

Bolshevism, The Evil Incarnate. This, then, is what the "defense" of the United States looks like in the hands of Herr Ehrhardt:

*Nation Europa* has never manufactured and offered pictures of a benevolent, selfless Uncle Sam. . . . But that hooligan [Uncle Sam] is after all of our blood, even though he is still permitting himself to be led by the nose by racial aliens. And in view of the mounting flood of colored mass peoples there is every good reason for drawing together the shrinking family, as soon as Baruchistan has again become America.

. . . . Despite all Morgenthauism, the politics and occupation policies of the U.S.A. cannot be equated with those of the U.S.S.R. . . . To be sure, we here in the Western Zones are also experiencing a scandalous infiltration of foreigners (*Überfremdung*) into our folkdom, a profit-capitalist enslavement of our economy, and a progressive dissolution of all good values.<sup>50</sup>

Despite these and worse attacks on everything that has happened since 1945, *Nation Europa* has never been indicted for subversion, although individual issues have been impounded on court order. Frequently, however, such confiscation provides only welcome publicity and leads to increased sales.<sup>(51)</sup> Its over fifteen years of continued publication and its steady circulation figures of seven to eight thousand make *Nation Europa* an important platform for antidemocratic, nationalist extremism.

## B. IDEOLOGICAL TRAINING BY WORD OF MOUTH

IDEOLOGY is only partly a matter of intellectual cognition and interpretation. Philosophic understanding must be joined with affective, emotional awareness and commitment to action. If this is true of every ideology, it is doubly true of ideologies which have been shaped by German folkish and nationalist mysticism and myths. Yet, in the workaday world of postwar Germany, with its rapid industrial transformations, urbanization of millions of uprooted Eastern farmers, unheroic political decision making and compromises—in a world, also, that rediscovered privacy and the joy of cosmopolitan diversity—in such a world the message of folk and racial kind, communal bonds, and the pieties of a bygone age could not hope to make its way by the sheer lucidity of its self-evident reasonableness. On the contrary, its irrelevance, its yawning anachronism, were so evident that only determined efforts could keep a glimmer of life in the embers of a once flaming nationalism. For so

quixotic a task a far more direct, affect-stimulating approach was necessary than that of the printed word. Cold print chills; the tribal gods cannot easily be invoked by it. In the columns of weeklies even Wotan does not stride, but minces; and the mighty emperors of the eternal Reich look like Wagnerian actors on a provincial stage. Print is the medium of polemics, the medium of revolt and of accusation. But to nourish the faith of old in those who still clung to it, and, hopefully, to rekindle it in those in whom it has been suppressed and was dying of attrition, required the living word, mutual reinforcement, and public witness to a common bond, a shared *religio*.

Aware of the inadequacy of unaided literature for the task at hand, high priests of the faith, not concerned with immediate political success nor with the vindication of a particular historical regime, began to preach the living word. It is to these men that we now turn. Moreover, we shall also have to consider other less romantic nationalists who strive to revise Germany's historical self-image and self-understanding which, they feel, the wily conquerors have insinuated into a defenseless people. They form "working associations" and institutes to develop the "objective," "undistorted" history of Nazism, the Third Reich, and the war, undimmed by the shadows of Morgenthauism, which presumably beclouds the vision of Western historians. To the extent to which these organizations are devised to supplement literary and scholarly efforts at historical revisionism with oral forms of "enlightenment," they require brief mention in this section.

### I. The German Cultural Work in the European Spirit (DKEG)

In 1950, we are told,

in a time of profound, fate-decreed misery, there gathered on top of the Klüt, a beautiful mountain of the Weser region, a group [of men] who had been truly gripped by the inner wretchedness of their people and of humanity, in order to get to the bottom of the misfortune of the times through a completely free, open discussion. In doing this they met on an interior mountain of the German landscape to which they felt pledged to maintain the values of character and ability which have always made us respected in the world. They [these values] alone will permit us to pass muster in our own and in our children's [eyes]. We are continuing our discussion about that in the *Klüter Blätter*.<sup>52</sup>

This was the beginning of a literary journal that called itself a "German collection in the European spirit." To those not privy to the special

*mystique* of that “interior mountain” to which at least some Germans “feel pledged,” the Klüt, on the edge of the town of Hameln, is primarily known through the exploits of the Pied Piper. Was *that* perhaps the *genius loci* which was to be incarnated in the *Klüter Blätter*? One could have almost thought so from the *curriculum vitae* of the man who had assembled a few of his friends at the top of the Klüt. Herbert Böhme, a vigorous man of forty-three, former division chief of the Reich Broadcasting Station in Berlin, had been a senator of the Nazi Academy of Letters. “The Party,” according to a eulogist in 1937, “placed [Böhme] in many an outstanding post; ‘to it [i.e., the Party] belongs my life,’ wrote he [Böhme].”<sup>53</sup> His anthologies of nationalist poetry, *A Nation Revolts* (*Volk bricht auf*) and *Calls into the Reich* (*Rufe in das Reich*), had stamped him—in the words of *Meyer’s Encyclopedia*—as a “passionate proclaimer of the ideals of the Third Reich.”<sup>54</sup> Such high praise was also due Böhme as an important member of the SA Culture Circle, that is, as one who crisscrossed Germany to read his poetry before Hitler Youth and SA audiences.<sup>55</sup> Of course, the Nazi encyclopedia might also have wished to make indirect reference to Böhme’s enthusiastic participation in the students’ action “Against the Un-German Spirit” which resulted in the notorious book burning of May, 1933.

By 1950, Böhme, who had become “disgusted with the constant insults heaped on us as a people who had to lose a war but not, on that account, ourselves,”<sup>56</sup> was determined to act. Indeed, Böhme had acted before; and the top of Mount Klüt, the habitat of the Pied Piper, appears to have been his favorite setting for public-spirited action. A year earlier, in May, 1949, Böhme, together with Gerhard Krüger, the radical founder of the Socialist Reich Party, and some other representatives of the “free spiritual forces” of Germany, met on the Klüt and in Hanover to found a peak organization which was later named German People’s League for Religious Freedom (Deutscher Volksbund für Geistesfreiheit).

The difficulties the American faces in appreciating the nature of the German “religious freedom” movement derive from the totally different historical and intellectual experiences of the two peoples. If in the United States representatives of various groups decided to form a peak organization, like Böhme’s, “for the protection of threatened religious freedom” and demanded, as he did, (1) the separation of church and state, (2) the elimination from public education of compulsory religion, (3) genuine freedom of teaching and research, and (4) guarantees for the freedom of conscience and religion, we would surely be right to infer

that we were dealing with liberal groups, probably having close affinity to religious humanism, unitarianism, or ethical culture and the American Civil Liberties Union. The four-point demand, in short, suggests to Americans rationalistic free thinking, or secularized Christianity, typical of progressive liberalism or democratic socialism. In Germany these demands may—and most frequently do—denote something entirely different. There, such terms as “spiritual freedom,” “free thought” or “free thinker,” “freedom of conscience” or “free faith,” may well conceal more or less radically folkish, nationalist, and anti-Christian heathenistic or pagan conceptions and religions. A short excursus will clarify the matter.

In the first part of the nineteenth century, the rigidity and conservative dogmatism of both Christian churches had led to the increasing alienation of some advanced or enlightened thinkers. Though subject to intermittent, but severe, official harassment and suppression, the non-conformist movement maintained itself throughout the nineteenth century not unlike similar movements in the West growing out of the Enlightenment and leading to rationalistic, deistic, humanistic demands for reform. Unlike the latter, however, the League of Free Religious Congregations of Germany, the Free Thinkers' League, and the other cognate “free spiritual” groups were soon engulfed by the anti-Enlightenment streams of folkish romanticism. The chthonian forces of race, blood, and instinct were viewed as the seeds of a higher culture, or at any rate a culture peculiarly Germanic, and were increasingly cherished as “vital values” in which enthusiasts, like Ernst Moritz Arndt, found “God and the exuberance of life.” Christianity was now seen as hostile to these vital forces, to nature, folk, and life, or at best as indifferent to them. If freedom mattered, it now became the freedom of the folk unit, not that of the individual. For “we may consider the folk with its peculiar forces of sentiment and soul, and with its spiritual capacity, as a revelation of God in the world.”<sup>57</sup> Thus, the movement that started as rationalist liberalism became folkish, anti-Christian, anti-Semitic collectivism.

Yet, the “free religious” orientation is by no means uniform. Its two universally shared features are anticlericalism and, to only a slightly lesser extent, anti-Semitism. Beyond these there are great differences, especially in the relation of the various groups to some form of Christianity. Some wish to remain in the established church, but want to Germanize Christianity by expurgating the Jewish elements, especially the contributions of the “Jew Paul” which are seen as subversive of the

teachings of the "Aryan Jesus," and by substituting a "heroic message of salvation" for the "Jewish notions" of compassion and sin. Others call for a respectful separation from Christianity. Others yet demonstrate bitter hostility against everything Christian and demand a self-conscious heathenism or neopaganism.

In organizational terms the spectrum began with the so-called *Deutschkirche* (German Church) and the *Deutsch-Christliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (German-Christian Working Association) under whose influence the Gospel of Christ was to be de-Judaized and thus made congenial to the specifically Germanic soul. It is these groups which formed the core of Nazi strength within the Protestant clergy and which in 1932 formed the Faith Movement of German Christians (*Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen*).<sup>(58)</sup> By contrast, the *Deutsche Glaubensbewegung* (German Faith Movement) of Professor Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, of Tübingen, sought to establish itself as a recognized church, a German National Church, the Third Church in the Third Reich, alongside the Christian churches, deliberately rejecting Christianity as incompatible with Germanism, but still with profound respect for the person of Jesus.<sup>(59)</sup> It self-consciously sought to establish a Nordic-Germanic religion which, unlike Christianity, would have its "origin in the soul of Nordic men," feature a heroic ethic, and reject the Christian theory of redemption and the idea of original sin as alien to German nature. Yet, when anti-Christian hostility became more intense, Hauer resigned from the presidency of that movement.<sup>60</sup> Finally, at the extreme end of the spectrum was the violently anti-Christian Tannenberg League of the Ludendorffs. Fanatically anticlerical, anti-Semitic, anti-Masonic—in short, against all three dark, mysterious supranational forces which control the world and destroy Germanism—Ludendorff cried to his fellow countrymen: "Your most important duty is to protect your children from Christian influences. They destroyed our people, and only priests and Jews have profited thereby."<sup>61</sup>

Because of their opposition to the official religious institutions, all the "free religious" groups, from the German Faith Movement on the "moderate" end of the spectrum to the Ludendorffians on the radical end, called for the separation of state and church and operated with the concepts of freedom of conscience, free thought, and freedom of religion. Associated in the American mind with universalist tolerance, liberalism, and humanistic democracy, these terms may become in the German environment the battle cry of the most radical anti-Semites and the most fervent and aggressive, albeit often anti-Hitler, national socialists.

Before returning to the postwar scene, a further clarification is necessary. It concerns the relation of the various neopagan and heathenistic folk movements to Hitler, for legend has it that they enjoyed the Führer's enthusiastic support throughout. It is important that this legend be laid to rest. Hitler was impressed, above all, by the importance of preventing denominational or confessional struggles from jeopardizing his construction of a folk state in which all differences among racial comrades would disappear.<sup>(62)</sup> Consequently, he carefully eschewed at first all partiality in religious matters and held that National Socialism as a *Weltanschauung* was compatible with any positive religion.<sup>(63)</sup> What this meant in practice was that Hitler was willing to work with any church as long as it concerned itself exclusively with the hereafter and, for the rest, permitted itself to become a transmission belt for his demands, in loyal support of his policies. Understanding the primary importance of compliant religious institutions for the strengthening of authoritarianism, Hitler, though eager for the formation of a national church as the most convenient way to complete his control over every facet of German life, was even more anxious not to drive those into opposition who clung to religious orthodoxies of various kinds. Therefore, he split with his fanatically anticlerical and anti-Christian racist allies around Ludendorff and, after his assumption of power, repeatedly inveighed against atheism, skepticism, and relativism, forbade the neopagan, neo-Germanic religious movements all public, anti-Christian propaganda, refused to make common cause with them, and treated them with disdainful indifference.<sup>(64)</sup> Waldemar Gurian was quite right when he wrote as early as 1936:

It is a fundamental misconception of the cultural-political situation in the Third Reich, very prevalent both in Germany and abroad, to imagine that deadly warfare is being waged between the Churches and blatant paganism, and that the government of the Reich, or the NSDAP is deliberately supporting or furthering this paganism as such. The attitude of Rosenberg alone, who is not in league with Hauer and is definitely hostile to Reventlow and Ludendorff, shows that nothing could be further from the thoughts of the most active champions of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung* than direct co-operation with those "honest but tactless" people who openly attack Christianity. These people, whom Hitler treats with good-humored nonchalance when it is merely a question of such effete causes as the "Away from Rome" movement, but with murderous contempt and hatred when they molest his own adherents . . . have in actual fact even less personal influence in the Third Reich than the "Free Thinkers" had in the Republic.<sup>65</sup>



Indeed, even the more radical of the Nazified Protestant church, the so-called German Christians, became an acute embarrassment to Hitler when they pronounced him a new incarnation of the Savior. They threatened in his eyes to upset the precarious peace which he had concluded with the Catholic Church.

Hitler's tactic changed only after the German Christians had thoroughly discredited themselves, thus giving new energy to the Confessing Church (that is, to those who resisted "co-ordination"), and after the Catholic Church began to oppose the demands of a totalitarian regime. Abandoning his fruitless efforts to capture the Protestant church from inside and to build it into his total system as a firm pillar of support, Hitler eventually withdrew his patronage from the German Christians and determined to smash the Protestant church by increasingly tighter control and more severe repression. Only then—and even then only hesitantly—did the regime turn to the official promotion of an anti-Christian, or non-Christian, Weltanschauung which, incidentally, never amounted to very much outside the SS.

Such had been the fate of the groups and associations which in the context of German development called themselves "freely religious," spoke for the separation of church and state, appealed to freedom of thought and of religion, demanded secular schools, and pleaded for "genuine freedom to research and teach." Within three years after Germany's unconditional surrender, they once again made their appearance and began to re-establish the contacts which had been lost in the years of confusion. From his home town of Lochham, near Munich, Herbert Böhme, the former Nazi poet, was organizing the "German Unitarians," an offspring of the Free Protestants in the last third of the nineteenth century. In their views they came close to J. W. Hauer's German Faith Movement, to which, indeed, they had belonged in the glorious days when the latter had become "the first non-Christian faith demanding state recognition since Constantine accorded it to Christianity in 313 A.D."<sup>66</sup>

Böhme, a far better organizer than poet, now called the meeting on the Klüt in May, 1949, to which we have already referred. Its purpose was the formation of a "working association" of a number of "free spiritual associations" for the defense against threats to the "freedom of the spirit" which the participants saw "in the blatantly increasing propaganda of the churches and of the confessional parties." The organization there conceived and later formally founded bore the name German People's League for Religious Freedom (Deutscher Volksbund für Geistesfreiheit).<sup>67</sup> Its stated objective was "the fight for the social recog-

nitition and state protection of the free-religious Weltanschauung, which is founded on natural morality and scientific knowledge, as well as for the establishment of a meaningful order of life that secures for man dignity and freedom.”<sup>68</sup> This was to be achieved through the usual demands of (1) separation of church and state, (2) elimination of compulsory religious education in the schools, (3) genuine freedom for research and teaching, and (4) guarantees for freedom of conscience and belief.<sup>69</sup> In support of these means, the associated groups professed their “obligation to awaken and foster the creative forces of the community in family, folk, and mankind.”<sup>(70)</sup>

Despite the clear demands of the German People's League, it was anything but homogeneous in composition. The distance that separated the various parts became glaringly evident in 1950 when a denazification tribunal placed Mathilde Ludendorff in the category of “Major Offender.” This led to an internal crisis and the resignation of many members, for the German People's League extended all the way from truly democratic—albeit fiercely anticlerical—humanists and vigilant antinationalists to more or less unreconstructed Ludendorff racists, radical nationalists, and violent anti-Semites.<sup>(71)</sup> Böhme clearly belonged on the latter end of the spectrum. To give his views broader resonance, he called together a second summit conference on Mount Klüt to consider ways to combat “the constant insults heaped on us as a people who had to lose a war but not, on that account, ourselves.” That meeting resulted in the formation of a publishing firm, the Türmer Verlag, for the purpose of producing the *Klüter Blätter* in defense of German folkdom and of a folkish spirituality in the form of “German Unitarianism.” The conference also resolved to create an organized fellowship that would champion the folkish forces that shape a people and would pit them against the agencies of corrosion, corruption, subversion, and decadence.<sup>72</sup> Shortly after the “summit meeting,” a group of Böhme's friends organized in Munich the German Cultural Work in the European Spirit (Deutsches Kulturwerk Europäischen Geistes, DKEG) and broadcast an appeal for assistance

in shaping this work which is to teach our children about those who in Germany's darkest hour, and oblivious to bickering and religious differences, preserved the homeland for a civilization (*Gesittung*) which we won't permit to be taken from us or sullied by any disrespect or distortion.<sup>73</sup>

The same truculent and resentful tone also characterizes Böhme's definition of the DKEG's task:

Despite the trend toward leveling and the inundation by the masses



(*Vermassung*) and, therefore also, [despite] the despiritualization (*Entseelung*) of all areas, we shall create the fellowship of those who wish to preserve their longing for their children and who still consider themselves worthy of their fatherland despite all the misery which has befallen both land and people.<sup>74</sup>

The DKEG, we are further told, will come to the aid of all those who “draw the holiest values of the nation from their own foundation and thus shape the face of Europe.” This language betrays its folkish origin; but far more than that, it also reveals how stubbornly Böhme and his friends were clinging to the arrogant conceit that it is Germany’s mission to “shape the face of Europe” and that it can be shaped only insofar as Teutonic tribalists bethink themselves of their own tribal heritage. Clearly, the “European Spirit” in the organization’s title referred to the Europe of the pan-Germans and of Hitler, to a Europe in which Germany, as the “heartland,” was also the “heart,” or in nationalist jargon the “ordering power” (*Ordnungsmacht*). The more realistic and immediate goal of the DKEG was to provide a forum for certain “voices of our people” which had been stifled by the “re-educators” of 1945. This is how Böhme put it: “The best artists of our people, the prophets (*Künder*) of its longing and soul, which are within us and still inspire us, are still suffering. Let it be our task that they, the chief witnesses of our inward riches, will not be forgotten.”<sup>75</sup> This passage is clear enough, despite its murky circumlocution. The “artists of our people” who were “still suffering” were the “ambitious second-raters” who “with the help of willing fellow travelers of good name”<sup>76</sup> had in 1933 brutally destroyed a brilliant flowering of creative genius, second only to the great age of classicism around 1800,<sup>77</sup> and had replaced it with a period of cultural sterility.

The novel and important notion which underlay the organization of the DKEG was that it would do more than publish yet another folkish periodical. The “novelty” lay in the decision to recreate essentially the Hitler Youth and SA poetry readings of the Nazi years: to disseminate folkish-nationalist ideology by word of mouth, in settings that would intensify the impact of the emotional content of folkish romanticism and maudlin sentimentality. In these things Böhme had a great deal of experience.

“If there should be someone . . . who has never read a single line of Herbert Böhme,” wrote once a eulogist about the SA bard,

he has surely [sat] in the circle of his comrades in the SA, SS or Hitler Youth [and] heard spoken many a line of that poet, or possibly even [heard Böhme] himself at one time or another. Only [two]

things are decisive, the listening and the circle into which the fellowship forms itself. . . . At solstice [celebrations] or obsequies, during the roll call of the SA, or the parade of the Hitler Youth and the Labor Service, some unknown comrade speaks the words of Böhme or Baumann or of someone else. He does not have to be an actor who has learned to recite in years of practice. Anyone can speak them; everyone can understand the words. The fellowship bears the poet. And he belongs to it, to its most beautiful hours. We feel what he is saying. His interpretation, [his] forming and shaping of the world grips us, and commits us, and strengthens our conviction (*Haltung*).<sup>78</sup>

To achieve the same effect, Böhme organized so-called *Pflegestätten* (Foster or Cultivation Centers) which would not only be meeting places for poetry readings and folkish-patriotic, ultra-Rightist lectures but would themselves become centers for nationalist cultural activity, for patriotic celebrations, and for the organization of discussion evenings in their own region. Böhme supplemented the Cultivation Centers by regional ritual assemblies, so-called *Rüsttage*, in which the Cultivation Center leaders would take refresher courses in folkish obscurantism. In the first year of operation, three Cultivation Centers were established; in 1952, the second year, there were seven of them; in 1953, thirteen; in 1956 their number had grown to sixty-eight; and in 1962 there were over a hundred. Within two years of the founding of the DKEG, Böhme was able to report with considerable satisfaction that the organization had succeeded in becoming an important part in the cultural life of numerous towns and that in many of them "collaboration with Regional Associations of Expellees (*Landsmannschaften*), adult education centers (*Volkshochschulen*), or other cultural organizations has become a pleasant habit."<sup>79</sup>

The co-operation in the towns was not the only assist from public and semipublic sources. In 1952 the Bavarian government accorded to the DKEG the tax status of an institution "particularly worthy of promotion," making donations or membership dues income-tax deductible.<sup>80</sup> Considerable adverse public pressure eventually forced the Land government to rescind the DKEG's special tax status. Böhme's financial worries, however, were apparently relieved by German industry and its Cultural Circle (*Kulturkreis*), which were reported to have made funds available in excess of DM 100,000.<sup>81</sup> The new source of money made possible a more elaborate speaker's bureau, which was also partly supported by two ultranationalist publishers, Plesse Verlag in Göttingen and Leopold Stocker in Graz.<sup>82</sup> Since then the activities of Böhme and his DKEG have constantly grown. Annual meetings of the leading officials

of the Cultivation Centers are being held in romantic castles. To these have been added, since 1953, special Poets' Meetings at which folkish authors and poets are given an opportunity to read their works and to compete for the Honor 'Ring' with the "blue stone of German poetry" which is awarded annually. At the same time, Guest Weeks were organized which usually precede the annual meeting and the Poets' Meeting, bringing together large numbers of folk enthusiasts for an entire week of readings, lectures, music, discussion—all from the true-blue folkish-nationalist point of view. In 1960 Böhme added to all this activity an annual Cultural Congress. To maintain the momentum both ideologically and financially, the Türmer Verlag was enlarged to include two book services, The Good Book and a "readers' fellowship," Books of the Germans. To the ideological content of these activities and the special efforts made to intensify their emotional impact, we shall return presently. But first we have to take note of the group of "still suffering" writers for whose sake, we remember, the DKEG had been supposedly established.

In view of the goals of the DKEG, it is not at all surprising that we should find among the former and present members of its associated Poets' Circle names that have occurred repeatedly in earlier sections of this and the previous chapter: Bruno Brehm, Ernst Frank, Hans W. Hagen, Hans Heyck, Moritz Jahn, Mirko Jelusich, Rudolf Jungnickel,<sup>83</sup> Maria Kahle, Alfred Karrasch, Erich Kern (Kernmayr), E. G. Kolbenheyer, E. W. Möller, Wilhelm Pleyer, Wilhelm Schäfer, Franz Schauwecker, Gerhard Schumann, Karl Springenschmid, Franz Spunda, Fritz Stüber, Hans Venatier, Friedrich Franz von Unruh, Heinrich Zerkaulen, and Heinrich Zillich. In addition, there are also Hans Berner, a frequent contributor to *Der Weg* and *Nation Europa* and a close friend of Karl-Heinz Priester, and Hermann Burte, the Alemannic folkish-racist author whom Goebbels, on the writer's sixtieth birthday, had hailed as "the admonisher and prophet of a folkish Greater Germany."<sup>(84)</sup> Then there are also Margarete Dierks, whom we shall meet again at Hans Grimm's Poets' Meetings; and Lotte Huwe, a leading member of the "free religious" group of Hamburg around Fritz Hermann; Erich Limpach, the former Nazi poet and glorifier of war; and Heinrich Schäfer-Hansen, Nazi Reichstag deputy, Motor Corps (NSKK) general, SRP enthusiast, and Naumann friend, whom we shall encounter again in connection with Rightist rally efforts.

To the outsider these names might appear tantamount to a political program, or at least to a political commitment. Yet to Böhme it was important to insist on the purely cultural objectives of his activity.

Anxious to strengthen a folkish consciousness in broad sections of the population, he had no interest in being drawn into the political-legal battles which threatened to grind to bits the willfully political exponents of the National Opposition. The first "appeal" which the then newly formed DKEG addressed to all Germans, regardless of political preferences, called for "the great rally of all like-minded who still wish to be united as Germans beyond all political differences of opinion and religious-dogmatic controversies, for the necessary maintenance and promotion of the ultimate and deepest values of our people, indeed of Europe."<sup>85</sup> As in many DKEG appeals for a "nonpolitical" appreciation of Germandom, the assumption here seems to be that the ultimate and deepest values of the Germans are not political questions: there is, or must be, a nonpolitical, ideological substratum without which the political organization of a diverse society could apparently not be imagined. Quite apart from the absence of persuasive evidence for the existence of such an ideological substratum this side of vague rhetoric, Böhme himself has never really lived up to his own self-denying recommendation of nonpoliticalness. When the *Klüter Blätter* introduced the "new" term "Third Nation" to circumvent, and yet allude to, the notion of the discredited Third Reich, and when they argue that members of that Third Nation "are living dispersed among Germans," representing the hope and future of the nation, we can hardly speak of a nonpolitical discussion. Nor is it any less political when Böhme recommends to his readers and listeners the sharply critical *Deutscher unabhängiger Zeitungsdienst* of Naumann's confidant, the ultranationalist F. K. Borne-mann, with the remark that he, Böhme, had established to his satisfaction "the complete agreement of our opinions about every essential question of public life." Nor could one speak of political neutrality—exclusive concern with ultimate values beyond political controversy—when Böhme used the DKEG to organize support for a general amnesty of all war criminals. For that was the appeal that extreme Rightists and Nazis, such as the late Friedrich Grimm, his friend Ernst Achenbach, Werner Best, Franz Six,<sup>86</sup> and many others had successfully employed to mobilize conservative opinion (especially in the Catholic Church) and through which they achieved their purpose, or at least a good part of it.

Similar inconsistencies are frequent in the *Klüter Blätter* and in many a DKEG lecture. Both, for instance, warn repeatedly against being trapped by a sense of nostalgia for past glories and against invoking a past which can never again become reality. At the same time, they

pointedly avoid analyzing that "period of fate," as Böhme disingenuously calls the Third Reich. They cannot condone the brutalities and stupidities of the past, yet are too hobbled by ambivalence and nostalgia to break through to a clear rejection of an authoritarian political system and biological collectivism. Sham objectivity also characterizes Böhme's attitude toward the Jews. Asserting that he was never anti-Semitic, Böhme, in the same breath, remarks that "many authoritative cultural positions" in Germany "are today again being occupied by representatives of the Jewish people" and suggests in the name of equity "that in Germany Jews should not occupy more positions than do Germans in Israel." Similarly, Böhme also bewails the partiality which puts the works of Carl Zuckmayer on every German stage, but ignores those of H. F. Blunck, E. G. Kolbenheyer, and Hans Rehberg.<sup>87</sup>

The relative moderation of the DKEG actually enabled Böhme in 1955 to exploit the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Schiller's death to strengthen his ties with the folkish and Right-wing local groups of large youth and student organizations. Following a patriotic-nationalist appeal of the DKEG, the dueling fraternities of the Coburger Convent and the German Burschenschaft joined with several ultranationalist youth organizations and some groups of the regional expellee associations, such as the German Youth of the East (Deutsche Jugend des Osten, DJO) in the founding of a Schiller League of German Youth (Schiller Bund der deutschen Jugend). Significantly enough, the radically nationalist Viking Youth was the first to join the new Schiller League.<sup>88</sup> Only belatedly did the alarm sounded by the democratic press and the labor unions alert the public as to what had happened and force the DKEG to abandon plans for "national festivals" in Kassel, Brunswick, and Wolfenbüttel. Under public pressure the Schiller League itself withered and shortly died. The antinationalist press whose vigilance had been aroused by this incident now began to urge local governments to rescind permission for the use of public-school buildings and other facilities by the DKEG, and in 1956 a campaign succeeded in denying Böhme the use of Castle Ludwigstein, a meeting place for organized youth groups where the DKEG had held its first four annual Guest Weeks.

As a consequence, Böhme abandoned the Guest Week in 1956 and limited himself to the three days' Poets' Meeting which, as in the previous year, coincided with the meeting of the leaders of the Cultivation Centers. The setting for these activities was the ancestral castle of one of the DKEG's "honorary members," the nationalist author Karl von Berlepsch. In that year addresses were delivered by Theodor Seidenfaden,

the DKEG's vice-president and a minor folkish-nationalist poet,<sup>(89)</sup> by Hans W. Hagen, by the Sudeten German folkish writer Wilhelm Pleyer, and by Böhme himself, who also won the Ring of Honor for a poem rejecting war.<sup>(90)</sup> There was also at the meeting the obligatory representative of the expellees, who adjured the listeners that "the fatherland in the East is not only the concern of the expellees. East activity is a joint activity of East and West Germans, not work for the masses. A fellowship of self-conscious men must be maintained, until the hour has become ripe."<sup>91</sup>

As every year, great pains were taken with the musical and ceremonial setting within which the poetry readings, the lectures, and the awarding of the Ring of Honor took place. A great deal of stagecraft heightens the elated emotion evoked by the romantic and chauvinist mumbo jumbo which characterizes folkish literature. This is particularly true for the awarding of the prize ring and the subsequent evening of poetry readings. Similar romantic stage settings are used wherever possible in the work of the hundred-odd Cultivation Centers. A report about the Lüneburg group is rather typical:

At the time of the summer solstice . . . invitations were extended for a bus trip to Jesteburg-Lüllau. There they visited the temple of art and the residence of the painter Johann Michael Bossard. Afterwards the members of the Lüneburg and Hamburg Cultivation Centers gathered in a beautiful juniper grove and joined in singing folk songs. . . . The young and the old stood then before the flaming campfire . . . and hearkened to the voice of the youth of our time, listened to the fire speech of Walter Lodders who once again managed to establish a wonderful harmony between Bossard's world and the intentions of those who in the DKEG . . . [struggle for] the essence of our German humanity.<sup>92</sup>

This kind of description has increasingly found its way into the columns of the provincial press, as the work of the DKEG has been intensified through the holding of regional Guest Meetings and as the Cultivation Centers have proliferated into smaller and smaller towns. In March, 1958, for instance, the active Lüneburg center organized a well-publicized Guest Meeting under the typically folkish title "Exalted Symbols of German Development toward Folkdom (*Volkwerdung*).<sup>93</sup> Equally well reported was a poetry reading of Böhme's in the town of Celle which he entitled "Appeal and Song of an Overflowing Heart," and two months later, in February, 1959, Böhme was reported as having spoken in the course of a Guest Week on "The Preservation of the Soul."

Recent efforts in the DKEG's campaign to disseminate folkish atti-



tudes and nationalist ideology through personal confrontation and shared group experience include an annual so-called German Cultural Congress.<sup>(93)</sup> This was not meant to be a new entity so much as an association of all kinds of cultural organizations, meeting on common ground to discuss common problems. The shared platform for the congress was to have been "Legality, Loyalty, and Discipline." Like the Schiller League, the congress represented an attempt by Böhme to gain access to, and possibly influence over, opinion molders on the bourgeois Right and Center. Böhme's hopes were disappointed: the response limited the scope of the enterprise essentially to the ultra-Right. The failure of the DKEG's ecumenical pretensions was in a way symbolized by the prominence at the first congress of August Haussleiter, leader of the splinter party German Community, who made his contribution to the already well-marked folkish and pan-German tenor of the meeting. An appreciative audience once again swallowed bombast as profundity and sentimentality as religious exaltation, but the real goal of the meeting had eluded its organizers. Nonetheless, in the following year, 1961, a renewed attempt was made, this time under the inviting slogan "German-European-Universal." Again the congress was viewed, at least theoretically, as merely a co-ordinating body for a large number of co-operating independent cultural organizations, and again demands were voiced for the holding of joint meetings and for the establishment of local supraparty working circles. But concrete organizational or institutional structures, such as a joint speakers' bureau, functional work groups, and joint financing, were mentioned only in passing. If the second congress confirmed the impression that Böhme's attempt to gain access to the cultural and ideological work of nonnationalist groups and parties had failed, it also strongly suggested that the DKEG had begun to assume somewhat of a monopoly position on the extreme Right.

By 1962 and the third congress, all pretense of co-ordinating a number of independent cultural organizations was dropped. It was plainly just another "show" of the DKEG. While there were a number of guests from outside the membership, they attended as private persons and not as representatives of their own parties or organizations.<sup>(94)</sup> In view of the DKEG's insistence that serious ideological and moral concerns can be fruitfully raised and illumined only in relatively small groups, no attempt was made to turn the congress into a mass rally. A part of the meeting, the so-called "Hour of Loyalty to the Folk," was organized around a memorial to the Austrian nationalist lyricist Josef Weinheber, whose poetry an American literary critic has called "anemic experiments in a

sterile classicism and nationalistic idiom.”<sup>95</sup> The main speeches of men like Robert Körber, the Austrian nationalist leader Roland Timmel,<sup>(96)</sup> and Böhme reverberated with such sentiments as the necessity to replace rootlessness by ties to tradition, language, and culture; the impossibility of building Europe as long as one of its peoples is being slandered and despised; the need for an end to the self-accusations within the German nation; the longing after honor, dignity, consciousness of ancestry, folk, and fatherland; and the presence of fatherland wherever Germans “experienced Germany.” The traditional poetry readings which, in the absence of a worthy work, were this time not accompanied by the award of the Honor Ring, concluded the Cultural Congress.<sup>(97)</sup> Even here folkish-nationalist propaganda was not relaxed for a moment, for the readings were introduced with a memorial to Hans Venatier, the ultra-nationalist schoolteacher and author who committed suicide in January, 1959, when his *Nation Europa* article “Is This ‘Neo-Facism’?” led to an investigation by the Ministry of Education and to Venatier’s removal from civics classes.<sup>98</sup> With this kind of introduction, the proper spirit was created for the readings, framed by music and folk songs, of Hans W. Hagen, Erich Kern, Theodor Seidenfaden, Gerhard Schumann, the folkish provincial authoress Natalie Beer, from the Austrian Vorarlberg, and others of like mind.

In October, 1963, the fourth annual German Cultural Congress took place in all of its—by now “traditional”—ritualistic luxuriance. Every detail of the program reflected Böhme’s conviction of the importance of the spoken word and the face-to-face group in the dissemination of nationalist and folkish values and ideology. A memorial hour for the dead, an “Hour of Loyalty to the Folk,” the award of a symbolic South Tyrolian crock to an outstanding defender of “folkdom,” the presentation of the Honor Ring with “the blue stone of German poetry”—every detail was carefully prepared and smoothly executed. Within this framework, the “poetic” or “literary” message of such faithful DKEG members as Roland Timmel, Theodor Seidenfaden, Ursel Peter, Erich Limpach, Mirko Jelusich, Hans Heyck, and Karl Springenschmid is expected to leave an unforgettable impression. The DKEG’s most recent addition to its bag of folkish tricks is a supraregional “sacred” solstice festival which the *Klüter Blätter* advertised as “the star tour of those loyal to the folk.” With fifteen hundred participants (almost half of whom were youngsters), the nocturnal rites included a contemplative midnight vigil at the monument of the Cheruscan Hermann (Arminius), the victor over the Roman legions in the Teutoburg forest, a solemn solstice celebration

later in the night, and a visit to old Germanic relics at dawn.<sup>99</sup> Böhme and the other organization leaders apparently intend to make this all-night obeisance to authentic Teutonism an annual event in the minutely structured calendar of the DKEG.

A question remains as to the effectiveness of Böhme's approach to the maintenance and strengthening of a folkish-nationalist consciousness in postwar Germany. His efforts to penetrate into the conservative Center via the large regional expellee associations and student corporations failed organizationally, as we have seen, in the case of the Schiller League and of the co-ordinating Cultural Congresses. Informal contacts, however, have remained alive and are becoming increasingly important. Also, the original function of the DKEG of disseminating throughout the countryside folkish-nationalist social and political values has on the whole been fulfilled. The constantly rising number of Cultivation Centers, and the growing willingness of archconservative or nationalist local bodies and newspapers to accept the DKEG as a bona fide part of their over-all local cultural resources, all testify to the success of the movement in relying largely on the spoken word for the spread and deepening of a modified folkish nationalism.

## II. The Lippoldsberg Poets' Meetings

Always diligent in documenting his independence from the Nazi regime and his critical distance from the cultural policies of the propaganda managers in the Goebbels ministry, Hans Grimm, one of the few examples of genuine postwar neo-Nazism, began in 1934 to invite foreign poets and scholars to poetry readings,

to prove to them . . . that, even with our land and people under the revolutionary conditions of a new epoch, [the people] still possess independent poets and competent, and brilliant, living poetry of its German folkhood, and that visitors from all strata come together to devote themselves [to the poetry] in eager and happy enjoyment.<sup>100</sup>

This became an annual event until 1939. And, indeed, every year a thousand or more people from near and far would make the pilgrimage to Lippoldsberg. There, on top of the hill which towers over the little town, overlooking the lovely Weser Valley, Grimm had in 1917 bought the ancient, abandoned, ivy-covered convent buildings abutting the nine-hundred-year-old Romanesque church. Together with the stables and service buildings, the Klosterhaus and the church formed a quadrangle surrounding a large yard paved with ancient cobblestones: a perfect set-

*Réelle*, the journal of the Belgian Social Movement), and Spanish, Portuguese, Icelandic, Brazilian, and Argentinian radicals.

165. Available evidence suggests that most of the groups which had joined the KNJ at the meeting of February, 1955, resumed their independence in the following year or two. On the other hand new organizations joined it. The League of National Students (BNS) (Klausdieter Ludwig) became a member of the KNJ, as did the Young German Community and a splinter of Zitzmann's Deutsch-Wandervogel under Siegrim Hammerbacher, of Lindau in Swabia (see Zitzmann's reply in Ludemann [X/117]), the Kameradschaft Deutscher Jungen (Comradeship of German Boys) under Hans Uwe Walter, and the Bund Heimattreuer Jugend Franken (League of Patriotic Youth Franconia). Subsequently Walter's Comradeship of German Boys dissolved itself and the Young German Community was forced by the autocratic chairman of its parent organization, August Haussleiter, to withdraw from the KNJ. The Comradeship of German Boys (KDJ) was first founded illegally in 1953 in an internment camp of the Soviet Zone. H. U. Walter, its *spiritus rector*, belonged to the younger group of Hitler Youth leaders, became a Communist, turned against Communism, and was eventually interned on charges of anti-Communist activity. Upon his release, Walter came to West Germany and promptly organized the Comradeship. Militantly nationalist, and now fanatically anti-Communist, the KDJ stoked radical irredentism and accused all antinationalists of being willing or unwilling tools of Bolshevism. (See Gesellschaft zum Studium von Zeitfragen, *Analysen und Berichte*, VI, 11 [September 11, 1959], 3–4.) In 1958 the Schiller Youth joined the KNJ. This group had emerged from the celebrations in 1955 of the 150th anniversary of Friedrich Schiller's death which were organized by the folkish SA poet Herbert Böhme. For these festivities, Böhme succeeded in mobilizing not only folkish and nationalist-extremist groups but also traditionalist-conservative nationalists, such as the refurbished, but hardly reformed, association of fraternities Coburger Convent and Deutsche Burschenschaften and nationalistic elements in the youth groups of some of the *Landsmannschaften*. (Especially the Sudeten German Youth is still quite considerably under the influence of nationalist leaders. See, for example, "Sudetendeutsche Jugend einst und jetzt," *Sudetendeutsche Jugend*, no. 9, 1956.) The organizational upshot of the Schiller memorial was a Schillerbund Deutschland under the chairmanship of Hans Seidenfaden, folkish-nationalist son of the minor Nazi poet Theodor Seidenfaden. The youthful contingent of the Schillerbund called itself Schiller League of German Youth (Schiller Bund der deutschen Jugend) and, like its progenitors, was characterized by a marked preference for folkish mumbo-jumbo and the requisite penchant for a form of Teutonic Christianity, from which have been extirpated the contaminating and corrupting elements of Judaism that were thought to infect the very core of the more traditional varieties of Christianity. (See Eric A. Peschler, "Hinter den Kulissen der bündischen Jugend," *deutsche jugend*, IV, 6 (June, 1956), 277–278.) These efforts, however, led nowhere. From the ruins of the Schiller League of German Youth emerged a folkish-nationalist book club, Junge Buchkameradschaft (Young Book Comradeship)

under Otto Mahler, of Heidelberg, as well as the Schillerjugend mentioned above. Within a few years it, too, had ceased to exist.

166. Hessler once headed Haussleiter's Young German Community, later seceded from it, and in 1957 founded the Jungdeutsche Freischar.

167. From *Der Adlerführer*, Sondernummer 1/59, quoted in Gesellschaft zum Studium von Zeitfragen, *Analysen und Berichte*, VI, 11 (September 11, 1959), 5.

168. For details on the organizational structure, size, personnel, and ideological orientation of the NPD see a confidential report of Fritz Zietlow, n.d., but probably April 1952; *Der Informationsdienst*, no. 184 (June 25, 1952); Report of V. Wilmsdorff to editor of the *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), June 26, 1952; *Lokale Hessische Nachrichten*, October 11, 1952; *Feinde der Demokratie* (Lower Saxony), II, 6 (March–April, 1953), and III, 8 (May–June, 1954); *Der Informationsdienst*, no. 218, (October 29, 1952), pp. 1–3; *Die Brücke*, II, 12 (December, 1955), 3–5; Gesellschaft zum Studium von Zeitfragen, *Analysen und Berichte*, V, 8/9 (April 3, 1958), 6. From June, 1951, on the monthly *Freiheitsbriefe* and *Der Freiheitsbote* are the best source for a continuous account of the NPD's political orientation and policy demands. The latter ceased publication in 1961.

169. Reproduced in Gesellschaft zum Studium von Zeitfragen, *Analysen und Berichte*, VI, 12 (September 15, 1959), 1.

170. Unconfirmed reports, however, maintain that the Hamburg groups of these two organizations seceded to join the Young German Movement. The Viking splinter was led by Uwe Siebrands, and the Deutsch-Wandervogel splinter by Kurt Voss. See *Bulletin on German Questions* (London), VI, 246 (October 1, 1959). It would also appear that Karl Lehmann led his Nuremberg local of the Deutsch-Wandervogel into the Young German Movement. The other four participants were the Jungdeutsche Freischar under Günther Hessler, the Nationale Jugend Deutschlands—Berlin (National Youth of Germany—Berlin) under Peter Bernau, the Deutschsozialistische Jungsturm under the former Strasser man Werner Diehl (and later under Karl-Heinz Nill), and the Schiller Youth under Hans-Ulf Siebrands, of Herne. (Nill, incidentally, is said to be closely connected with the anti-Semitic, anti-Masonic, anti-Catholic, and anti-Christian Ludendorff League for God Cognition [L] [Bund für Gotterkenntnis (L)]. See Gesellschaft zum Studium von Zeitfragen, *Analysen und Berichte*, VI, 12 [September 15, 1959], 2.) The initial invitation had, in fact, been issued in the name of the National Youth Fellowship, the Jungdeutsche Freischar, and the Deutschsozialistische Jungsturm. In 1962 the Siebrands brothers, Hans-Ulf and Uwe, were sentenced to three months' imprisonment for subversive activities.

171. For Schönborn, see above, VI/116 and VII/151. See Gnielka (VII/142), p. 10. This essay, originally published under the title "Das deutsche Volk muss wieder auf Vordermann gebracht werden," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, June 22, 1959, must be used with caution. Excessively sensationalist, its facts are not always entirely reliable.

172. Gnielka (VII/142), p. 12.

173. *Ibid.*, p. 11. On January 2, 1960, Peter Bernau was to earn new