inner being in all directions, to develop the glorious shape to which she is to grow: yet she has no feeling for these airs as yet, or hearing for these voices, or if she had, she is consumed in pain at her loss, with which she believes she has at the same time lost herself."

The question is natural: how is the mood of a soul who, in a contemplation of the age and the changing of the ages, is driven to such a comparison? Fichte is talking here about the existence of the human soul after its separation from the body by death, the way a person otherwise talks about a material process that plays itself out before his senses. To be sure, Fichte is using a simile. And a simile must not be exploited in such a way that one would like to prove something by it about a significant view of the person who utters the simile. But the simile points to a mental representation that lives in the soul of the simile-maker with regard to an object or process. Here, with regard to the experiences of the human soul after death. Without wanting to claim anything about how Fichte would have made a pronouncement about the validity of such a mental representation if he had done so in the context of his world view, one can never-the-less lead this mental representation before one's soul. Fichte speaks of the human soul as of a being so independent of the body that this being separates from the bodily nature in death, and is able to look consciously at the separated body the way the man in the sense world looks at an object or process with his eyes. Apart from this looking at the body which one has left, the new environment which the soul enters when it has separated from the body is hinted at too. That modern form of the science of the spirit which talks about these things on the basis of certain soul experiences is allowed to find something significant in this Fichtean simile. What this science of the spirit strives for is a recognition concerning the spiritual worlds entirely in the sense of the type of recognition that is acknowledged by modern natural science as justified concerning the natural world. Though this form of spirit science is presently still seen by many as a dreaming, as a wild flight of fancy; yet so it also went for many people for a long time with the view, contradicting the senses, of the orbit of the earth around the sun. It is essential that this science of the spirit has as its basis a real recognizability of the spiritual world. A recognizability that rests not on concepts thought out, but on experiences of the soul of man that are really to be achieved. As he can know nothing of the properties of hydrogen who knows only water, which has hydrogen in it, so he can know nothing of the true being of the human soul who experiences the soul only the way it is when it is in connection with the body. Yet the science of the spirit leads to this: that the spiritual-and-soul releases itself for its own perception from the physical-and-bodily, as by the methods of the chemist hydrogen can be released from water. Such a release of the soul happens not by false mystical flights of fancy, but by rigorously healthy intensified inner experiencing of certain soul faculties, which, though always present in every soul, remain unnoticed and unconsidered

in normal life and in normal science. By such strengthening and enlivening of soul forces, the soul of man can come to an inner experiencing in which it beholds a spiritual world, as it beholds with the senses the material world. It then knows itself to be indeed "outside of the connection with the body" and equipped with what — to use Goethean expressions — one can call "eyes of spirit" and "ears of spirit." Spirit science talks of these things not at all in a pseudo-mystical sense, but in such a way that for it, the progression from the usual view of the sense world to the viewing of the spiritual world becomes a definite process inherent in the essential being of the nature of man, which to be sure one must call forth by one's own inner experiencing, by a definitely directed self-activation of the soul. But with respect to this too, the science of the spirit is allowed to feel itself in unison with Fichte. When in 1813 in autumn he delivered his *Doctrine* before listeners as ripe fruit of his spirit striving, he spoke the following as introduction: "This doctrine presupposes a completely new inner sense instrument, by which a new world is given that for the ordinary person does not exist at all." Fichte does not at all mean by this an "organ" that exists only for "chosen," not for "ordinary people," but an "organ" that anyone can acquire, but which for man's ordinary recognizing and perceiving does not come to consciousness. With such an "organ," man is now really in a spiritual world, and is able to speak about life in this world as by his senses about material processes. For anyone who puts himself into this position, it becomes natural to speak about the life of the soul the way it is done in the Fichtean simile quoted. Fichte makes the comparison not out of a general belief, but by a standing within the spiritual world that has been experienced. One must sense in Fichte a personality that in every stirring of life consciously feels itself one with the holding sway of a spiritual world, and beholds itself standing within this world as the man of the senses does in the material world. Now, that this is the mood of soul that he has the German basic tenor of his world view to thank for, Fichte distinctly states. He says: "The true philosophy [on p. 11 beginning "The true philosophy" has been corrected in one point. The present essay, as printed in 1915 (3rd printing) misquotes one word, *Leben*, as *Lebens* (this is now corrected in the Complete Edition of Rudolf Steiner's works [vol. 24, latest edition only, 1982]). The alteration is presumably unintentional, producing as it does the meaning "... and it sees how merely in the appearance of this life closes and again opens, endlessly on, ..." Therefore I have translated according to the original Fichte.] that has come to an end within itself, and has truly penetrated beyond appearance to its core, ... proceeds from the one, pure, divine life — as life outright, which remains that for all eternity, and in eternity always remains one, but not as from

this or that life; and it sees how merely in the appearance this life closes and again opens, endlessly on, and only in consequence of this law comes to an existence, and to a Something at all. For it, existence comes about, which the other (here Fichte means un-German philosophy) takes as given in advance. And so this philosophy (Fichte means the one he professes) is in the quite proper sense only German, that is, original; and conversely, were someone but to be come a true German, he would not be able to philosophize otherwise than thus."

It would be wrong to quote these words of Fichte's in characterization of his soul mood without at the same time calling to mind the others that he spoke in the same context of the speech: "Anybody who believes in spiritual-intellectual activity, and freeness of this spiritual-intellectual activity, and wants the eternal further education of this spiritual-intellectual activity by freeness, he, wherever he was born, and whatever language he speaks, is of our lineage, he belongs to us, and he will join us." — In the time when Fichte saw German nationality threatened by western foreign rule, he felt the necessity of declaring that he sensed the essential-being quality of his world view as a gift extended to him as if by the German Folk Spirit. And he unreservedly brought it to expression that this sensation had led him to the recognition of the tasks he was allowed to accord the German Folk within the evolution of humanity, in the sense that from the recognition of these tasks the German may derive his right and his vocation to all that he intends and fulfills in the context of peoples. That he may seek in this recognition the source from which there flows to him the power to get involved in this evolution as a German with all that he has and is.

Whoever in the present time has taken up Fichte's soul mood into the life of his own soul, will find in the world view of this thinker a power which does not let him remain at this world view. Which leads him, in his striving for spiritual-intellectual activity, to a viewpoint that shows the connections of man with the world differently from how Fichte presented them. He will be able to gain by Fichte the ability to see the world differently from how Fichte saw it. And he will sense just this manner of striving in a Fichtean way as a profound relationship with this thinker. Such a one will also certainly not reckon among the ideals which he would like to stand up for unconditionally the plan of education that Fichte in his *Speeches to the German Nation* characterized as the one that appeared salutary to him. And so it is with much that Fichte wanted to advance as content of his views. But the soul mood that from him communicates itself to the soul that can meet with him works like a spring still flowing in the present in full

freshness. His world view strives for the strongest exertion of the powers of thought that the soul can find in itself, in order to discover in man what shows man's being as "higher man" in man in connection with the spirit foundation of that world which lies beyond all sense experience. Certainly that is the way of every striving for a world view that does not want to see in the sense world itself the basis of all being. But Fichte's special quality lies in the power he wants to give to thought out of the depths of the essential being of man. So that this thought find by itself the firmness that lends it weight in the spiritual world. A weight that maintains it in the regions of soul life, and in which the soul can feel the eternity of her experiencing, yes, so create this eternity by willing it that this willing is allowed to know itself to be connected with the eternal spirit life.

Thus does Fichte strive for "pure humanity" in his world view. In this striving he is allowed to know himself to be at one with all that is human, wherever and however it ever makes its appearance on the earth. And in a time heavy with destiny, Fichte uttered the word: "Were someone but to become a true German, he could not philosophize other than thus." And through all that he says in the *Speeches to the German Nation*, the extension of this thought sounds through like a foundation tone: If only someone is a true German, he will out of his German-ness find the path upon which an understanding of all human reality can ripen. For it is not that Fichte thinks he is allowed to see only the world view in the light of this thought. Because he is a thinker, he gives as an example what kind of thinker he by his German-ness had to become. But he is of the opinion that this fundamental essential being of German-ness must speak itself out in every German, wherever he has his place in life.

The passion of the war wants to deny Germans the right to speak about the German element the way Fichte did. From the countries living at war with the Germans, personalities who occupy a high position in the spiritual life of these countries also speak out of this passion. Philosophers use the power of their thinking to corroborate — in unison with the opinion of the day — the judgment that the German ethnic element itself has estranged itself from that willing that lived in personalities of Fichte's quality, and has fallen prey to what is designated with the now popular word "barbarism." And if the German voices the thought that this ethnic element did after all produce people of that quality, then probably the utterance of such a thought will be designated as most superfluous. For one would probably like to reply that all of that is not what is being talked about. That one knows how to honor it that the Germans have had Goethe, Fichte, Schiller, etc. in their midst; but that their spirit does not speak out of what the

Germans are bringing about in the present. And so the passionate critics of the German essential being will probably even manage to find the words: out of the dreamy quality of the Germans — which we have always evaluated correctly — why shouldn't dreamers still turn up today as well who, in response to the words with which we meet what the German weapons do to us, answer with a characterization of the German essential being given them by their Fichte in a past that is lost to them; which characterization he himself would probably change, though, if he saw how the German manner is today.

There will come times that will acquire a calm judgment about whether the condemnation of German willing spoken out of passion does not correspond to blind inebriation, equivalent in its reality-value with a dream, and whether next to that, the "dreaming" that still speaks about present German willing in Fichte's manner does not perhaps signify that waking state which does not insert between itself and the events the passions, hostile to reality, which lull judgment to sleep.

Working out of no other spirit than that in whose name Fichte spoke can the willing appear to the German which the German people must develop in the fight forced upon it by the enemies of Germany. As if in a far-spread fortress, the opponents hold the body enclosed which is the expression of what Fichte characterized as the German Spirit. That Spirit which the German warrior feels himself as a fighter for, whether he does this in conscious recognition of this Spirit, or takes his stand in the battle out of the subconscious powers of his soul.

"Who wanted this war?" so ran a question posed to the Germans by many opponents, which presupposed, as self-evident answer, that the Germans wanted it. Yet to such a question, not passion may reply. Also not the judgment that wants to draw conclusions only from the facts that preceded the war in the very most recent time. What happened in this very most recent time is rooted deeply in the currents of European will impulses. And an answer to the above question can be sought only in the impulses that have long been set against the German element.

Here only such impulses are to be pointed to as are so well known, in their general essence, that it can seem fully superfluous to speak about them when one wants to say something about the causes of the coming about of the present war. There are, however, two points of view from which the seemingly superfluous can appear desirable after all. The one results when one considers that in the forming of a judgment about

important facts, what matters cannot be solely that one knows something, but from what bases one forms one's judgment. One is led to the second point of view when, in the contemplation of impulses of peoples, one wants to recognize in what manner they are rooted in the life of the peoples. From the insight into this manner, there results a feeling perception about the strength with which these impulses live on in time, and take effect at the moment that is favorable to them.

Ernest Renan is one of the leading spirits of France in the second half of the Nineteenth Century. This author of a *Life of Jesus* and *of the Apostles* wrote in an open letter during the war in the year 1870 to the German author of a *Life of Jesus*, David Friedrich Strauss: "I was at the Seminaire St. Sulpice, around the year 1843, when I began to get to know Germany through the writings of Goethe and Herder. I believed I was entering a temple, and from that moment on, all that until then I had held to be a splendor worthy of the Godhead only made upon me the impression of wilted and yellowed paper flowers." Further the French man writes in the same letter: "in Germany" there has "for a century come about one of the most beautiful spiritual developments known to history, a development which, if I may venture the expression, has added a level of depth and extension to the human spirit, so that whoever has remained untouched by this new development is to him who has gone through it as one who knows only elementary mathematics is to him who is experienced in differential calculus." And this leading Frenchman brings clearly to expression in the same letter what this Germany, before whose life of spirit "all that until then" he "had held to be a splendor worthy of the Godhead only made upon" him "the impression of wilted and yellowed paper flowers," would have to expect from the French if it did not conclude the war of then with a peace agreeable to Renan's fellow countrymen. He writes: "The hour is solemn. There are in France two currents of opinion. The ones judge thus: Let us make an end to this hated business as quickly as possible; let us give away everything, Alsace, Lorraine; let us sign the peace accord; but then, hatred unto death, preparations without rest, alliance with anyone convenient, unlimited permissiveness toward all Russian overreachings; one single goal, one single driving force for life: the struggle of obliteration against the German race. Others say: Let us save France's integrity, let us develop the constitutional institutions, let us make good our mistakes, not by dreaming of revenge for a war in which we were the unjust attackers, but by concluding a treaty with Germany and England whose effect will be to lead the world further on the path of free civilized morality." Renan himself calls attention to this: that France was the unjust

attacker in the war of then. And so it is not necessary to put forward the easily demonstrable historical fact that Germany had to wage that war to put in its bounds the constant disturber of its work. Now, one can disregard to what extent Germany was striving for Alsace-Lorraine as a region of related ethnic stocks; one need only emphasize the necessity which Germany was put into by this: that it could only get itself some calm at the hands of the French if with the Alsace-Lorraine region it took away from its neighbor the possibility of disturbing this calm so easily in the future as had often happened in the past. But thereby a brake was put on the second current in France spoken of by Renan; not this one had prospects for its goal of "leading the world further on the path of free civilized morality," but the other, whose "single goal, single driving force," for life was: "the struggle of obliteration against the German race." There were men who in some of what has happened since the War of 1870 believed they recognized signs that a bridging of the conflicts was possible on a peaceful path. In the course of the last years many voices that sounded in this tone could be heard. Yet the impulse directed against the German people lived on, and there remained alive the driving force: "alliance with anyone convenient, unlimited permissiveness toward all Russian overreachings; ... the struggle of obliteration against the German race." Out of the same spirit, sounds are issuing again at present through quite a few of the leading minds of France. Renan continues his contemplation about the two previously portrayed currents in the French people with the words: "Germany will decide whether France will choose this political strategy or that one; it will thereby decide at the same time about the future of civilized morality." One must really first convert this sentence into the German meaning to appraise it rightly. It means: France has proven to be an unjust attacker in the war; in the event that Germany, after a victory over France, does not conclude a peace that leaves France unimpededly in the position to become such an unjust attacker again as soon as it pleases, then Germany is deciding against the civilized morality of the future. What is decided, out of such an understanding, concerning "hatred unto death, preparations without rest, alliance with anyone convenient, unlimited permissiveness toward all Russian overreachings," what is decided concerning the "single driving force for life: the struggle of obliteration against the German race," that and nothing else provides the basis for an answer to the question: "Who wanted this war?"

As to whether the "alliance" will be found, there too, men capable of taking a look at the impulses directed against Germany were already giving an answer back when Renan spoke out in the sense characterized. A man

who seeks a look forward from the then present into the future of Europe, Carl Vogt, writes during the War of 1870: "It is possible that even if its territory is left intact, France will take advantage of the opportunity to whet the nicked blade sharp again; it is probable that with no annexation, it will have more than enough to do with its own internal affairs, and will consider a renewed war all the less, since a powerful current of peace must take hold in the hearts and minds; it is certain that it will set aside all scruples should an annexation take place. Which wager then should the statesman choose?" — It is easy to see that the answer to this question depends also upon one's view about the coming European conflicts. By itself, France will not dare, even in the longer term, to brave the fight against Germany anew, the blows have been too heavy and thorough for that, — but as soon as another enemy arises, it will be able to put to itself the question whether it is in a position to join in, and on whose side. — As far as I'm concerned, I am not in doubt for a moment that a conflict between the Germanic and the Slavic world is approaching and that in it, Russia will take over the leadership on the one side. This power is preparing even now for this eventuality; the national Russian press spits fire and flames against Germany. The German press is already letting its calls of warning resound. A long time has passed since Russia collected itself after the Crimean War, and as it seems, it is now found advisable in Petersburg to take up the Oriental question once again ... If the Mediterranean is someday supposed to become, according to the more pompous than true expression, a "French lake," Russia has the at least much more positive aim of making the Black Sea a Russian lake, and the Sea of Marmara a Russian pond. That Constantinople needs to become a Russian city, is an established goal of "the Russian policy," which finds its "supporting lever" in "Pan-Slavism." (*Carl Vogt's Political Letters*, Biel 1870.) To this judgment of Carl Vogt's about what he foresees for Europe, there could be added those of not a few other personalities, gleaned from the contemplation of European directions of willing. They would make what is to be indicated here more vividly insistent, and yet speak of the same fact: that already in 1870 an observer of these directions of willing had to point to the East of Europe if he wanted to answer for himself the question: Who will want to wage a war against Middle Europe sooner or later? And his gaze had to fall upon France when he asked: who will want to wage this war together with Russia against Germany? Vogt's voice comes especially into consideration because in the letter in which he so speaks, he says some unfriendly things to Germany. He can truly not be accused of bias in favor of Germany. But his words are proof that the question: who will want this war? had long been answered by the facts before those causes were at

work which Germany's opponents would so like to hear as an answer when they raise the question: Who wanted this war? That it took more than forty years from then to the outbreak of the war, is not thanks to France.



Part 3

In the Russian spiritual life of the Nineteenth Century, there come to light directions of thought that bear the same countenance as the will to war that has unloaded at present from the East against Middle Europe. To what extent those persons are right who assert that the reference to this kind of directions of thought is inappropriate, can be known by him too who sees in such a reference the right way to the understanding of the relevant events. What one calls the "causes" of these events in the ordinary sense can quite certainly not be sought in such directions of thought of Particular people — who today aren't even alive anymore. As regards these causes, there will certainly eventually be some agreement for those who will show that these causes lie with a number of persons, whom they will then point to. Against this way of looking at the issue, no objection shall be made, its full justification shall not be contested. Yet something else, something no less justified, is the recognition of the powers and driving forces operative in the historical process. The directions of thought pointed to here are not these driving forces; but these driving forces show themselves upon and in the directions of thought. Whoever recognizes the directions of thought, holds fast in his recognition the beings in the folk forces. It can also not be objected that it is asserted by many with a certain rightness that the directions of thought that come into question are no longer alive at present. What is alive in the East flickered up in souls of thinkers, formed itself back then to thoughts, and lives at present — in another form — in the will to war.

What flickered up is the idea of the special mission of the Russian people. What comes into consideration is the manner of how this idea is brought to bear. In it lives the belief that the Western European life of the spirit has entered the state of wizened old age, of decline, and that the Russian Folk Spirit is called to effect a total renewal, rejuvenation of this life of the spirit. This idea of rejuvenation grows to the opinion that all historical progress of the future coincides with the mission of the Russian People. In the first half of the Nineteenth Century Khomiakov already builds out this idea to a comprehensive edifice of doctrine. This edifice of doctrine is to be found in a work published only after his death. It is carried by the belief that the Western European development of the spirit was basically never set up to find the way to proper humanness. And that the Russian folk element must first find this way. Khomiakov looks in his fashion at this Western European

development of the spirit. Into this development has flowed, according to his kind of view, to begin with, the Roman essential being. That this has never been able to manifest inner humanity in the deeds of the world. That on the contrary, it forced upon the human inward being the forms of external laws of men, and thought in a rational, materialistic way of what ought to be taken hold of in the inner weaving of the soul. This external way of grasping life continued, Khomiakov opines, in the Christendom of the Western European peoples. That their Christianity lives in the head, not in the soul's in most. Now according to Khomiakov's belief, what Western Europe has as life of the spirit, has been made by modern "barbarians" — again externalizing after their fashion what ought to live inwardly — out of the Roman element and Christendom. That the turning inward will have to be brought by the Russian people, in keeping with the higher mission embodied in it by the spiritual world. — In such an edifice of doctrine, there rumble sensations whose complete interpretation would necessitate a detailed characterizing of the Russian folk soul. Such a characterization would have to point to forces inherent in this folk soul that will one day occasion it to adapt in a corresponding way for itself, out of its inner power, what holds sway in the Western European life of the spirit and will only then give the Russian people what it can ripen to in the course of history. What of the result of this ripening of the Russian people the other peoples will make fruitful for themselves, the Russian people should leave up to these peoples. Otherwise, it could fall prey to the sad misunderstanding of taking a task it has to fulfill for itself to be a task for the world, and thereby taking away its very most essential point. — Since it is a matter of the rumbling of sensations of such a misunderstood task, the idea in question did connect it self, in the heads it appeared in, only all too frequently with political directions of thought that demonstrate that in these heads this idea is the expression of the same driving powers that from the East laid in other people the germ to the pre sent will to war. Even if on the one hand one will be able to say of the lovable, poetically high-minded Khomiakov that he expected the fulfillment of the Russian mission by a peaceful current of spirit, yet the reminder is also permissible that in his soul this expectation associated with what Russia would like to attain as military opponent of Europe. For one will certainly do him no wrong when one says that in 1829 he took part in the Turkish War as a volunteer hussar because he sensed, in what Russia was then doing, a first flashing up of its world-historical mission. — What rumbled in the lovable Khomiakov often in poetic transfiguration; it rumbled on; and in a book by Danilevsky *Russia and Europe*, which toward the end of the Nineteenth Century was regarded by a number of personalities as a gospel on the task of Russia, the driving

powers are brought to expression which thought of the "spiritual task of the Russian people" as fused to complete unity with a far-reaching will to conquest. One need but look at the expression this fusion of spiritual willing with intentions of attack has found be fore all the world, and one will find clear symptoms of what mattered to begin with to many of those, also, who wanted to derive the mission of Russia from the essential being of the spiritual world. This mission is brought together with the conquest of Constantinople, and it is demanded of the will which is thereby assigned its direction that without sensing "love and hate," it dull itself against all feeling toward "Reds or Whites, toward demagogues or despots, toward the legitimate or revolutionaries, toward Germans, French, English, or Italians," that it regard as "true allies" only those who support Russia in its striving. It is said that "in Europe the balance of political driving powers" is especially pernicious to what Russia must will, and that one must further "any violation of this balance," "whatever side it may come from." "It is incumbent upon us to reject forever any cooperation with European interests."

Especially characteristic is the position the fine-minded Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovieff has taken toward these directions of thought and sensation. Solovieff can be regarded as one of the most significant embodiments of Russian essential being of spirit. In his works there lives beautiful philosophical power, noble upward spiritual vision, mystical depth. Yet he too was long imbued with the idea rumbling in the heads of his fellow countrymen of the lofty mission of the Russian element. With him too this idea associated with the other one about the exhausted-ness of the Western European element. For him, the reason Western Europe was not able to help the world to the revealing of full inmost humanity was that this Western Europe had expected salvation from the development of the individual powers inherent in man. Yet in such striving out of man's own powers, Solovieff could see only an unspiritual false path, from which mankind had to be redeemed by this: that without human doing, by a miracle, spiritual power would pour itself from other worlds onto the earth, and that that folk element which was chosen to receive this power would become the savior of a mankind that had lost its way. In the essential being of the Russian people he saw what was prepared to receive such an extra-human power, and hence to be the savior of true humanity. Solovieff's growing together with the

Russian essential being got to the point where in his soul the rumbling of the Russian ideal was pleased to look benevolently for a time upon others who were likewise possessed by this rumbling. Yet this was only able to be

so until his soul, which was filled with genuine idealism, awakened to the feeling sense that this rumbling was based on the misconception of a future ideal for the Russian people's own development. He made the discovery that many others do not speak at all about which ideal the Russian people strives after for its own salvation, but rather that they make the Russian people, as it presently is, itself to an idol. And through this discovery, Solovieff became the harshest critic of those who, under the flag of a mission of the Russian people, were introducing into the will of the nation, as wholesome driving powers of further spirit development, the attacker instincts directed against Western Europe. Out of the doctrine of Danilevsky's book *Russia and Europe*, the question was staring at Solovieff: why must Europe look with concern at what is coming about within the borders of Russia? And in the soul of the Russian this question takes on the form: "Why does Europe not love us?" And Solovieff, who saw the Russian attacker instincts in the garb of the ideas of the world-historical mission of Russia especially spoken out in Danilevsky's book, found in his way the answer to this question in a critique of this book (1888). Danilevsky had opined, "Europe fears us as the newer and higher cultural Type, called to replace the wizened old age of the Romanic-Germanic civilization." Solovieff quotes this as Danilevsky's belief. And to it he replies: "Nevertheless, both the content of Danilevsky's book and his later admissions and those of his like-minded friend — meaning Strakhov, who advocated Danilevsky's ideas after his death — lead to a different answer: Europe looks upon us as an opponent and with worry because in the Russian people there live dark and unclear elemental forces, because its spiritual and cultural powers are meager and insufficient, whereas its demands make their appearance blatantly, and sharply defined. Mightily the calls resound out to Europe of what the Russian people wills as a nation, that it wants to annihilate Turkey and Austria, defeat Germany, wants to seize Constantinople, and if possible, India too. And when they ask us, in place of what we seize and destroy, what favors we want to bestow on mankind, what spiritual and cultural rejuvenation we want to bring into world evolution, we must either be silent or babble meaningless clichés. And if Danilevsky's bitter confession that Russia is beginning to fall ill is just, then instead of the question: why does Europe not love us? we would have to occupy ourselves rather with a different one, a question closer to us and more important to us: why and wherefore are we ill? Physically, Russia is still fairly strong, as shown in the latest Russian war; so our malady is a moral one. There weigh upon us, according to the words of an old author, the sins hidden in the folk character and not coming to our awareness — and so it is needful above all to bring these up

into the light of bright consciousness. As long as we are spiritually bound and paralyzed, all our elemental instincts must cause us only harm. The essential, indeed the only essential question for true patriot ism is not the question about the power of Russia and about its calling, but about its sins."

One will have to point to these directions of will coming to light in the East of Europe if one wants to speak of operative forces in the attacker will of this East; what came to expression through Tolstoy represents inoperative forces.

This doctrine of the "mission of Russia" can receive an illumination by this: that side by side with it, one contemplates an example of how such a mission of a people is sensed within that life of spirit which the speakers of this mission look down upon as upon a life of spirit condemned to wizened old age. Schiller stood especially close to Fichte in his life of thought when in his *Letters Concerning the Aesthetic Education of Man* he sought for a prospect that lets man behold in himself the "higher," the "true man." If one enters into the soul mood that holds sway in these aesthetic letters of Schiller's, one will be able to find in them a high point of German perceptive feeling. Schiller is of the opinion that man can become unfree toward two sides in his life. He is unfree when he faces the world in such a way that he lets the things affect him only through the necessity of the senses; then the sense world governs him, and his spirituality subordinates itself to it. But also when man obeys only the necessity holding sway in his Reason he is unfree. Reason has its own demands, and if he submits to these demands, man cannot experience the free holding sway of his will in the rigid necessity of reason. Through the reason-necessity, he does live on a spiritual level, but the spirituality subjugates the sense life. Man becomes free when he can experience in such a way what affects the senses that in the sense-perceptible something spiritual manifests, and when he experiences the spiritual itself in such a way that it can be pleasing to him like what affects the senses. That is the case when man stands before the work of art, when the sense impression becomes spiritual pleasure, when what is experienced spiritually, transfiguring the sense impression, is felt. On this path, man becomes "completely man." Many prospects that result from this way of mind shall be disregarded here. Only one thing that is striven for with this Schiller view shall be pointed out. One of the paths is sought on which man, through his relationship to the world, finds in himself the "higher man." This path is sought out of the contemplation of the human entity. Just really place beside this way of mind, which wants to

speaking humanly in man with man himself, the other, which supposes that the Russian folk quality is the one that in contrast to other folk qualities must lead the world to true humanity.

Fichte seeks to characterize this way of mind inherent in the essential being of the German attitude in his *Speeches to the German Nation* with the words: "There are peoples who, while themselves retaining their peculiarities and wanting them honored, also let the other peoples have theirs, and do not begrudge them, and grant them; without doubt the Germans belong to these, and this trait is so deeply founded in their entire past and present life in the world that very often, in order to be just both towards the contemporary world abroad and towards antiquity, they are unjust towards themselves. Again there are other peoples whose narrowly ingrown self never allows them the freeness of separating off for a cool and calm contemplation of what is foreign, and who are therefore compelled to believe there is only one way of qualifying as an educated person, and that every time this way is the one that some chance has cast precisely upon them at this point in time; that all other people in the world have no other calling than to become as they are, and that they ought to pay them the greatest thanks if they are willing to take upon themselves the pains of thus forming them. Between peoples of the first kind, an interplay of mutual formation and education most beneficial to the development of man in general takes place, and an interpenetration in which nevertheless each one, with the good will of the other, remains himself. Peoples of the second kind are able to educate nothing, for they are unable to take hold of anything in its existent state; they only want to annihilate everything that stands existent, and outside of them selves everywhere produce an empty place, in which they can only keep repeating their own shape; even their initial apparent entry into foreign customs is only the good-natured condescension of the educator toward the apprentice who is now still feeble but gives good hope; even the figures of the perfection of the ancient world they do not like, until they have wrapped them in their garment, and if they could, they would wake them up from the tombs to educate them after their fashion." That is how Fichte passes verdict concerning some national peculiarities; only, after this judgment there follows straightway a sentence intended to take away from this judgment any tinge of a national arrogance of his own: "To be sure, far be the audacity from me to accuse any existent nation as a whole and without exception of that narrow-mindedness. Let us rather assume that here too those who do not express themselves are the better ones."

Part 4

These contemplations would not like to answer the question: who wanted this war? out of such a mood of soul as some personalities of the countries at war with Middle Europe do. They would like to let the conditions influencing the events speak on their own. He who is writing down these contemplations asked among Russians whether they had wanted a war against Middle Europe. — To him, what Renan predicted [on p. 23. The 3rd printing (1915) has a sentence that would mean, uncorrected: "It seems to him that what Renan predicted in the year 1870 to lead onto a surer path than the judgments presently pronounced out of passion." The present translation is based on the assumption that *Ihm scheint, daß, was* (1915) should probably read *Ihm scheint das, was.*] in the year 1870 seems to lead onto a surer path than the judgments presently pronounced out of passion. This seems to him to be a path to the only region of judgment which, regarding the war, can and should be entered upon by him too who makes himself mental representations about what judgments of thought are superfluous and inappropriate when the judgments of deed by the weapons have to decide about the destinies of peoples out of blood and death.

It is certain that driving powers pushing for war can be compelled by other forces into a life of peace long enough until they have weakened in themselves so far that they become ineffective. And whoever has to suffer from this effectiveness will make an effort to create these peacekeeping forces. The course of history shows that for years, Germany has taken upon itself this effort concerning the will forces streaming from West and East. Everything else that one can say regarding the present war in the direction of France's and Russia's driving powers weighs less than the simple, patent fact that these driving powers were sufficiently deeply anchored in the willing of these two countries to defy everything that wanted to hold them down. Whoever states this fact does not necessarily have to be reckoned among those personalities who judge out of inclination or disinclination, predetermined by the events — quite comprehensible in this time, of course — toward this or that people. Disdain, hatred, or the like need have nothing to do with such formation of judgment. How one loves such things, or does not love them, how one assesses them in feelings, is entirely another matter than setting forth the simple fact. It also has nothing to do with how one loves or does not love

the French, how one values their Spirit, when one believes one has reasons for the opinion that driving powers to be found in France are entwined in the present war complications. What is said about such driving forces as are present in peoples, can be kept free of what falls within the realm of accusation or blame in the usual sense.

One will seek in vain among the Germans for such driving forces as had to lead to the present war in a similar way to those characterized by Solovieff among the Russians, proclaimed in advance for the French by Renan. The Germans could foresee that one would wage this war against them some day. It was their obligation to arm for it. What they have done to fulfill this obligation, is called among their opponents the cultivation of their militarism.

What the Germans have to accomplish, for their own sake, and in order to fulfill the tasks laid upon them by world-historical necessities, would have been possible for them to accomplish without this war, if these accomplishments were just as acceptable to others as they are *necessary* to them. It did not at all depend on the Germans how the other peoples took the fulfillment of the world-historical tasks that in recent time in the realm of material culture added themselves for the Germans to their tasks existing earlier. In the power that, working only out of itself, establishes the position of their material cultural accomplishments, the Germans were able to place the trust they could gain from the way their work of spirit has been received by the peoples. If one looks at the German manner, one notices that nothing is inherent in it that would have made it necessary for the German to establish in any other way before the world the present work he has to accomplish than has happened with his purely spiritual accomplishments.

It is not necessary that the German make the attempt himself to characterize the significance for mankind of the German quality of spirit and accomplishment of spirit. If he wants to record verdicts as to what significance this quality and accomplishment have for mankind outside of the German area, he can seek the answers among this mankind outside of the German area. One will be permitted to listen to the words of a personality who belongs to the leading ones in the region of the English language, to the words of the great speaker of America, Ralph Waldo Emerson. [On pp. 24 f. there are quotations from Emerson. Rudolf Steiner uses a free but very true German rendering by Herman Grimm. Here the passages are given in Emerson's original English, but with unmarked omissions and sentence divisions as in the German. Nevertheless I have

left Rudolf Steiner's footnote unaltered.] In his contemplation on Goethe, he gives a characterization of the German quality of spirit and accomplishment of spirit in their relationship to the world's formative cultural education. [Emerson's sentences are quoted here according to the translation by Herman Grimm. Cf. his book: *Fifteen Essays*, Third Installment.] He says: "What distinguishes Goethe for French and English readers is a property which he shares with his nation, — a habitual reference to interior truth. In England and in America there is a respect for talent; and, if it is exerted in support of any ascertained or intelligible interest or party, or in regular opposition to any, the public is satisfied. In France there is even a greater delight in intellectual brilliancy for its own sake. And in all these countries, men of talent write from talent. It is enough if the understanding is occupied, the taste propitiated, — so many columns, so many hours, filled in a lively and creditable way. The German intellect wants the French sprightliness, the fine practical understanding of the English, and the American adventure; but it has a certain probity, which never rests in a superficial performance, but asks steadily, To what end? A German public asks for a controlling sincerity. Here is activity of thought; but what is it for? What does the man mean? Whence, whence all these thoughts?" And in another passage of this contemplation on Goethe, Emerson molds the words: The "earnestness enables them — Emerson means men educated in Germany — to out-see men of much more talent. Hence almost all the valuable distinctions which are current in higher conversation have been derived to us from Germany. But whilst men distinguished for wit and learning, in England and France, adopt their study and their side with a certain levity, and are not understood to be very deeply engaged, from grounds of character, to the topic or the part they espouse, — Goethe, the head and body of the German nation, does not speak from talent, but the truth shines through. He is very wise, though his talent often veils his wisdom. However excellent his sentence is, he has somewhat better in view. He has the formidable independence which converse with truth gives. Hear you, or forbear, his fact abides."

A few more thoughts of Emerson's shall be added that will quite certainly be allowed to stand here; after all, an English-American spoke them about the Germans. "The Germans think for Europe ... The English want the faculty of grouping men in natural classes by an insight of general laws ... The English cannot interpret the German mind." Emerson was able to know what infusion German spiritual work is capable of giving to mankind.

In the sentences quoted, Emerson speaks of the "French sprightliness," and of the "fine practical understanding of the English." If one wanted to continue in his sense with regard to the Russians, one could perhaps say: the German lacks the impulse of the Russians to seek a mystical power for all their life expressions, even the practical, by which they are justified.

And in these relationships of the spirits of these peoples lies something quite similar to the military conflicts presently in effect. In the driving force that from the side of the French led to the war with Germany, their temperament is at work, what Emerson means by their sprightliness is at work. In this temperament lies the mysterious force that so bubbles over when it utters itself in Renan's words: "hatred unto death, preparations without rest, alliance with anyone convenient." That before the war France stood armed with a military almost equal to Germany's in absolute terms, but in relation to its population even more than one and a half times as large, is a result of this mysterious force, over which result, the cliché about "German militarism" is to be drawn as a concealing veil. — In Russia's will to war, the mystical belief is at work, even where it finds only an instinctive expression. To characterize the conflicts effective to day between French and Russians on the one hand and Germans on the other hand, one will have to observe the moods of the souls. — The military conflict between British and Germans, by contrast, is such that the Germans see themselves facing only "fine practical" driving forces. The ideal of English policy is, in keeping with the essential being of the country, entirely oriented toward practical goals. Be it emphasized: in keeping with the essential being of the country. What its inhabitants reveal of this essential being, say in their behavior, is itself a working of this essential being, but not the basis of the English political ideal. Activity in the sense of this ideal has engendered in the Briton the habit of counting as guideline for this activity what seems to him to correspond to personal interests of life. It does not contradict the presence of such a guideline that it asserts itself in the shared life of society as a definite rule, which one strictly obeys if one wants to have manners. It also does not contradict it that one holds the guideline to be something quite other than it is. [On p. 26 the expression "something quite other than it is" is based on the correction of *etwa* to *etwas*. Otherwise it would mean "perhaps quite other than it is."] All of this holds good only for the Briton insofar as he is integrated into the world of his political ideal. And by this, a military conflict is created between England and Germany.

That one day the time must come when on soul territory, the world view of the German essential being, aiming as it does for the spiritual, will have to achieve its world validity by conquest — obviously, only by a battle of spirits — over against the one that has its representatives out of the English essential being in Mill, Spencer, the pragmatist Schiller, in Locke and Huxley, among others: the fact of the present war can be an admonition for this. But this has nothing directly to do with this war.

Goethe had in mind the guideline characterized for England's political ideal when he, who counted Shakespeare among the spirits that exerted the greatest influence on him, spoke the words: "But while the Germans torture themselves solving philosophical problems, the English with their great practical mind laugh at us, and win the world. Everyman knows their declamations against the slave trade, and while they would have us believe [On p. 26 the expression "have us believe" is based on the correction of *weiß* to *weis*. Otherwise it would mean "make us white."] what humane principles lie at the basis of such a policy, it now comes out that the true motive is a real object, without which the English, as is known, never do so, and which one should have known." — About Byron, who became his model for Euphorion in the Second Part of *Faust*, Goethe says: "Byron is to be regarded as man, as Englishman, and as patriot. His good qualities are to be derived primarily from the man; his bad ones, that he was an Englishman. All Englishmen are as such without real reflection; distraction and partisan spirit do not allow them to reach any calm formative training. But they are great as practical men."

These Goethean verdicts, too, touch not the Englishman as such, but only what reveals itself as "total essential being England" when this total essential being reveals itself as bearer of its political ideal.

The political ideal mentioned has developed the habit of establishing as great a space of the earth as possible for England's use, in keeping with the guideline characterized. Regarding this space, England appears like a person establishing his house at his pleasure, and growing accustomed to bar his neighbors as well from doing anything that makes the inhabitability of the house less pleasant than one wishes.

England believed the habit of being able to live on in this fashion was threatened by the development that Germany *unnecessary* had to strive for in most recent time. Hence it is understandable that it did not want to allow a military conflict to arise between Russia-France on the one hand and Germany-Austria on the other without doing everything that could

contribute to eliminating the nightmare of threat caused to it by Germany's cultural work. That, however, was to join Germany's opponents. A purely political "fine practical understanding" calculated what danger could arise for England from a Germany victorious against Russia and France. — This calculating has as little to do with a merely moral indignation over the "violation of Belgian neutrality" as it has much to do with the "fine practical understanding," which sees the Germans in England's circle of interests when they enter Belgium.

What this "fine practical" direction of will in connection with other forces directed against Germany has to bring into operation in the course of time, was able to show itself, for a German sensing, when the question was asked: how did England's political ideal always work when a European land power had to find that the world-historical conditions demanded that it expand its activity over the seas? One needed only to look at what this political ideal had done regarding Spain and Portugal, Holland, France, when these unfolded their activity at sea. And one could remember that this political ideal always "had a fine understanding for the practical," and that it knew how to calculate how the European directions of will that were directed against the countries in which a young maritime activity was unfolding were to be brought into a relationship of forces in such a way that a prospect opened up that England would be freed of its competitor.

What the People of Germany had to sense regarding the European situation before the war, emerges upon observation of the forces directed upon this people from the periphery. From England, the "fine practical" "ideal" of this country. From Russia, directions of will that opposed the tasks that had emerged for Germany and Austria-Hungary for "Europe's Middle." From France, folk forces whose being was not to be sensed otherwise for the German than in the manner which Moltke, in reference to France's relationship to Germany, once molded into the words: "Napoleon was a passing phenomenon. France remained. We already had to do with France centuries ago, we shall still have to do with it in centuries. ... the younger generation in France is raised in the belief that it has a sacred right to the Rhine, and that it has the mission of making it the border of France at the first opportunity. The Rhine border must become a truth, that is the theme for the future of France."

In the face of these three directions of will, world-historical necessity had forged together Germany and Austria-Hungary into "Europe's Middle." There have always been people grown together with this European middle who sensed how tasks will grow up for this European middle that will

reveal themselves to them as tasks to be solved in common by the peoples of this middle. Like a representative of such people, one long dead shall be remembered here. One who bore the ideals of "Europe's Middle" deep in his soul, in which they were warmed by the power of Goethe, from which he let his whole world conception and the inmost impulses of his life be carried. It is the Austrian researcher of literature and language, Karl Julius Schröder. A man who was all too little known and appreciated by his contemporaries in his being and significance. The writer of these contemplations counts him among those personalities to whom he owes immeasurable thanks in life. Schröder wrote down in his book on *German Poetry* in the year 1875, as written trace of the sensations that the events of 1870/1871 had stirred for the forming of an ideal of "Europe's Middle," the words: "We in Austria see ourselves, just at this significant turning point, in a peculiar situation. Though the free movement of our life of state has cleared away the wall of separation that parted us from Germany up to a short time ago, though we are now given the means of working our way upward to a common cultural life with the other Germans, yet just now it has come to pass that we were not to participate in a great act of our people. ... A wall of separation could not arise through this in the German life of the spirit. Its roots are not of a political but of a culture-historical nature. We want to keep our eyes on this untearable unity of the German life of the spirit ... in the German Empire may they appreciate and honor our difficult cultural task, and as for the past, not blame us for what is our fate, not our fault." Out of what sensations would a soul who so feels speak, if he still dwelt among the living, and beheld how the Austrian in full unity with the German of Germany is fulfilling an "act of his people!"

"Europe's Middle" is formed by "fate;" the souls that feel themselves as belonging to this middle with an engagement full of understanding place it in the responsibility of the spirit of history to judge what in the past — and what also in the present and future is its "fate, not its fault."

And whoever wants to assess the understanding which the ideas of a common direction of will of the "Middle of Europe" have found abroad in Hungary, let him read voices from Hungary such as one is to be found in the article about "The Genesis of the Defensive Alliance," by Emerich von Halmos, in the March, 1911 issue of *Young Hungary*. In it are the words: "If we ... consider that Andrassy stepped back from directing affairs more than thirty, and Bismarck more than twenty-one years ago, and this great work of peace stands ever yet in full power, and promises to have still further a long duration: then surely we need not surrender to a gloomy pessimism ... Bismarck and Andrassy with united force found an impressive solution to

the middle-European problem, and thereby fulfilled a civilizational work that hopefully will outlast several generations ... In the history of alliances we seek in vain for a formation of such duration and of such mighty conception."

When the characterized directions of willing, turned against "Europe's Middle," had joined for common pressure, it was inevitable that this "pressure" determined the sensations that formed within the middle-European peoples concerning the course that world events were taking. And when the facts of the summer of 1914 came about, they found Europe in a world-historical situation in which the forces operative in the life of peoples enter actively into the course of events in such a way that they remove the decision about what is to happen from the realm of ordinary human assessment, and place it into that of a higher order, an order by which world-historical necessity takes effect within the course of human development. Whoever senses the essential being of such world-moments, also lifts his judgment out of the region in which questions nest of the type, what would have happened if in an hour heavy with destiny this or that proposal of this or that personality had had more effect than was the case? In moments of world-historical turnings, men experience in their decisions forces about which one only judges aright if one endeavors — remember the words of Emerson [On p. 29, Emerson's thoughts are quoted in brief phrases taken from a free rendering in German. I have translated the German into English, rather than replacing it with Emerson's own words.] — not only to "see the particular" but to "conceive of" mankind "as a whole by higher laws." How should it be permissible to judge by the laws of ordinary life the decisions of men that cannot be made out of these laws, because in them the spirit is at work who can be beheld only in the *world-historical* necessities. — Natural laws belong to the natural order; above them stand the laws that belong to the order of ordinary human living-together; and above them stand the spiritual-operative laws of world-historical becoming, which belong to yet another order, the one through which men and peoples solve tasks and go through developments that lie outside the realm of ordinary human living together.

Remark Added Afterward

Berlin, 5 July 1915.

The preceding thoughts contain what the author of this brief writing spoke out in lectures held before the military entry of Italy into the present wrestling of peoples. From this fact, one will find it comprehensible that in this writing nothing is included about the driving powers that from this side have become the will to war against "Middle Europe." A brief writing appearing later will hopefully be able to bring an addition in this regard.

.....
∴

Read & Write



kennethmdouglass.com