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National Socialism Before Nazism:
Friedrich Naumann and Theodor Fritsch, 1890-1914

By

Asaf Kedar

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Mark Bevir, Chair

Professor Wendy Brown

Professor Martin Jay

Spring 2010

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Asaf Kedar

Abstract

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Asaf Kedar

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Mark Bevir, Chair

This dissertation is a rethinking and critique of the concept of “national socialism.” I show that this concept not only emerged in Germany years before Nazism, but also arose within the mainstream of German society, alongside and independently of parallel developments in the radical right. Alarmed by the dramatic rise of an internationalist, Marxist socialism in the years following German unification, a succession of prominent public figures gave voice to an alternative, nationalist reading of the social problems accompanying capitalist industrialization. This endeavor involved a wholesale reconceptualization of social life and social reform, and a marginalization of the concern for social justice and emancipation in favor of a preoccupation with national order, homogeneity, and power.

The dissertation focuses on two variants of national socialism developed in Germany prior to the First World War, one by the left-leaning bourgeois reformist Friedrich Naumann and the other by the right-wing *völkisch* antisemite Theodor Fritsch. Their differences notwithstanding, both strands of national socialism shared two major ideational foundations. First, both were underpinned by a national existentialism: the claim that the nation is facing a “struggle for existence” which necessitates aggressive international expansion, colonization, and ethnic purification. The social reforms demanded by national socialism were, accordingly, geared at systematically harnessing all socio-economic forces in the service of these purportedly “existential” struggles. Second, both variants of national socialism adhered to a national productivism that, by stressing the need for cooperation among all the “productive” strata of the nation, elided the class-based exploitation characteristic of industrial capitalism. On the basis of their national productivism, both Naumann and Fritsch were opposed simultaneously to Marxism with its class-conflict view of society on the one hand, and to liberalism with its individualistic worldview on the other hand.

Given that Naumann and Fritsch were pivotal figures in their respective social, cultural, and political milieux—Naumann in the reformist bourgeoisie, Fritsch in the radical right—their articulation of a national-existential claim on the social is indicative of a profound generational shift in the ideational climate of Imperial Germany. This generational shift did not consist in the appearance of national socialism itself, which had already been articulated in the 1870s by

prominent figures such as political economist Gustav Schmoller and Christian socialist Adolf Stoecker. Rather, the shift consisted in the shedding of the ethical-conservative sensibility of the first generation of national socialism in favor of a sense of existential urgency grounded in a biologicistic imagination. The impact of national socialism on the generation of Naumann and Fritsch reached its apex in the First World War, when an existential national socialism constituted the ideological underpinning of Germany's war economy, i.e. the systematic regimentation and mobilization of the national economy in service of the war effort.

Beyond the fresh perspective it offers on the historical dynamics of Imperial Germany, the dissertation also sheds new light on the intellectual-historical context in which national socialism made its way into the name and program of the Nazi movement from 1920 onward. The study suggests that the conceptual field of national socialism into which Nazism entered after the First World War was more variegated, more sophisticated, and had deeper historical and intellectual roots than previously believed.

To Saya

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my teachers at UC Berkeley, above all to Mark Bevir, Wendy Brown, and Martin Jay. I thank Professor Bevir for inspiring me to try and match his razor-sharp analytical thinking; for leading me through my first and most difficult steps in the bewildering world of academic publication; for helping me to structure my time and my work in more efficient ways that I had thought was possible; and for helping to keep my spirits up during a particularly tough year on the job market. I thank Professor Brown for encouraging me to find my own voice; for offering me her warm and invaluable support at certain critical junctures on my path; and for her presence as a model of rigorous scholarship, devotion to teaching, and commitment to values. And I thank Professor Jay for sharing his encyclopedic knowledge in an unfailingly amicable and supportive way; and for helping me to spot the most vulnerable points in my argumentation, in ways that helped me time and again to refine and deepen my writing. Special mention also goes to Gerald Feldman, who was a member of my dissertation committee until his passing less than a year after my advancement to candidacy. I feel privileged to have benefited from Professor Feldman's enormous experience and erudition, as well as from his kindness and generosity.

I am grateful to the participants in Wendy Brown's monthly dissertation workshop, which has been the single most useful resource I have had as ABD at Berkeley. I thank them not only for their kind, thoughtful, and illuminating comments on the draft chapters I presented, but also for having given me the opportunity to learn from their work-in-progress and from my attempts to articulate useful responses to it.

I am grateful to all those on the administrative end who have made things so much easier: Gwen Fox, Paul Hamburg, Janet Newhall, Andrea Rex, Sandy Sanders, Jim Spohrer, the librarians at Interlibrary Services, and the custodians on the third and seventh floors of Barrows Hall; and in Berlin, the staff at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin and the Bundesarchiv in Berlin-Lichterfelde. No less important is the financial support without which this project would have been impossible to carry out: a Fulbright Grant; fellowships from the UC Berkeley Graduate Division; pre-dissertation and dissertation fellowships from the UC Berkeley Institute for European Studies; a travel grant from the UC Berkeley Graduate Assembly; and various fellowships, GSIs, and other awards from the UC Berkeley Department of Political Science.

I am grateful to friends and colleagues who, at different times and each in their own unique and irreplaceable way, were there for exchange of ideas, moral and emotional support, and just plain good company: Maya Barzilai, Amos Bitzan and Marina Zilbergerts, Ali Bond and Greg Barker, Leila Brannstrom, Geo Ciccariello-Maher, Naomi Choi, Yasmeen Daifallah and Mohamed Talaat, Annie Hill, Simon Levis Sullam, Michael Nelson, Avital Oren, Toby Reiner, Avital Shein, Zhivka Valiavicharska and Susanne Wengle.

I am grateful to a number of very special people who have not only given me deep and inspiring support on my path, but have also helped me to redefine the path itself: (in the order of their appearance) Armand Volkas, Joan Facher, Karin Pfluger, Jennifer Ward, Jill Eickmann (with Jeff, Kobie, and Megan), Jennifer Burke, Katherine Sherwood, Brianna Rogers, Karen Roeper, Cybèle Tomlinson, Chandra Easton, and the Saturday night Sangha led by Alexa Ouellett and Anthony Rodgers.

This dissertation is dedicated to Saya, my wife and greatest teacher. I bow down to you.

Chapter 1 | Wilhelmine National Socialism: Introduction & Origins

I. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a rethinking and critique of the concept of “national socialism.” My central thesis is that national socialism not only emerged in Germany years before Nazism, but also arose within the mainstream of German society independently of parallel developments in the radical right. Alarmed by the dramatic rise of an internationalist, Marxist socialism in the years following German unification, a succession of prominent public figures—including not only antisemites, but also bourgeois reformists and conservative economists—gave voice to an alternative, nationalist reading of the social problems attending on capitalist industrialization. What I seek to show in this inquiry is that this endeavor involved a wholesale reconceptualization of social life and social reform, and a marginalization of the concern for social justice and emancipation in favor of a preoccupation with national order, homogeneity, and power. In other words, national socialism was far more than a superficial phenomenon that can be explained away in terms of short-term political tactics and rhetorical maneuvers. Rather, it was a full-fledged ideological formation with identifiable historical-intellectual origins and a distinctive way of approaching the “social question.” Such an interpretation fundamentally alters our understanding of the intellectual-historical context in which national socialism made its way into the name and program of Hitler’s movement. It suggests that the conceptual field of national socialism into which Nazism entered after the First World War was more variegated, more sophisticated, more complex, and had deeper historical and intellectual roots than previously believed.

My investigation focuses on two variants of Wilhelmine national socialism, one by the left-leaning bourgeois reformist Friedrich Naumann and the other by the radical right-wing antisemite Theodor Fritsch. Naumann (1860-1919) was founder of the short-lived but historically significant National-Social Association (1896-1903). He was also founding editor of the periodical Die Hilfe (“Assistance”), which the historian Wolfgang Mommsen has dubbed “the social conscience of the German Protestant educated stratum.”¹ Naumann was highly influential in bourgeois-reformist circles and drew into his orbit many of the stellar figures of the time, such as Max Weber, Werner Sombart, and Friedrich Meinecke.² Theodor Fritsch (1852-1933) was one of the most prominent antisemites in Wilhelmine Germany and an important predecessor of Nazism.³ He was founding editor of the periodical Antisemitische Correspondenz (“Antisemitic Correspondence”) in the late 1880s and, shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, of the antisemitic periodical Hammer. He was also a leading figure in various antisemitic organizations such as the German Social Party and the Mittelstand Association in the Kingdom of Saxony.

¹ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, “Wandlungen der liberalen Idee im Zeitalter des Imperialismus,” Liberalismus und imperialistischer Staat: Der Imperialismus als Problem liberaler Parteien in Deutschland 1890-1914, eds. Karl Holl and Günther List (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 117.

² For Naumann’s intellectual-historical significance, see e.g. H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930 (New York: Knopf, 1958), 48.

³ Uwe Puschner, Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich: Sprache, Rasse, Religion (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001), 57.

Both Naumann and Fritsch were highly prolific writers, energetic publicists, gifted popularizers of ideas, deeply engaged in political activity, pivotal nodes in various social and discursive networks, and highly representative of their respective social, cultural, intellectual and political milieux.

In the process of designing this project, it was clear from the very beginning that Friedrich Naumann would be a case study. For no other public figure in Wilhelmine Germany espoused, theorized, and translated into political praxis the idea of a “national socialism” to the extent that Naumann did from 1895 (when he converted from Christian to national socialism) to 1903 (when his National-Social Association ceased to exist). Naumann’s case also offers itself as clear evidence for the strong presence of national socialism within the Wilhelmine bourgeois left, given his pivotal position in bourgeois-reformist social, political, and discursive networks.⁴ The case of Theodor Fritsch, in turn, was chosen for a number of reasons. First, the historical significance of Fritsch for the development of nationalist antisemitism in Wilhelmine (and later Weimar) Germany makes him an intrinsically important object of inquiry, especially given the relatively scant scholarly attention he has received so far. Second, the juxtaposition of Naumann and Fritsch gives a sense of the broad political wingspan of national socialism. Finally, this juxtaposition also offers a comparative perspective through which both differences and similarities across these variants of national socialism may be identified.

While right-wing versions of national socialism have received some degree of attention in the existing literature, no scholarly examination of any kind of left-bourgeois national socialism exists to date. The literature on national socialism, therefore, is with a few exceptions limited to the domain of the radical right. The pioneering works of the 1960s and 1970s on national socialism by Eugen Weber, Enzo Santarelli, Zeev Sternhell, Andrew Whiteside, and George Mosse all have right-wing nationalists and antisemites as their exclusive objects of inquiry.⁵

⁴ Kevin Repp, Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890-1914 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). Naumann pervades Repp’s authoritative work on bourgeois reformism from beginning to end: “[i]ndeed, we have encountered Naumann and his colleagues at every turn: in the case studies, at the centers of learning, and in circles of social, cultural, and life reform.” Writing about Naumann’s “short-lived National Social Association,” Repp argues that it was “by far the clearest and most memorable expression of the younger generation’s commitment to the message of social integration proclaimed in the February Decrees [issued by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1890], and it created one of the densest tangles of crisscrossing paths, personal and institutional ties in the entire web of Wilhelmine anti-politics [i.e. non-party-political bourgeois reformism]. . . . The common link between them all was Naumann himself.” (279f).

⁵ Eugen Weber, “Nationalism, Socialism, and National-Socialism in France,” French Historical Studies 2.3 (1962); Andrew G. Whiteside, “Nationaler Sozialismus in Österreich vor 1918,” Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 9.4 (1961); Andrew Whiteside, Austrian National Socialism before 1918 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962); Enzo Santarelli, “Le Socialisme national en Italie: Précédents et Origines,” Mouvement Social 50.1 (1965); Zeev Sternhell, “National Socialism and Antisemitism: The Case of Maurice Barrès,” Journal of Contemporary History 8.4 (1973); Zeev Sternhell, “Fascist Ideology,” Fascism: A Reader’s Guide. Analyses, Interpretations, Bibliography, ed. Walter Z. Laqueur (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Zeev Sternhell, The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); George L. Mosse, “The French Right and the Working Classes: Les Jaunes,” Journal of Contemporary History 7.3 (1972); George L. Mosse, Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism (New York: Harper Colophon, 1980). Sternhell’s work on the Zionist Labor movement in pre-state Palestine does go beyond the radical right, which in and of itself is a valuable contribution, but it obviously does not offer insights into similar tendencies in the European bourgeoisie. See Zeev Sternhell, The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making

Moreover, most if not all of these works share a tacit or explicit distinction between “liberal” or “political” forms of nationalism considered to be acceptable, and “organic” or “cultural” or “integral” nationalisms attributed to the radical right and to national socialism. This normative assumption occludes the possibility of identifying the complicity of bourgeois nationalism in the pernicious historical dynamics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such dynamics (including the carnage of the First World War, the rise of Fascism and Nazism, and the Holocaust) tend to be implicitly or explicitly associated in the abovementioned literature either exclusively with the radical right or with “contaminations” of mainstream culture by ideas originating exogenously in the radical right, or in some interplay between radical left and radical right, rather than within mainstream bourgeois society itself. Similarly and more specifically, this historiographical perspective makes it difficult to identify bourgeois forms of national socialism and to comprehend them as endogenous rather than exogenous to the bourgeoisie.

A more recent work on national socialism by Christoph Werth does venture beyond the confines of the radical right; Werth goes as far as submitting Friedrich Naumann and Walther Rathenau to the same analytical framework as Jünger, Spengler and other radical right-wing figures. Yet Werth’s work suffers from two important shortcomings. First, his account is a rather descriptive exposition of social and political ideas with almost no theoretical depth and only a minimal degree of historical contextualization. Werth presents each thinker or movement in isolation, thereby failing to grasp their interconnectedness as parts of a broad historical phenomenon. Second, Werth’s study does not treat the Great War and the period preceding it (with the exception of a brief and inadequate discussion of Naumann and of Rathenau’s pre-1918 activity). That is of course a legitimate delimitation of the scope of investigation, but it leaves much work to be done in terms of analyzing national socialism as a distinctive Wilhelmine ideational formation.⁶

Just as works on national socialism have thus far failed to recognize bourgeois manifestations thereof, so too works on German bourgeois reformism or left-liberalism have overlooked the presence of national socialism in those circles. Much of this literature focuses mainly on the party-political and social dimensions of German bourgeois reformism, with ideological patterns relegated to the sidelines. Such a perspective, while valuable within its own premises, cannot be hoped to identify national socialism as a distinctive ideational formation.⁷ While the coexistence of social reformism and nationalism in left-of-center bourgeois circles is acknowledged, the link between the two is largely overlooked. The same applies to Gangolf

of the Jewish State, trans. David Maisel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). In addition to the abovementioned texts, another strong statement from the 1960s regarding the importance of national socialism in the interwar radical right is to be found in Martin Broszat, Der Nationalsozialismus: Weltanschauung, Programm und Wirklichkeit (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1961), 47-61.

⁶ Christoph H. Werth, Sozialismus und Nation: Die deutsche Ideologiediskussion zwischen 1918 und 1945 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996).

⁷ James J. Sheehan, German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Dieter Langewiesche, ed., Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert: Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988); Dieter Langewiesche, “Liberalismus und Bürgertum in Europa,” Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert: Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich, ed. Jürgen Kocka (Munich: DTV, 1988); Allan Mitchell, “Bürgerlicher Liberalismus und Volksgesundheit im deutsch-französischen Vergleich 1870-1914,” Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert: Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich, ed. Jürgen Kocka (Munich: DTV, 1988); Alastair P. Thompson, Left Liberals, the State, and Popular Politics in Wilhelmine Germany (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Hübinger's insightful essay which is generally more sensitive to the ideational dimension.⁸ In the authoritative studies of Wilhelmine bourgeois reformism by Rüdiger vom Bruch and Kevin Repp, the national-social nexus does surface occasionally, but no systematic development of the issue ensues.⁹

Karlheinz Weißmann's work on national socialism illustrates the sensitivity of my project's topic. Weißmann, a prominent thinker of the German "new Right" and a "revisionist" historian of Nazism and the Holocaust, offers a book-length examination of national socialism as a distinct ideological formation transcending the boundaries of Germany and described by him as a phenomenon of profound, epochal significance. But Weißmann's account is seriously flawed in a number of ways. First, his conceptualization of national socialism is rather superficial, inaccurate, and at times bizarre (e.g. his association of national socialism with the French Jacobin tradition). Second, Weißmann's analysis of national socialism is restricted largely to the radical right. When he does mention non-right-wing strands of national socialism (such as the Fabians in Britain or Friedrich Naumann), they are only discussed fleetingly, and there is no serious attempt to identify the divergences as well as similarities between those different types of national socialism. Finally, Weißmann's alarming record as a "revisionist" historian casts a dubious light on his work on national socialism. One of his critics has pointed out that, by emphasizing the continuity of the NSDAP with a broad and deep ideological tradition of national socialism, Weißmann seeks to lend Nazism an image of respectability and to downplay and divert attention from the centrality of racism for Nazism.¹⁰ My intention is diametrically opposed to Weißmann's: in showing national socialism to have existed at the heart of German bourgeois society, I do so as a critique of the latter rather than as a legitimation of the former. My study seeks to bring to visibility certain ideational tendencies within the Wilhelmine bourgeoisie that, first, blocked the dissemination of more radical and emancipatory critiques of industrial capitalism such as those originating in the Social Democratic camp; and, second, lent legitimacy to violent nationalist projects of colonization and ethnic purification, seeking systematically to harmonize, organize, and mobilize the social in the service of this nationalist agenda.

⁸ Gangolf Hübinger, "Hochindustrialisierung und die Kulturwerte des deutschen Liberalismus," Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert: Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich, ed. Dieter Langewiesche (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988).

⁹ Rüdiger vom Bruch, "Bürgerliche Sozialreform im deutschen Kaiserreich," Weder Kommunismus noch Kapitalismus: Bürgerliche Sozialreform in Deutschland vom Vormärz bis zur Ära Adenauer, ed. Rüdiger vom Bruch (München: C. H. Beck, 1985); Repp, Reformers.

¹⁰ See Theodor Wieser's review of Weißmann's book for the Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 6/2/1999. On Weißmann's involvement with the *neue Rechte* see Richard Stöss, "Die 'neue Rechte' in der Bundesrepublik," in Die Wiedergeburt nationalistischen Denkens: Gefahr für die Demokratie, ed. Forschungsinstitut der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn 1995. Web. 10 Sept. 2009, <<http://www.extremismus.com/texte/neuerechte.htm>>; and Helmut Kellersohn, "Ein Institut zur ideologischen Aufrüstung der CDU: Die Deutsche Gildenschaft und die Gründung des 'Instituts für Staatspolitik'." DISS-Journal 9, 2001. Web. 10 Sept. 2009, <http://diss-duisburg.de/DJ_01_8/HTML-Format/Raunen_und_Runen/Die_Deutsche_Gildenschaft.htm>. In a book commissioned in the mid-1990s by the German publisher Propylaen, Weißmann had sought to diminish the scope of the Holocaust; his book was consequently withdrawn from publication. A number of Weißmann's other books have been published by Edition Antaios, a radical right-wing German publisher. His most recent book, Das Hakenkreuz: Symbol eines Jahrhunderts, aims to rehabilitate the swastika's respectability by embedding it in a broader history of the symbol. At one point, Weißmann's personal website boasted the logo of Theodor Fritsch's periodical Hammer on its homepage: <<http://baukasten.karlheinzweissmann.de/>>, Sept. 10, 2009.

The statement of intentions just enunciated deliberately avoids placing Wilhelmine national socialism in the interpretive orbit of Nazism and prefers to seek its evaluation in light of its own contemporary constellation.¹¹ While the inquiry as a whole certainly derives much of its overarching significance from the implication of national socialism with one of the most catastrophic regimes in world history, the investigation itself should be prevented from succumbing to the potentially distorting teleological pull exerted by Nazism. Wilhelmine national socialism must be fleshed out within the framework of its own historical context; only then, once its independent conceptual-historical foothold has been secured, can it start to shed new, richer light upon the interwar years. Only then can National Socialism be assessed in terms of the broader context of “national socialism” and not vice versa.

One way, then, in which I try to counter the teleologization of my inquiry is by emphasizing the legitimating and de-legitimizing effects of Wilhelmine national socialism in relation to its own contemporary situation. Another de-teleologizing strategy I employ, and to which I now turn, is tracing the intellectual-historical origins of national socialism—“origins” in the sense of a contingent ensemble of historical continuities and ruptures that together constitute the causes and conditions for the emergence of a given historical phenomenon or, in our case, of a certain ideational formation.¹² The turn to origins will help to demystify the concept of national socialism. It will enable us to comprehend it as the outgrowth of contingent but empirically identifiable historical dynamics rather than as the speculative starting point of a teleologically constructed historical trajectory. The story of how national socialism came to be will also make clear that the latter cannot be dismissed as some haphazard, tactical, or demagogic political maneuver, but rather constituted a genuine ideational phenomenon with deep intellectual-historical roots. The turn to origins will therefore mark the beginning of each part of this dissertation. It will appear in the introductory chapters to the respective sections on Naumann and Fritsch, as well as in the present introductory chapter to the project as a whole.

The turn to origins, of course, has to avoid its own teleological pitfall: namely, constructing Wilhelmine national socialism as the culmination of an inexorable intellectual-historical development. In tracing the origins of national socialism to seventeenth-century

¹¹ A consciously non-teleological approach has in fact become increasingly characteristic of the historiography of the *Kaiserreich* as a whole over the past two or three decades, as part of a broader paradigmatic shift away from the idea of a German *Sonderweg* or “special path” to modernity. As much (though not all) of the recent literature on Imperial Germany testifies, the avoidance of a Nazi teleology need not involve a blunting of the critical edge of historical inquiry into pre-Nazi Germany. Led by scholars such as Geoff Eley and the late Detlev Peukert, historians of modern Germany have since the 1980s been producing an abundance of critical scholarship informed by Marxist, Foucauldian, postcolonial and feminist theory. This body of work includes *inter alia* critical explorations of gender relations, German colonialism and genocide in Africa, and biopolitical discourses of eugenics, population control, and criminology. For the most recent overview of these developments in the historiography of Imperial Germany, see Sven Oliver Müller and Cornelius Torp, “Das Bild des Deutschen Kaiserreichs im Wandel,” *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich in der Kontroverse*, eds. Sven Oliver Müller and Cornelius Torp (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009). See also David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Geoff Eley, ed., *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany 1870-1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), esp. Eley’s introduction; and Detlev Peukert, *Max Webers Diagnose der Moderne* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

¹² My notion of origins thus corresponds to what Foucault, following Nietzsche, associates with the German term *Entstehung*, as opposed to the essentialist *Ursprung*. See Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

cameralism and nineteenth-century conservatism, to economists such as Karl Knies and Gustav Schmoller and to social reformers such as Lorenz von Stein and Karl Rodbertus, it is by no means my intention to claim that these intellectual currents had to give birth eventually to Wilhelmine national socialism, or that the latter was already available in nuce within these earlier instances. Instead, my account seeks to establish how, under certain historical conditions, national socialism emerged as a contingent and “cumulative effect” (to use Foucault’s expression)¹³ of a protracted and convoluted accretion of intellectual, political, and socioeconomic processes and phenomena. Within a historical dynamic of this kind, both breaks and continuities—the two sometimes interlaced with each other—may be identified.¹⁴ For example, I will show below how certain ethical-holistic ideas perdured in German economic thought from their initial formulation by seventeenth-century cameralism through the 1870s; but I will also show how in the mid-nineteenth century, these ideas took a nationalist turn in the writings of German economists such as Roscher and Knies, a historical development that played an important role in preparing the theoretical groundwork for a post-1871 national socialism.¹⁵

In what follows, I will begin my story of origins by adumbrating some of the general characteristics of national socialism in their relation to Germany’s post-unification historical constellation. I will then shift our gaze to the period immediately preceding Naumann and Fritsch. Focusing on political economist Gustav Schmoller and court chaplain Adolf Stoecker, I will lay out the contours of what amounts to an ethical-conservative national socialism¹⁶ that arose in the 1870s and that Naumann and Fritsch would later both build upon and react against. Next I will unearth the medium- and long-term trends, ranging from the seventeenth century up until Germany’s unification, that created the ideational space within which this early form of national socialism was able to emerge. Specifically, I will discuss two major intellectual-historical sedimentations and the nationalist turn they experienced after 1850: (1) an ethical-holistic conception of society and social policy developed and bequeathed to later generations by the cameralists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and (2) the reorientation of social conservatism to the industrial-capitalist “social question” from the 1840s onwards.

¹³ Michel Foucault, Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007), 239: “Intelligibility in history would perhaps lie in something that we could call the constitution or composition of effects. How are overall, cumulative effects composed? ... How is the state effect constituted on the basis of a thousand diverse processes...?”

¹⁴ The interlacing of breaks and continuities is also visible in Foucault’s lecture on governmentality, e.g. when he argues that the *continued survival* of the state from the eighteenth century onwards was made possible by a *break* in the objects and instruments of the state, the transition from “the administrative state that corresponds to a society of regulations and disciplines” to “a state of government that is no longer defined by its territoriality,” but rather “bears on the population and calls upon and employs economic knowledge as an instrument.” Foucault, Security, Territory, Population, 109f (cit. 110).

¹⁵ A similar intertwining of historical continuity and discontinuity in connection with nineteenth-century German bourgeois social thought appears in Pascal Grosse, Kolonialismus, Eugenik und bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland 1850-1918 (Frankfurt: Campus, 2000), where the eugenic racial policy in the German colonies at the turn of the twentieth century is analyzed as arising out of German bourgeois society and as continuous with the pre-1880s “liberal anthropology,” while at the same time taking a biologicistic and social-technological turn (15).

¹⁶ Although an ethical-conservative national socialism can be identified in conceptual form in the writings of Schmoller, Stoecker and others, the terminology is mine, not theirs.

II. ORIGINS

National socialism in its historical context

The years immediately preceding and immediately following the 1871 founding of the German Empire witnessed dramatic developments on three fronts simultaneously: the social, the national, and the economic. On the social front, Germany witnessed the meteoric rise of socialist movements: first Lassalle's General German Association of Workers in 1863, then the Social Democratic Workers' Party in 1869, and finally the unification of the two movements in 1875. What constituted for the members of these movements a struggle for social emancipation was perceived by the German middle classes as presenting a grave threat to social order.¹⁷ This class-based anxiety, moreover, was intensified by the epochal political development of those years: the unification of Germany and the establishment of a nation-state. When the fledgling juridico-political framework was faced from its very inception with challenges to its legitimacy on the part of the workers' movements, the "social question" quickly came to be understood by some of the more perceptive observers of bourgeois society as a national question as well.¹⁸ The ideas on how to address this perceived threat to the social and national order were, in turn, shaped to a great extent by a set of political-economic upheavals during those years: the economic crash of 1873; the subsequent onset of a two-decades long recession; the precipitate decline in the political clout of economic liberalism; and the rapid transformation of Germany into an industrial-capitalist country. This distinctive historical constellation manifested itself *inter alia* in a crisis of social and political thought. It led to an increasingly widespread conviction that neither the traditional model of the *Ständestaat* nor the liberal model of the *Rechtstaat* can serve much longer as an adequate foundation for the nation-building project.¹⁹

These dynamics and anxieties surrounding German unification have long been familiar and are well documented. What has been given insufficient attention, however, is that a number of intellectual responses to this historical constellation shared certain ideational characteristics that added up to a national socialism. The conservative "socialism of the lectern" of political economists Gustav Schmoller and Adolph Wagner; the bourgeois-reformist national socialism of Friedrich Naumann; the nationalist antisemitism of Theodor Fritsch and Friedrich Lange: all of these as well as others gave voice in different ways to a nationalist reading of the "social question" and its possible resolutions. This endeavor did not simply superimpose national boundaries on a conception of social justice that could be articulated in non-national terms. Instead, it involved a wholesale reconceptualization of social life and social reform, and a marginalization of the concern for social justice and emancipation in favor of a preoccupation with national order, homogeneity, and power.

¹⁷ George Steinmetz, Regulating the Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 61.

¹⁸ The national dimension of the perception of the social question after 1870 is completely overlooked by Steinmetz.

¹⁹ Cf. Eckart Pankoke, Soziale Bewegung - Soziale Frage - Soziale Politik: Grundfragen der deutschen 'Socialwissenschaft' im 19. Jahrhundert (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1970), 167f and Section IV more generally; Pankoke, however—like most of the literature on the subject—entirely overlooks the nationalist dimension, which became increasingly visible in discussions of social questions and social policy after 1871.

As this dissertation will show, national socialism both left and right, their differences notwithstanding, rejected the Marxist class-conflict view of society on the one hand and the individualistic worldview of liberalism on the other hand. National society was conceived instead as a single body greater than the sum of its individuals or classes; a collective body dependent for its existence upon the uninterrupted cooperation of all its constituent elements: entrepreneurs and workers, artisans and peasants. The constitutive inequalities and exploitative mechanisms characterizing the capitalist sphere of production were either left unquestioned or at best reduced to the status of a problem for the stability of the national order. The revolutionary stance of Marxist socialism was rejected and the fundamental structure of the capitalist order accepted to the extent that limited social reform can render it conducive to the perpetuation of the national order.

One of the chief intellectual underpinnings of national socialism in its various strands was national productivism. “Productivism” denotes a strand of social and political thought that elevates work and production to the status of a decisive organizing principle for society. It tends to view the distinction between “producers” and “non-producers” as the primary social cleavage, and the “parasitic” existence of the latter as the chief predicament of modern industrial societies, thereby covering over the class-based exploitation characteristic of industrial capitalism. Frustrations arising from the gaping socioeconomic inequalities and dislocations of industrial capitalism are deflected onto social actors presented as “unproductive,” be it stock brokers, Jews, or large landowners. Moreover, productivism tends to favor order and organization over freedom and equality; it seeks to harness all productive exertions in the service of a centrally organized and emphatically inegalitarian socio-political order.

From this productivist standpoint, national socialists perceived the socioeconomic terrain of industrial capitalism as presenting too many opportunities to be seized and too many threats to be thwarted for it to be left outside the purview of systematic state intervention. On the opportunity side, the hitherto unimaginable productive capacity attained by industrial capitalism could be tapped so as to provide the nation-state with the resources needed for the expansion of its power domestically and internationally. On the darker side, free-market capitalism and its increasingly polarized class structure were seen as posing a series of grave dangers to national power and cohesion: the emergence of trans-national sources of identity and solidarity competing with national loyalty; an exacerbated class conflict disrupting the national order of things; the pursuit of “selfish” interests by capitalists and workers alike to the detriment of the nation as a single “whole”; and the prospect of an overthrow of the nation-state in a proletarian revolution.

The programs of social reform advanced by the various strands of national socialism aimed at arresting the dangers and harnessing the potentialities of industrial capitalism from a nationalist standpoint. Limited redistributive policies were advocated in a quest, not to eliminate the exploitation of workers, but to coopt them as “productive” elements of national society and to wean them away from revolutionary ideas without having to address the roots of socioeconomic inequality. These and other reform proposals were often also presented as putting the capitalist pursuit of individual self-interest in check, but were usually directed at landowners and/or financial capital rather than industrial entrepreneurs who, like the workers, were considered “productive” members of the nation. Trade unions or other labor associations were to be allowed but to be constituted as organs of the national body, not as autonomous expressions of class identity. Capital would be allowed to retain its leadership of the productive sphere, albeit subject to limited regulation intended primarily to ensure that the national economy continues to furnish

the nation-state with the material and human resources that it needs for consolidating its domestic authority and extending the reach of its international power.

The 1870s: ethical-conservative national socialism

In order to put the national socialisms of Friedrich Naumann and Theodor Fritsch in the proper historical perspective, we need to recognize that they were not the first to articulate this kind of ideological synthesis in the German *Kaiserreich*. Rather, they both built upon and reacted against a previously existing intellectual and political space that had been carved out by leading conservatives during the 1870s. In 1872, the Association for Social Policy (*Verein für Sozialpolitik*) was founded by leading Protestant-conservative intellectuals, soon to be dubbed *Kathedersozialisten* (“Socialists of the Lectern”). The aim of the Association was to press for state-led social reform as an alternative to both *laissez-faire* liberalism and Marxist socialism. Among the co-founders were Gustav Schmoller and Adolph Wagner, the two most prominent political economists of their generation, whose theoretical justification for social reform amounted to an ethical-conservative national socialism. It was Schmoller in particular who among the *Kathedersozialisten* was the leading figure in the nationalization of the social question.²⁰

Towards the end of the same decade, court chaplain Adolf Stoecker joined forces with Adolph Wagner and others to establish in 1877 the Protestant-conservative Central Association for Social Reform (*Centralverein für Socialreform*) and its publication organ The State Socialist (*Der Staatssozialist*). Shortly thereafter, in the beginning of 1878, Stoecker entered the party-political scene with the founding of his Christian-Social Workers’ Party.²¹ Stoecker’s Christian socialism is well-known for its antisemitism, but it also bore a strong nationalist streak; if Christianity provided the moral and spiritual framework for Stoecker’s social sensibility,²² the German nation was the concrete ethical community towards which he oriented his social agenda.²³ Thus Stoecker’s was a national no less than a Christian socialism, and his party-political activity introduced in effect an ethical-conservative national socialism into mass politics. Stoecker was also the chief inspiration behind the founding in the early 1880s of the *Vereine deutscher Studenten* (Associations of German Students), a nationalist-antisemitic

²⁰ Schmoller never used the term “national socialism,” but neither did he shy away from the word “socialism”; he and other intellectuals sharing his views proudly adopted the epithet “socialists of the lectern” which had originally been coined as a pejorative by their critics. Adolph Wagner was even more outspoken than Schmoller in identifying himself as a socialist.

²¹ W. Reginald Ward, Theology, Sociology and Politics: The German Protestant Social Conscience 1890-1933 (Berne: Peter Lang, 1979), ch. 2, esp. 48-50 for his connection to Adolph Wagner. For Stoecker’s own perspective on these years, including his approval of Adolph Wagner’s conservative reformulation of the concept of socialism, see Adolf Stoecker, Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), IXff., L. Wagner and Stoecker cooperated again in the early 1890s with their co-founding of the *Evangelisch-Soziale Kongress* (Protestant Social Congress), one of the most important bourgeois arenas in Wilhelmine Germany for the discussion of social-policy issues.

²² Ronald L. Massanari, “Christian Socialism: Adolf Stoecker’s Formulation of a Christian Perspective for the Protestant Church in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” Lutheran Quarterly 22.2 (1970): 192f.; Ronald L. Massanari, “True or False Socialism: Adolf Stoecker’s Critique of Marxism from a Christian Socialist Perspective,” Church History 41.4 (1972): 491.

²³ Massanari, “True or False Socialism,” 494.

students' movement of which the young Friedrich Naumann was also a member. Naumann, in fact, was one of Stoecker's closest followers until the rift between the two in the 1890s.

The primary, overarching concern of both Stoecker's Christian socialism and the "socialism of the lectern" was not to promote social emancipation, but to consolidate and preserve an ontologically conceived ethical-holistic social order for the newly unified German nation. I will now illustrate briefly the primacy of national order in the national socialism of the 1870s by reference to the thought of Gustav Schmoller and Adolf Stoecker. This account is by no means exhaustive; its purpose is merely to adumbrate the ethical-conservative cast in which national socialism first emerged into the public life of the German Empire. As we shall see in the next chapters, much of what is new and distinctive about the varieties of national socialism subsequently developed by Naumann and Fritsch has to do with their repudiation of precisely its ethical-conservative dimension.

Gustav Schmoller's preoccupation with national order is underpinned theoretically by a nationalist inflection of the Aristotelian, teleological-ethical approach to political economy as developed by cameralism.²⁴ Schmoller considers all socio-economic categories, such as the concept of need,²⁵ the value of labor,²⁶ and conceptions of justice and injustice,²⁷ as deriving their content from the historically specific "shared purposes" of a given "ethical community." While Schmoller enumerates a great variety of possible forms and scales that "ethical communities" may take—family, tribe, local and regional communities and so on—it is the nation (with the state as its political-institutional embodiment) that reigns supreme. "The state center," Schmoller declares, "is or ought to be the leading intelligence, the responsible focal point of national sentiment [*Volksgefühl*], the apex of all existing ethical and spiritual forces."²⁸

From this perspective, Schmoller acknowledges the "ever harsher antagonism" between the workers and the "propertied and educated classes," but at the same time reframes the problem from one of social exploitation and emancipation to one of national order and disintegration. Rather than an asymmetrical struggle for social justice, the industrial class conflict is cast as "dangerous" to the "organism of society and the state," a disruption of the national order, a threat to the "ethical condition of [the] nation [*Nation*]"²⁹ and to the very existence of its "political institutions."³⁰ Schmoller reminds his audience of the lessons of history: "Romans and other nations [*Völker*]" have "gone under" due to their failure to contain "social class-struggles and revolutions" and achieve a "reconciliation between the upper and the lower classes." A similar

²⁴ For an explicit allusion to Aristotle, see Gustav Schmoller, "Rede zur Eröffnung der Besprechung über die sociale Frage in Eisenach (1872)," Zur Social- und Gewerbepolitik der Gegenwart: Reden und Aufsätze (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1890), 204, 210. I elaborate below on the cameralist provenance of Aristotelianism in modern German economic thought.

²⁵ Schmoller, "Rede zur Eröffnung," 229f.

²⁶ Schmoller, "Rede zur Eröffnung," 224, 228f.

²⁷ Schmoller, "Rede zur Eröffnung," 217f.

²⁸ Gustav Schmoller, "Vorrede," Zur Social- und Gewerbepolitik der Gegenwart: Reden und Aufsätze (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1890), 244.

²⁹ Schmoller, "Rede zur Eröffnung," 10f.; Gustav Schmoller, "Die sociale Frage und der preußische Staat (1874)," Zur Social- und Gewerbepolitik der Gegenwart: Reden und Aufsätze (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1890), 42.

³⁰ Schmoller, "Rede zur Eröffnung," 12. This is of course a classical nineteenth-century conservative trope. On Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, see Pankoke, Soziale Bewegung, 61-4.

fate awaits “our culture,” Schmoller admonishes, if the lower classes are not “integrated” in “harmony and peace” into the national “organism.”³¹

The nation, then, is ontologized here as *the* fundamental social unit, not just in the German case but throughout world history,³² and as the concrete ethical community that provides the yardstick for the evaluation of all social and economic activity. The nation figures as an organic whole of which the several social classes are merely parts, thereby denying the idea that the latter may have a self-determinative *raison d’être* and political subjectivity. The health of the national whole, furthermore, is dependent upon the proper, harmonious “political-economic organization” of the social parts in relation to each other.³³ In this desired arrangement, the “upper classes” remain upper classes and the “lower classes” remain lower classes; what changes in the “relations” between them—what turns these relations into the “right relations”—is neither their material conditions nor their exploitative character, but only their ethical substance: they transmute from antagonistic relations shaped by “egoism” to “conciliatory” ones.³⁴

In Adolf Stoecker’s speeches and writings from the late 1870s and early 1880s we see a similar ontologization of the nation as an ethical-holistic social order.³⁵ The court chaplain, in fact, not only ontologizes but also theologizes the nation, leaving no conceptual space to envision any alternative socio-political order:³⁶ “I believe,” Stoecker intimates, “that every nation [*Volk*] is endowed by God with a singular disposition, with special gifts, and that it must hold on to these peculiarities, for they belong to the essence of its existence.” He therefore repudiates the belief he attributes to Lessing that “cosmopolitanism is the only truth, national sentiment a weakness . . . I hold it to be one of the greatest achievements of our last decade that we have recollected our nationality and its peculiarities, including its Christian ones.”³⁷ The “Christian-

³¹ Schmoller, “Rede zur Eröffnung,” 10f.; cf. Schmoller, “Die sociale Frage,” 54, 62f.

³² Cf. Schmoller, “Rede zur Eröffnung,” 12, where the material and cultural integration of the workers into the nation is seen as “the great purpose [*Ziel*] of world history in general.” In elevating of the national to the status of a world-historical principle, Schmoller and the other figures discussed here were in line with the German historicist tradition as documented by Georg G. Iggers, The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983).

³³ Cf. Schmoller, “Die sociale Frage,” 55f.

³⁴ Schmoller, “Die sociale Frage,” 44.

³⁵ In contrast to Schmoller’s straightforwardly nationalistic social thinking, Stoecker’s worldview seems to be animated primarily by his Christian faith. But in Stoecker’s speeches and articles from the late 1870s and early 1880s, German nationalism figures at least as prominently as Christianity; the two seem to be co-constitutive of his social sensibility. As Jochmann puts it, over the course of history “Christianity and Germanhood have [in Stoecker’s view] fused into an indissoluble unity.” Werner Jochmann, “Stoecker als nationalkonservativer Politiker und antisemitischer Agitator,” Protestantismus und Politik: Werk und Wirkung Adolf Stoeckers, eds. Günter Brakelmann, et al. (Hamburg: Christians, 1982), 168 and more generally 167-73. Jochmann does not, however, discuss the relationship between Stoecker’s nationalism and his social thinking. See also the official program of the Christian-Social Workers’ Party, where Christianity and German nationalism appear jointly in the two opening clauses. “Programm der christlich-sozialen Arbeiterpartei,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 21. Klaus Holz goes even further than Jochmann, arguing that the national is more fundamental to Stoecker’s antisemitism than the religious: see Klaus Holz, Nationaler Antisemitismus (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2001), 248.

³⁶ The nation-state—“the organized nation [*das organisierte Volk*]”—is also theologized by Stoecker as “a divine order.” Adolf Stoecker, “Der Kampf des Lichtes gegen die Finsternis, der Charakter und die Aufgabe der Gegenwart,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 106.

³⁷ Adolf Stoecker, “Das Aufwachen der deutschen Jugend,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 111.

national movement”³⁸ founded by Stoecker to continue the struggle for these “national peculiarities” will cultivate, accordingly, a “healthy national egoism, without which a nation would come to ruin.”³⁹ This project of ego formation would continue, at the level of subjectivity, the formal political unification of Germany, which had “reconnect[ed] all the torn-off limbs of the German Empire with our national body [*Volkskörper*].”⁴⁰ The reference to “national egoism” in this passage underscores the extent to which political subjectivity has come to be identified in Stoecker’s mind with the nation.

This political subjectivity and its hegemony, however, requires constant maintenance: the nation must be kept internally unified, harmonious, and well-ordered; and the spiritual, cultural, and ethical substance animating it must retain its Christian-conservative form. No other autonomous subjectivity, whether individual or class-based, may be tolerated. It is from this standpoint of national-ethical order and cohesion, not of social justice and emancipation, that Stoecker excoriates the unbridled freedom of competition and “crass egoism” promoted by liberalism, the class conflict fomented by Social Democracy, and the materialism of both.⁴¹ Thus with respect to the Social Democrats, he exhorts them to “live again in peace with the other classes.”⁴² In its current political form, the proletariat is “a danger for our national life [*Volksleben*],”⁴³ and the “war” between labor and capital must be ended so that “our nation [*Volk*]” will not “experience severe crises.”⁴⁴ What awakens Stoecker’s consternation according to these passages, and what he encodes as “hate,” is nothing but the Social-Democratic attempt to assert itself as a self-determinative political subject with endogenic ethical principles over against the national-Christian ethical, political, and social order.

The standpoint of national ethical order similarly informs Stoecker’s critique of economic liberalism. The latter, “which has ruled our fatherland for a decade,”⁴⁵ has “atomiz[ed] the nation [*Volk*]”;⁴⁶ it has destroyed the old corporations without installing alternative “labor

³⁸ Adolf Stoecker, “Die Bedeutung der christlichen Weltanschauung für die brennenden Fragen der Gegenwart,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 369, 381.

³⁹ Stoecker, “Die Bedeutung der christlichen Weltanschauung,” 382. Cf. Schmoller’s usage of the term “national egoism” in Gustav Schmoller, “Der Übergang Deutschlands zum Schutzzollsystem: Rede in der Generalversammlung des Vereins für Socialpolitik,” Zur Social- und Gewerbepolitik der Gegenwart: Reden und Aufsätze (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1890[1879]), 168.

⁴⁰ Adolf Stoecker, “Die kaiserliche Botschaft,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 121.

⁴¹ Adolf Stoecker, “Zur Begründung einer christlich-sozialen Arbeiterpartei,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 5; Stoecker, “Der Kampf des Lichtes,” 105; Adolf Stoecker, “Sozialdemokratisch, Sozialistisch und Christlich-Sozial,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 323; Adolf Stoecker, “Christlich-Konservative Ziele für die Gegenwart,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 353.

⁴² Adolf Stoecker, “Der Haß der Sozialdemokratie gegen das Christentum,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 13.

⁴³ Adolf Stoecker, “Zur Handwerkerfrage,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 345.

⁴⁴ Stoecker, “Die Bedeutung der christlichen Weltanschauung,” 379. On the call for cross-class cooperation see also Adolf Stoecker, “Über den Programmentwurf für die christlich-soziale Arbeiterpartei,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 18; Stoecker, “Zur Handwerkerfrage,” 347.

⁴⁵ Stoecker, “Zur Handwerkerfrage,” 340.

⁴⁶ Adolf Stoecker, “Eine ernste Stunde deutscher Geschichte,” Christlich-Sozial: Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1885), 496.

organizations”;⁴⁷ it has unleashed unbridled competition, egoism, and speculation, which in turn “destroy Germany’s well-being”⁴⁸ and cause “the noble ideas and aspirations of a nation [*Volk*] to go under”;⁴⁹ and it has “caused damage to religious-ethical concepts” by initiating a *Kulturkampf* against both Catholicism and Protestantism.⁵⁰ As with his opposition to Social Democracy, much of Stoecker’s objections to liberalism have to do, not with its exploitation of the industrial workers, but rather with its disintegrative effect upon the organizational cohesion, ethical content, and general contentment of *national* society as a whole.

Following the same line of thinking, the problem which for both Schmoller and Stoecker social reform is meant to tackle is not the exploitation and alienation that gave rise to the class conflict, but rather the effects of the latter on the nation’s social and ethical order. Hence in Schmoller’s view, for example, the class conflict is itself part of the problem. The main purpose of social reform, accordingly, is not to bring to fulfillment the emancipatory potential of the class conflict, but (among other things) to do away with that conflict itself.⁵¹ By construing the social antagonism itself as the problem, and by presenting it as merely the play of “egoistic class-interests,”⁵² the class domination characteristic of industrial capitalism is covered over and the legitimacy of the workers’ struggle against this domination denied. The holistic subordination of the social question to the problem of national order is given quintessential expression in Schmoller’s hope that “the centripetal will outweigh the centrifugal forces in the national and state organism ... [that] egoism wins or is restrained by ideal powers ... [that] the residue of ethical force, of willingness to sacrifice, of generosity is still large enough in the German nation [*Volk*].”⁵³ For Stoecker, similarly, the ultimate purpose of “Christian-social reform” is “to rebuild

⁴⁷ Stoecker, “Sozialdemokratisch,” 325.

⁴⁸ Stoecker, “Eine ernste Stunde,” 494. Cf. Stoecker, “Die Bedeutung der christlichen Weltanschauung,” 379: “speculative capital ... ruins the healthy earning relations of our nation [*Volk*].” The term “healthy earning relations [*gesunde Erwerbsverhältnisse*]” presumably refers to earnings derived from “productive” work, in contrast to “speculative” rent and interest. This is just one example among many of Stoecker’s Christian-national productivism.

⁴⁹ Stoecker, “Zur Handwerkerfrage,” 341.

⁵⁰ Stoecker, “Eine ernste Stunde,” 495.

⁵¹ Elsewhere Schmoller acknowledges the ineluctability of conflict in social and political life, including class as well as national conflicts. What he opposes are conflicts that cannot be contained by and rendered useful for the existing political institutions. Gustav Schmoller, *Zur Social- und Gewerbepolitik der Gegenwart: Reden und Aufsätze* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1890), 241f. On the order-preserving purpose of social reform, see also Schmoller, “Die sociale Frage,” 47. where Schmoller takes pride in the Prussian kings of the eighteenth century for preempting through social policy the kind of “social movement” that in France brought about the Revolution of 1789. Schmoller here is trying to connect with a political-economic era that did not yet bear the stamp of the conceptual divorce of the social from the political, a development that set in at the turn of the nineteenth century with the appropriation of Adam Smith. Incidentally, this eighteenth-century social policy was a practical application of Cameralist doctrine, which indicates a clear historical-intellectual link between Schmoller and his ethical-conservative national socialism on the one hand, and Cameralism on the other. The connection to Cameralism will be explored further below.

⁵² Schmoller, “Rede zur Eröffnung,” 9.

⁵³ Schmoller, “Die sociale Frage,” 55. Schmoller’s nationalist stance on the social question was translated at the level of praxis to a legitimation of the statist social-welfare policies implemented by Bismarck in order to stem the rising tide of Marxist socialism and to secure social order for the nation-building project. See Gustav Schmoller, “Vier Briefe über Bismarcks sozialpolitische und volkswirtschaftliche Stellung und Bedeutung,” *Charakterbilder* (München and Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1913), esp. 56-61; Klaus-Peter Tieck, “Gustav Schmollers Neuausrichtung der Nationalökonomie,” *Gustav Schmoller in seiner Zeit: die Entstehung der Sozialwissenschaften*

an era of better inner peace in the outwardly unified Germany.”⁵⁴ Social reform, in a classical trope of national socialism, is logically subordinated here to Germany’s nation-state building project as merely one of its aspects. It is a policing measure designed to establish and maintain domestic social cohesion and political order.

Pre-unification origins

What are the intellectual-historical processes that enabled Schmoller, Stoecker and others in the 1870s to articulate a variant of socialism aimed at harmonizing the social for the sake of national order? Although the rise of Marxism, the unification of Germany, and the crisis of the liberal economy in the 1870s were important triggers for the emergence of an ethical-conservative national socialism, the latter also built upon longer-term ideational sedimentations. These include two major layers of social and political theory that had accumulated in Germany over the course of two centuries: (1) an ethical-holistic conception of collective life and social policy, and its nationalization in the mid-nineteenth century by the German historical school of national economy, especially Wilhelm Roscher and Karl Knies; and (2) the adaptation of social conservatism and its concern with the preservation of social order to the emerging realities of industrial capitalism, and the articulation of a nationalized social conservatism by Karl Rodbertus.⁵⁵ The rest of this section will present these two intellectual-historical developments.

Although both of the above-mentioned intellectual traditions underwent, as just suggested, a nationalization by prominent mid-nineteenth century intellectuals, there was nothing inevitable about this nationalist turn. Both ethical holism and social conservatism could be (and has historically been) taken in non-nationalist directions, in Germany or elsewhere. Moreover, both the German historical school and the writings of Rodbertus present a massive and heterogeneous body of thought which may be (and have historically been) read, appropriated or criticized from a great variety of perspectives. That said, the centrality of nationalism for these thinkers is real, as is its role in the subsequent emergence of an ethical-conservative national socialism. Gustav Schmoller, for example, was strongly influenced by Knies and Roscher in the 1850s and 1860s,⁵⁶ and had a great appreciation for the eighteenth-century social-policy and nation-building legacy of cameralism.⁵⁷ And Adolph Wagner, who worked in close cooperation

in Deutschland und Italien, eds. Pierangelo Schiera and Friedrich Tenbruck (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1989), 413-16.

⁵⁴ Stoecker, “Die Bedeutung der christlichen Weltanschauung,” 369.

⁵⁵ We might also mention the historicist tradition initiated by Ranke, the right-wing Hegelians, and the conservative Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl as additional intellectual-historical factors informing the crystallization of national socialism. In my exposition, however, I will focus only on the intellectual influences that played the most direct role in shaping national socialism, leaving out the more diffuse factors.

⁵⁶ Schmoller was mentored by Roscher from his first publications in the 1860s: David F. Lindenfeld, The Practical Imagination: The German Sciences of State in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 217 n.47. On Knies, Schmoller testifies that “whoever began his studies in the field of national economy in the decade of 1850-60 knows how deeply influential” Knies’ book, Political Economy from a Historical Standpoint, was at the time. (This is the book discussed below.) Gustav Schmoller, “Karl Knies (1883),” Zur Litteraturgeschichte der Staats- und Sozialwissenschaften (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1888), 204.

⁵⁷ Tieck, “Gustav Schmollers Neuausrichtung”; Gustav Schmoller, “Friedrich List (1884),” Zur Litteraturgeschichte der Staats- und Sozialwissenschaften (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1888).

with Stoecker in founding the Christian-socialist movement, was personally acquainted with and strongly influenced by Rodbertus.⁵⁸

(1) Ethical social holism and its nationalization

Seventeenth- and eighteenth century cameralism⁵⁹ introduced into German thought an ethical-holistic conception of the social as a distinctive ontological domain and as a central arena for state administration. Cameralism, building on Pufendorf's concept of sociality and his identification of the social as a distinctive ontological domain,⁶⁰ advanced a new understanding of what governing was about, in which the social figured as a major arena of government. The social was considered to be the very body of the state, not an external object on which the latter acts.⁶¹ Accordingly, cameralism made the case that paternalistic care for this social body—specifically, the fostering of social “happiness” by way of a proper top-down ordering of society—was an indispensable aspect of maintaining the state, of the art of politics.⁶²

The crucial connection made by cameralism between happiness and (estate-based) social order⁶³—positing the latter as a condition for the possibility of the former—was articulated on

⁵⁸ Wagner, who edited many of Rodbertus' writings after the latter's death in 1875, called Rodbertus the “Ricardo of economic socialism” and “the first, most original, and most courageous representative of scientific socialism in Germany.” Adolph Wagner, “Einleitung und Berichterstattung (1885),” Zur Beleuchtung der sozialen Frage, ed. Adolph Wagner, vol. II (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1899), xxv; and Adolph Wagner, “Einleitung,” Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Carl Rodbertus-Jaetzow. I. Briefe von Ferdinand Lassalle an Rodbertus, eds. H. Schumacher-Zarchlin and Adolph Wagner (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1878), 6 (respectively).

⁵⁹ I use this term here in the broad sense that encompasses *Polizeiwissenschaft* or “police science,” the body of knowledge concerned with the actual practice of public administration; cf. Lindenfeld, Practical Imagination, 15-20.

⁶⁰ The place of Pufendorf's natural law as one of the theoretical underpinnings of cameralism is discussed by Keith Tribe, Governing Economy: The Reformation of German Economic Discourse 1750-1840 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 28-30.

⁶¹ Hence from the cameralists' perspective it would be erroneous to speak here about the social as an “object” of government because the very distinction between state and society had not yet developed to any significant extent. In fact, even the prince was not clearly distinguishable as a political category from state and society. Tribe, Governing Economy, 21; Albion W. Small, The Cameralists: The Pioneers of German Social Polity (Kitchener, Ont.: Batoche, 2001[1909]), 21.

⁶² Tribe, Governing Economy, ch. 2; Keith Tribe, Strategies of Economic Order: German Economic Discourse, 1750-1950 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), ch. 2.

⁶³ Cf. Tribe, Governing Economy, 32. The intimate link between social order and the new conception of government also reveals itself in Foucault's insight that governing was understood to consist “in th[e] activity of establishing a relation” between the components of society (or of a ship, which is the metaphor used by Foucault to illustrate the point); or, in the words of La Perrière, “government is the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead to a convenient end.” Michel Foucault, “Governmentality,” Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, ed. J. D. Faubion, vol. 3 (New York: New Press, 2000), 209; Perrière cited on p. 210. For a similar reading of German cameralism and its linkage of happiness and social order, see Pasquale Pasquino, “Theatrum Politicum: The Genealogy of Capital -- Police and the State of Prosperity,” The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality, eds. Graham Burchell, et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). On the Aristotelian-ethical character of the cameralists' concept of “happiness” (*Glückseligkeit*), as well as the centrality of this concept for their thought, see Ulrich Engelhardt, “Zum Begriff der Glückseligkeit in der kameralistischen Staatslehre des 18. Jahrhunderts (J. H. G. v. Justi),” Zeitschrift für historische Forschung 8.1 (1981): 48-50. The cameralists' view of functionally defined *groups* as the fundamental components of society sets the cameralist conception of social order apart from its individualistic social-contract and utilitarian counterparts. On the cameralists' conception of society, see Mack

the basis of a holistic social ontology, on the basis of which social order also became integral to the operative goal of the cameralists' eudaemonistic social policy. Johann Becher, for example, one of the intellectual founding fathers of cameralism, had as early as the mid-seventeenth century offered a systematic analysis of society as a whole composed of three main interconnected parts defined by the nature of their economic activity: agriculture, manufacture, and commerce. Becher's threefold classification of society then became an important social-theoretic foundation for the formulation of the goals of public policy as aiming at the establishment and maintenance of a proper balance and proportion between these activities.⁶⁴ A century later, Johann Beckmann intensified Becher's social holism by portraying the state as a "machine" of which the various parts of society are "a countless number of large and small wheels." It was the task of *Polizei*, according to Beckmann, to ensure the proper functioning of this machine by directing economic activity "for the best of the whole state" and to "the advantage of the whole society."⁶⁵ The concept of work, too, was endowed with social-holistic meaning by Christian Wolff and Johann von Justi, two thinkers whose ideas became linchpins of eighteenth-century cameralism. Wolff and Justi understood the work of society as the sum total of exertions of the various *Stände*—each according to its place in the hierarchical social order—in the service of the social whole.⁶⁶

Despite the dramatic impact of Adam Smith on German economic thought from the turn of the nineteenth century onward, cameralism did not disappear from the scene.⁶⁷ Its ethical holism, in particular, was picked up in the mid-nineteenth century by the first generation of the German historical school of national economy (Wilhelm Roscher, Karl Knies, Bruno Hildebrand) and given a nationalist twist.

Although a nationalist inflection of ethical holism was characteristic of the "older" historical school of national economy as a whole,⁶⁸ nowhere does it receive more rigorous

Walker, "Rights and Functions: The Social Categories of Eighteenth-Century German Jurists and Cameralists," *Journal of Modern History* 50.2 (1978).

⁶⁴ Lindenfeld, *Practical Imagination*, 13. Not only socioeconomic groups, but also individuals came to be considered (for example in the writings of the eighteenth-century Austrian cameralist Joseph von Sonnenfels) solely as "component[s] of a population" and subjected on this basis to state regulation. Tribe, *Strategies of Economic Order*, 23f.

⁶⁵ Quoted by Lindenfeld, *Practical Imagination*, 32f. It is interesting to note how state and society are hardly distinguishable in this passage. As Keith Tribe puts it, the state in this discourse "is *synonymous* with th[e] social body." Tribe, *Strategies of Economic Order*, 20. As in the case of Becher, the principles of state intervention and social holism appear in tandem.

⁶⁶ Werner Conze, "Arbeit," *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, eds. Otto Brunner, et al., vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Klett, 1972), 170, 173. On Wolff's relation to cameralism, see Jürgen G. Backhaus, "From Wolff to Justi," *The Beginnings of Political Economy: Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi*, ed. Jürgen G. Backhaus (New York: Springer, 2009); Alexander Kaufman, *Welfare in the Kantian State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), ch. 2.

⁶⁷ This is one of the central theses of Lindenfeld, *Practical Imagination*.

⁶⁸ Thus Rüdiger vom Bruch locates the distinctiveness of the historical school in its emphasis on "the historical understanding of the peculiarities of individual states in the framework of national-cultural developments," and more specifically the idea of "the historicity of national culture as the condition and meaning-endowing binding force [*sinnstiftende Einbindung*] of economic processes." Rüdiger vom Bruch, "Zur Historisierung der Staatswissenschaften: Von der Kameralistik zur historischen Schule der Nationalökonomie," *Gelehrtenpolitik, Sozialwissenschaften und akademische Diskurse in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 309. On the nationalism of the historical school, see also David F. Lindenfeld, "The Myth of the

theoretical treatment than in the work of Karl Knies—who in the 1850s was a Professor of *Kameralwissenschaften* at Freiburg—and especially his classic *Political Economy from an Historical Standpoint* (1853; 2nd ed. 1883).⁶⁹ It is safe to say that nationalism is one of the main organizing principles of Knies' economic theory. Knies constructs his approach in opposition to, among other things, the “cosmopolitanism” of previous economists: the idea that economic theories may be equally valid for all “nationalities [*Nationalitäten*].”⁷⁰ Against this cosmopolitanism, Knies insists on “the *concrete peculiarity of national man* [*des nationalen Menschen*], which is at play in the national economy.”⁷¹ It is the “national nature of man [*nationalen Natur des Menschen*]” which gives rise to the “concrete configuration of the national economy [*concrete Gestaltung der Volkswirtschaft*].”⁷² The “economic element,” in turn, is merely one aspect of “national life [*Volksleben*]” as a whole and “cannot be torn out of its connection to the overall condition of a nation [*Gesamtzustande eines Volkes*].”⁷³ Nations move through history as a single “living organism” animated by a unified “spirit,” and “the economic conditions and developments of nations [*Völker*]” may “only be regarded as an organ tightly connected” to this organism as a whole.⁷⁴

Just as the various life-spheres of the nation—the economic and the political, the religious and the juridical⁷⁵—make up in their interconnectedness a single, organic whole, so too the economic sphere itself, “with its social structuration [*gesellschaftliche Gliederung*] and the juridical order given to it by the state [*ihre staatliche Rechtsordnung*],” constitutes “an organic formation.”⁷⁶ This organic economic order derives its purpose from its “connection to the whole of national life [*zu dem Ganzen des Volkslebens*].”⁷⁷ Thus the production of goods through (the division of) labor is for Knies a “life-calling and activity for the sake of the [national] whole.”⁷⁸

Older Historical School of Economics,” *Central European History* 26.4 (1993): 415f.; Erik Grimmer-Solem and Roberto Romani, “The Historical School, 1870-1900: A Cross-National Reassessment,” *History of European Ideas* 24.4-5 (1998): 289. On Wilhelm Roscher’s national holism, see Wilhelm Roscher, *Principles of Political Economy*, trans. John J. Lalor, vol. 1 (Chicago: Callaghan, 1882), 81-92; Gottfried Eisermann, “Die Grundlagen von Wilhelm Roschers wissenschaftlichem Werk,” *Wilhelm Roscher und seine ‘Geschichte der National-Oekonomie in Deutschland’*, eds. Jürgen G. Backhaus, et al. (Düsseldorf: Verlag Wirtschaft und Finanzen, 1992), 50-2, 69f.; Francesca Schinzinger, “Roscher und die Entstehungsgeschichte der deutschen Nationalökonomie vom 15. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert,” *Wilhelm Roscher und seine ‘Geschichte der National-Oekonomie in Deutschland’*, eds. Jürgen G. Backhaus, et al. (Düsseldorf: Verlag Wirtschaft und Finanzen, 1992), 82.

⁶⁹ Karl Knies, *Die Politische Oekonomie vom geschichtlichen Standpunkte*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Buske, 1930[1883]). There has been surprisingly little written on Knies; whatever secondary literature does exist focuses mostly on his historical approach, or else he is lumped together with Roscher and Hildebrand in broader discussions of the “older” historical school as a whole. Knies’ nationalism and its role in his economic thought has remained unexplored.

⁷⁰ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 24.

⁷¹ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 68. Original emphasis. See also e.g. 75f., 92, 98. National peculiarities include both physical and inner differences between “men in individual nations [*Menschen in den einzelnen Nationen*].” Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 75.

⁷² Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 71, 78.

⁷³ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 72; cf. e.g. 143, 146f., 152f., 487.

⁷⁴ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 141.

⁷⁵ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 107ff.

⁷⁶ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 164.

⁷⁷ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 161.

⁷⁸ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 161.

Economic life should not only satisfy the nation's material needs,⁷⁹ but should also contribute "to the realization of the highest ethical and political goals" of the nation;⁸⁰ it should be rendered compatible with "the ethical and political demands of national life."⁸¹ The activity of individuals in the economic sphere, furthermore, should be driven, not by the "selfishness that is ruinous to national life [*volkliche Leben*]," but rather by the spirit of "consideration for the well-being of others" and by the same "patriotic instincts [*gemeinsinnigen Triebe*]" that inspire the citizen to die courageously on the battlefield."⁸² In sum, Knies' work shows us how, in the mid-nineteenth century, the German historical school of national economy appropriated the cameralists' ethical social holism and gave it a nationalist inflection.

(2) Social conservatism and its nationalization

The middle decades of the nineteenth century (roughly 1840-70) witnessed a tectonic shift in German social thought as it gradually took upon itself to reckon systematically with the emerging realities of industrial capitalism. Through the writings of thinkers as diverse as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Rodbertus, Robert von Mohl and Lorenz von Stein, the condition of the industrial working class was catapulted in mid-century to the foreground of German intellectual life and public discourse, overshadowing pauperism as the principal "social question" and as the chief object of social policy.⁸³

The "social question" in its new incarnation was from the very beginning perceived by many of its theorists as far more than a purely economic question of income levels or material living standards. The condition of the working class was widely understood as the epicenter of world-historical developments that are bound to send ripples through every aspect of modern collective life.⁸⁴ Beyond this common ground, however, the specific contours given to the social question varied widely. In the context of the present study, most noteworthy is the rise of a distinctly conservative social reformism or conservative state socialism.⁸⁵ In this body of thought—of which Lorenz von Stein and Karl Rodbertus are the most notable mid-century representatives⁸⁶—the social question was lined up, not along the axis of exploitation and emancipation, but along that of order (or harmony) and disintegration (or discord).⁸⁷

⁷⁹ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 164.

⁸⁰ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 484.

⁸¹ Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 485.

⁸² Knies, *Politische Oekonomie*, 487.

⁸³ Pankoke, *Soziale Bewegung*, sec. II.

⁸⁴ Cf. Pankoke, *Soziale Bewegung*, 49.

⁸⁵ The term "state socialism" only emerged and proliferated after 1871: see Erich Thier, *Rodbertus / Lassalle / Adolph Wagner: Ein Beitrag zur Theorie und Geschichte des deutschen Staatssozialismus* (Leipzig: Franckenstein & Wagner, 1930), 1-5. As the title of this work suggests, Thier lumps Lassalle together with Rodbertus and Wagner as a state socialist, and throughout the work the differences between Lassalle and the other two thinkers are downplayed whereas the commonalities are foregrounded. Lassalle was, of course, in many ways a state socialist; but the state was for him subordinated to the struggle of the working class, not vice versa as was the case with Rodbertus and Wagner. It would be erroneous, therefore, to number him among the *conservative* state socialists who are the focus of my discussion here.

⁸⁶ Another name worth mentioning here is the political economist Albert Schäffle, who from the 1860s propounded a "conservative social policy" on the basis of organological social theory, mapping the latter onto the emerging industrial social structure rather than the traditional *Stände* model. See Pankoke, *Soziale Bewegung*, 172-74, who also mentions here Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl as holding a similar position. Hermann Wagener, editor of the

Consider the example of Lorenz von Stein (1815-90), one of the most influential social thinkers in nineteenth-century Germany. In Stein's work, state and society are situated at opposing poles of this axis. The state is the embodiment and guarantor of unity and order, whereas society is inherently a site of the antagonistic pursuit of self-interest on the part of individuals and classes.⁸⁸ Over against these pernicious centrifugal tendencies—and in a theoretical move that “resumed a relation to the old *Polizeiwissenschaft*”⁸⁹—Stein imparts to state administration the task of putting society in order, of “giving it form.”⁹⁰ This process might involve the cooptation of political class organizations by the state and their transformation into building-blocks of a state-organized, state-administered social order. Unless brought in this way into the fold of the state's administrative apparatus, these class organizations are all viewed by Stein as equally pernicious centrifugal manifestations of self-interest and so as a “social danger for the system as a whole.”⁹¹ In short, Stein's vision of social reform is, as Pasquino puts it, that of a “technology of administration. Society was to transform itself from a space of confrontation into a field which was completely ‘administrable’.”⁹²

Roughly a contemporary of Stein, Karl Rodbertus (1805-75) also envisioned a project of social reform led by a monarchical state, but his deep-seated German nationalism makes him a more important figure in the context of our study. In fact, Rodbertus' theorization of the social question already gives us a first glimpse of the conservative national socialism of the 1870s.

conservative organ *Kreuzzeitung* and advisor to Bismarck, was also involved in attempts to advance a social conservatism. On these and other social-conservative thinkers, see Dirk Blasius, “Konservative Sozialpolitik und Sozialreform im 19. Jahrhundert,” *Rekonstruktion des Konservatismus*, ed. Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner (Freiburg: Rombach, 1972). Finally, all these figures were merely prominent nodes in a much broader discursive network. On this broader mid-nineteenth century discourse, see Eckart Reidegeld, *Staatliche Sozialpolitik in Deutschland: Historische Entwicklung und theoretische Analyse von den Ursprüngen bis 1918* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996), 114-49. For an overview of social conservatism from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries, see Johann Baptist Müller, “Der deutsche Sozialkonservatismus,” *Konservatismus*, ed. Hans-Gerd Schumann (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1974).

⁸⁷ Cf. Pankoke, *Sociale Bewegung*, 55.

⁸⁸ “While the state integrates ... individuals into a personal unit, society subordinates individuals to other individuals,” leading to a “perennial struggle for dominance and for liberation.” In modern society, this ontological dynamic manifests itself historically in a “growing antagonism” between capital and labor. If this analysis reminds one of Marx, the deep divergence between the two immediately surfaces. For what perturbs Stein about this situation is not the subjugation and exploitation of the workers, but rather the fact that the class conflict “disturb[s] the peace” and obstructs the integrative thrust of the state. Lorenz von Stein, *The History of the Social Movement in France, 1789-1850*, trans. Kaethe Mengelberg (Totowa, NJ: Bedminster Press, 1964[1850]), 54, 65, 86.

It is important to note that Stein distinguishes between “society” and “economy.” Underneath the restless conflictuality of social life lies the stable, law-governed bedrock of the economy—“this whole area of production and distribution of goods” in which “the various occupations are organic parts of a whole.” Thus not only the state, but also the economy is a realm of order and integration. Stein, *History of the Social Movement in France*, 46f. Society is the ensemble of interpersonal relationships arising out of the collective economic effort to meet human needs through the production and distribution of goods; and social relations are perforce also power relations, shaped by “a general human tendency to attempt to subject others to one's service” by means of property. Stein, *History of the Social Movement in France*, 54.

⁸⁹ Pasquale Pasquino, “Introduction to Lorenz von Stein,” *Economy and Society* 10.1 (1981): 4. As noted earlier, *Polizeiwissenschaft* constituted historically part of cameralism in the broad sense of the term.

⁹⁰ Forsthoff, cited by Pasquino, “Lorenz von Stein,” 5.

⁹¹ Pankoke, *Sociale Bewegung*, 200 (also 73).

⁹² Pasquino, “Lorenz von Stein,” 3.

Rodbertus' formulation of the social question leads the latter away from an emancipatory and towards a national-productive calculus. Its epicenter is the working class, but its substance has to do, not with the conditions of the working class as such, but with "the national-economic relation of the working classes to the entire society."⁹³ Specifically, it is a question of "the workers' share in the national income,"⁹⁴ which income is in turn the end-result of the nation's productive exertions. In practical policy terms, this means that wages must be regulated by the state so as to maintain their proportionality to the level of national productivity.⁹⁵

These propositions exhibit, of course, a Ricardian logic which could in principle possess an emancipatory potential. But this potential is overshadowed by the national dimension in these statements, which is revealed to be crucial when read in the broader context of Rodbertus' nationalism. Rodbertus commits himself to the "dominating point of view of the nation's welfare [*Nationalwohlfahrt*]"⁹⁶—that is, of the nation as a collective whole rather than of its constituent members—and on this basis foresees a state-led "harmonious construction" of society and the attainment of a "social equilibrium" between capital, landownership, and labor.⁹⁷ The inegalitarian character of these goals is underscored by the fact that Rodbertus excludes the elimination of the wage system itself or of the asymmetrical power relations between workers and entrepreneurs from his conception of state-led social reform. Nor will this reform ever involve, in Rodbertus' vision, any greater political participation for workers, or as he puts it, any "political agitation that incites the working classes against the existing state authority."⁹⁸ In other words, Rodbertus calls for a redistribution of material goods, but not of power or of political subjectivity. The workers are condemned to remain encased in the existing, exploitative socio-political order. In diametrical contrast to his legitimation of the subjection of the working class, Rodbertus repeatedly asserts the need for a "healthy national egoism."⁹⁹

Rodbertus' German nationalism is present consistently throughout his entire oeuvre and political praxis. He unabashedly claims Germany's right to subjugate other nations if its interests so require; hence his vehement objection to Giuseppe Mazzini's universalist "nationality principle."¹⁰⁰ And in his political activity he worked relentlessly for the cause of German unity,

⁹³ Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, Schriften von Dr. Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow. Vol. III: Zur Beleuchtung der sozialen Frage. Theil II, ed. Adolph Wagner (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1899), 265.

⁹⁴ Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, Zur Erkenntniss unsrer staatswirthschaftlichen Zustände. Erstes Heft: Fünf Theoreme (Neubrandenburg und Friedland: G. Barnewitz, 1842), 28. Cf. H. Dietzel, Karl Rodbertus: Darstellung seines Lebens (Jena: Fischer, 1886), 11-13, 15, 20, 63.

⁹⁵ Rodbertus-Jagetzow, "Zur Beleuchtung der sozialen Frage, Theil II," 281.

⁹⁶ Cited in Dietzel, Karl Rodbertus, 69.

⁹⁷ Cited in Dietzel, Karl Rodbertus, 69.

⁹⁸ Cited in Wagner, "Einleitung," 5. Rodbertus refused to join forces with Lassalle precisely because he objected to two crucial points in the latter's agenda: the elimination of the wage system and the politicization of the workers' movement with a view to enhancing and institutionalizing mass political participation. Wagner, "Einleitung," 3f.

⁹⁹ Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, "Seid deutsch!" Schriften von Dr. Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, ed. Moritz Wirth, vol. IV: Gesammelte kleine Schriften (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1899[1861]), 283; Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, "Erklärung," Schriften von Dr. Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, ed. Moritz Wirth, vol. IV: Gesammelte kleine Schriften (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1899[1861]), 272.

¹⁰⁰ Rodbertus-Jagetzow, "Seid deutsch!"; Rodbertus-Jagetzow, "Erklärung"; Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, "An Mazzini: Offner Brief," Schriften von Dr. Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, ed. Moritz Wirth, vol. IV: Gesammelte kleine Schriften (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1899[1861]). Rodbertus does differ from Knies, though, in that he limits the national phenomenon to a particular era of world history, to be superseded by a unified organization of

switching political sides from democrats to royalists in accordance with their shifting positions on the national question.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, as we have seen, Rodbertus' nationalism also suffuses his economic theory. But the nationalist streak in Rodbertus' conservative socialism becomes most pronounced after Germany's 1871 unification, shortly before his death in 1875.¹⁰² Working on a draft programme for a Social-Conservative Party in 1872-73, Rodbertus maintains that "the national and the social questions can only be handled as the reverse side of each other" and proposes to frame the new political endeavor as "monarchical, national, social"¹⁰³—antedating Friedrich Naumann's similar call by nearly a quarter-century. In short, the nationalization of Rodbertus' socialism provides a tangible illustration of the ease with which the conservative rendering of the social question in the mid-nineteenth century could serve as part of the theoretical framework for the emergence in the *Kaiserreich* of a national socialism bent on harmonizing the social for the sake of national order.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has discharged a twofold task. First, it has set up the (meta)historiographical problem underlying this dissertation: the way in which the double pull of teleology and repression has occluded the very possibility of taking cognizance of national socialism in its full historical scope and significance. Second, this chapter has turned to the intellectual-historical origins of Wilhelmine national socialism as a way of breaking through this impasse. I have shown that by the founding of the German Empire, all the necessary and sufficient intellectual conditions for the emergence of an ethical-conservative national socialism were in place: a conservative-reformist engagement with the modern, industrial-capitalist "social question" as a problem of (dis)order; a social holism that readily offers itself as an alternative to both the individualist and the class-conflict social imaginaries; and a suffusion of social and economic thought by an overbearing theoretical commitment to nationalism. The turn to origins also revealed that a conservative national socialism did indeed emerge immediately following German unification, on the basis of these same ideational foundations. With Adolf Stoecker, moreover, national socialism was introduced into (antisemitic) party politics.

An important issue that the foregoing historical account points up is that of political subjectivity. It is clear that what social-conservatives, including conservative national socialists, were concerned about was not merely the cohesion of society or the distribution of national income. At stake was also the question of who controls the terrain of political subjectivity and what kinds of subjects will be allowed to take form within this terrain. It is no coincidence that

humanity, an idea apparently borrowed by Rodbertus from Saint-Simon. Rodbertus-Jagetzow, "Zur Beleuchtung der sozialen Frage, Theil II," 7. On the Saint-Simonian connection, see Charles Gide and Charles Rist, A History of Economic Doctrines from the Time of the Physiocrats to the Present Day, 2nd English ed. (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1948), 420. That said, Rodbertus' commitment to nationalism within these world-historical limitations was deep, unwavering, and ruthless.

¹⁰¹ Dietzel, Karl Rodbertus, 31, 68f.

¹⁰² Rodbertus reads in the founding of the German Empire a divine calling upon the new state "to attend to the social question, after it had solved the national one"; for now "our nation [*Volk*] possesses the life-force [*Lebenskraft*] to carry out the transition to the social state." Cited in Dietzel, Karl Rodbertus, 72.

¹⁰³ Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, "Letter to Hermann Wagener, 22 March 1872," Aus Rodbertus' Nachlaß, ed. Hermann Wagener (Minden i. Westf.: Bruns, 1886), 8; Carl Rodbertus-Jagetzow, "Programmentwurf," Aus Rodbertus' Nachlaß, ed. Hermann Wagener (Minden i. Westf.: Bruns, 1886), 12.

we find in conservative national socialism a distinctive mode of deployment of the term “egoism.” Both liberalism and Marxism are relentlessly denounced for their crass, materialist “egoism” or “selfishness”—be it individual- or class-based—while at the same time a “healthy national egoism” is repeatedly commended for the international sphere. These two modes of deployment—the hypostatization of national selfhood and the aggressive delegitimation of non-national sources of selfhood—are merely two sides of the same coin. They both reveal a deep-seated anxiety and insecurity about the ability to sustain a durable nationalist project in the face of challenges emanating from both the international and the domestic spheres. As we shall see, this anxiety and its aggressive manifestations will intensify still further in the Wilhelmine era.

We now move on to examine our case studies, Friedrich Naumann and Theodor Fritsch. By the time these two figures entered public life in the 1880s, national socialism had already secured a foothold in German social and political discourse, from the lecture-halls of academia to the beer-halls of mass politics. Both of our protagonists built upon this earlier national socialism, while discarding its ethical-conservative trappings and imbuing it with a new, chilling sense of existential urgency.

Chapter 2 | Friedrich Naumann's National Socialism: Introduction & Origins

I. INTRODUCTION

In August 1919, when he died prematurely at the age of 59, Friedrich Naumann was at the peak of his political career. Just two months earlier he had been elected Chairman of the German Democratic Party (DDP), the Weimar incarnation of the Wilhelmine *Freisinnige* or left-liberals that Naumann had joined in 1903 after his 7-year-old National Social Association had collapsed. We have no way of knowing what Naumann's stamp on the Weimar era would have been had he lived longer. What is widely acknowledged, on the other hand, is the extraordinary impact that Naumann had exerted on public life and discourse in Wilhelmine Germany. Naumann's ideas resonated widely and deeply throughout the Wilhelmine bourgeoisie, making their way through extensive personal, institutional, and discursive networks. It is also clear that Naumann's influence antedated his party-political engagement with liberalism to encompass his National-Social phase as well.¹

Against this backdrop, the utter elision of Naumann's national socialism in the post-1945 historiography is all the more striking and disturbing. Some of the works on Naumann written between the early 1950s to the mid-1970s pointed up his espousal of nationalist power-politics, social (or liberal) imperialism, and social Darwinism, but did not see fit to take up national socialism as a framework for making sense of his worldview.² Since the early 1980s the historiography has moved even further away from Naumann's national socialism, displaying an increasing tendency to associate Naumann's legacy in largely affirmative tone with (social) liberalism.³ In the most recent comprehensive survey of Naumann's life and work, the contexts

¹ Repp argues that Naumann's National-Social Association was "by far the clearest and most memorable expression of the younger generation's commitment to the message of social integration proclaimed in the February Decrees [issued by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1890], and it created one of the densest tangles of crisscrossing paths, personal and institutional ties in the entire web of Wilhelmine anti-politics [i.e. non-party-political bourgeois reformism]. ... The common link between them all was Naumann himself." Repp, *Reformers*, 279f. See also Hughes, *Consciousness and Society*, 48. Wolfgang Mommsen has dubbed Naumann's periodical *Die Hilfe* "the social conscience of the German Protestant educated stratum." Mommsen, "Wandlungen der liberalen Idee," 117.

² Werner Conze, "Friedrich Naumann: Grundlagen und Ansatz seiner Politik in der nationalsozialen Zeit (1895 bis 1903)," *Schicksalswege deutscher Vergangenheit: Beiträge zur geschichtlichen Deutung der letzten hundertfünfzig Jahre*, ed. Walter Hubatsch (Dusseldorf: Droste-Verlag, 1950); Richard Nürnberger, "Imperialismus, Sozialismus und Christentum bei Friedrich Naumann," *Historische Zeitschrift* 170.3 (1950); William O. Shanahan, "Friedrich Naumann: A Mirror of Wilhelminian Germany," *Review of Politics* 13 (1951); John E. Groh, "Friedrich Naumann: From Christian Socialist to Social Darwinist," *Journal of Church and State* 17.1 (1975); Mommsen, "Wandlungen der liberalen Idee."

³ Moshe Zimmermann, "A Road Not Taken: Friedrich Naumann's Attempt at a Modern German Nationalism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 17.4 (1982); Peter Theiner, *Sozialer Liberalismus und deutsche Weltpolitik: Friederich Naumann im Wilhelminischen Deutschland (1860-1919)* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1983); Peter Theiner, "Friedrich Naumann und der soziale Liberalismus im Kaiserreich," *Sozialer Liberalismus*, eds. Karl Holl, et al. (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); Rüdiger vom Bruch, ed., *Friedrich Naumann in seiner Zeit* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000); and, most recently, Jörn Leonhard, "Progressive Politics and the Dilemma of Reform: German and American Liberalism in Comparison, 1880-1920," *The Place of Europe in American History: Twentieth-Century Perspectives*, ed. Maurizio Vaudagna (Torino: Otto, 2007). It is also worth mentioning in this context that already in 1958, German liberals led by Theodor Heuss established the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, a

chosen to frame the analysis are German liberalism and social Protestantism; national socialism slips out of view.⁴

The persistent elision of Naumann's national socialism is, by all indications, to be explained by the linguistic link between Naumann and Hitler and the desire to block the slippery slope that could lead from this linguistic alignment to a conceptual and historiographical teleology. Thus Theodor Heuss—first President of the Federal Republic of Germany and one of Friedrich Naumann's closest followers at the beginning of the century—feels it necessary in his monumental biography of Naumann to grapple with and denounce the fact that

not in Germany, but in America and perhaps elsewhere, ... [Naumann] has been lined amongst the 'forerunners' of Adolf Hitler. Should one, is one allowed to engage at all with such a thesis? Its visual cause, so to speak, is easily visible: Naumann had named the group of his political breaking free [*Verselbständigung*] 'national-social' and Hitler traded under the name 'national-socialist.' There must after all be a connection...⁵

While the attempt to avoid a hasty, distorting teleologization of Naumann's legacy is certainly legitimate, it has paradoxically contributed a historiographical distortion of its own by stifling any serious discussion at all of Naumann's national socialism. Naumann's contemporaries, by contrast, exhibit a much greater awareness of the historical import of Naumann's national socialism. Thus Gustav Stresemann—a leader of the Wilhelmine National-Liberals and subsequently a Weimar-era statesman who at the turn of the century was a young member of Naumann's National-Social Association—chooses in his obituary to Naumann to highlight not the latter's long career as a liberal parliamentarian, but rather his period as a national socialist, claiming that "had Friedrich Naumann remained chairman of the National-Social Association ... perhaps his position in Germany would have become much stronger than now [in the DDP]."⁶ And Friedrich Meinecke, in his famous treatise The German Catastrophe written in the wake of the collapse of the Third Reich, goes so far as to proclaim that "had Naumann been successful, there probably would never have been a Hitler movement. ... Naumann's national socialism ... was a wonderful attempt to bring together in an exceedingly

foundation related with the FDP. To grasp the significance of appending Naumann's name to this foundation, consider the fact that the foundation related to the SPD is named after Friedrich Ebert (first President of the Weimar Republic) and the one related to the CDU is named after Konrad Adenauer (first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany).

⁴ Bruch, ed., Friedrich Naumann, 4.

⁵ Theodor Heuss, Friedrich Naumann: Der Mann, Das Werk, Die Zeit, 2nd revised ed. (Stuttgart and Tübingen: Rainer Wunderlich Verlag Hermann Leins, 1949), 512. Three decades after Heuss, in an article that sets out to rehabilitate Naumann's nationalism, Moshe Zimmerman dubs Naumann's world-view as "'national-social'ism," cautioning in a footnote that "Naumann's 'national social'ism should not be confused with Hitler's 'National-Socialism'." Zimmermann, "Road Not Taken," 691. The title of Zimmermann's article—"a road not taken" (referring to Naumann's nationalism)—also seems to be part of the author's attempt to ensure that Naumann's legacy is severed from the Nazi phenomenon. Similarly, Peter Theiner evinced almost concurrently with Zimmermann his concern about the possibility that an "affinity in content" or even a more modest "elective affinity" would be read into the "linguistic signal." Theiner, Sozialer Liberalismus und deutsche Weltpolitik, 9.

⁶ Gustav Stresemann, "Zum Tode Friedrich Naumanns," Schleswiger Nachrichten, 2 September 1919, Nachlass Friedrich Naumann (N 3001), Berlin-Lichterfelde, file 62, pp. 19-20. A large collection of obituaries to Naumann is found at the Nachlass Friedrich Naumann (N 3001), Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, files 1, 2, 62.

rich synthesis both the most spiritual and the most practical and realistic elements in the German people.”⁷

Meinecke does to Naumann precisely what Heuss and others have been so fearful of: he link him up with Hitler, albeit negatively. This open wound in the Naumann legacy must be treated with care, but it cannot be simply wished away. Instead, what is needed is a delicate surgical procedure that would submit Naumann’s national socialism to systematic examination but would do so in a de-teleologized setting, temporarily bracketing out the post-Wilhelmine era. But the next, unavoidable step (*pace* Heuss) would then be to consider the complex relationship between Naumann’s and other forms of national socialism.

This chapter and the next two undertake the first phase of this historiographical surgery, namely a comprehensive analysis of Naumann’s national socialism. In the present chapter I trace Naumann’s conversion from Christian to national socialism. I show how in the course of 1895 he abandoned his ethical conception of social reform in favor of a national existentialism that overrides any ethical imperative; and how his Christian productivism mutated into a national productivism. By the beginning of 1896, national existentialism and national productivism were firmly in place as the ideational foundations of Naumann’s newly formulated national socialism. These foundations are, in turn, the focus of the next chapter, where I show how national existentialism and productivism continued to form the core of Naumann’s national socialism throughout the period under discussion (1896-1903). In the third and final chapter on Naumann, I will examine his position as a national socialist with regard to questions of political praxis, focusing on his attitude towards the imperial constitution and party politics as well as his nationalist reframing of various social-policy issues.

My discussion of Naumann’s national socialism will be limited to the years 1895-1903, based on two considerations. First, from the ideational-morphological perspective, this is the only period of time in which Naumann explicitly used and systematically elaborated the term “national socialism.” My ideational analysis would therefore be much more cohesive and firmly anchored in apodictic foundations if it refrained from wandering into the more ambivalent territory of Naumann’s post-1903 liberal phase. The question of the extent to which Naumann remained a national socialist, at heart if not in so many words, in his liberal period is an important one, but engaging this problem in the current project would do more to obfuscate the central issues at stake than to contribute to their clarification.

Secondly, from a historiographical standpoint, it should be noted that Naumann’s attempt from 1895 to 1903 to roll out a national socialist agenda for German collective life was his single most original political and intellectual project, the one he could most properly and genuinely call his own. Both before and after the national socialist period, Naumann was always embedded in a broader framework that was independent of his own involvement in it, however important his distinctive input might have been. Within both Christian socialism and left-liberalism, Naumann had to adapt his political activity and language to the constraints posed by the larger movement of which he was a part. In the National-Social Association, by diametrical contrast, Naumann was the undisputed founder and leader, the foremost theorizer and propagator. It was a Naumannite endeavor *par excellence*. And at the same time, it is a severely underexplored phase

⁷ Friedrich Meinecke, The German Catastrophe: Reflections and Recollections, trans. Sydney B. Fay (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 18f.

of Naumann's life. The upshot is that the national socialist period is an extremely significant object of study in its own right, and its exploration has the potential of sending out ripples through our understanding, not only of Naumann himself, but also of Wilhelmine bourgeois reformism and the *Kaiserreich* in general.

II. ORIGINS

Naumann's Christian Socialism

1. Ethical State Socialism

Friedrich Naumann, born in 1860, began his public life as a Protestant pastor. His clerical career was bound up from its very beginning with the social question. In the early 1880s Naumann came under the influence of Adolf Stoecker, founder of the antisemitic Christian-Social Workers' Party.⁸ And in 1883 Naumann took up a position with Johann Wichern's Inner Mission, a politically non-affiliated Protestant organization providing social relief with which Naumann was to be associated well into the 1890s.⁹

From the late 1880s, however, Naumann went beyond the narrow, apolitical confines of the Inner Mission to develop a much bolder Christian-socialist vision. Under the influence of socialist thought,¹⁰ the young clergyman saw a new "world-historical age [*Weltalter*]" dawning in Germany: the age of large-scale industry and mass labor;¹¹ an age when economic and social questions have become "vital matters to the nation" to a historically unprecedented extent.¹² In view of this dramatic historical transformation, Naumann called for a full-fledged, Christian "socialist state." This "administrative state in the highest power," by contrast to the thin *Rechtsstaat*, would "take everything possible into its hands: employment positions, hospices, sick-nursing, the training of caregivers. This future state must be an employer, a paterfamilias, an educator on the largest scale."¹³

⁸ Heuss, *Friedrich Naumann*, 28. Naumann, though, never joined Stoecker's party; Cf. Heuss, *Friedrich Naumann*, 42.

⁹ Jochen-Christoph Kaiser, "Naumann und die Innere Mission," *Friedrich Naumann in seiner Zeit*, ed. Rüdiger vom Bruch (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000).

¹⁰ In the second half of the 1880s, while serving as a village pastor, Naumann immersed himself in socialist literature: Bebel and Liebknecht, Lassalle, Marx and Engels. Heuss, *Friedrich Naumann*, 49.

¹¹ Friedrich Naumann, "Arbeiter-Predigt (1888)," *Werke*, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 58f.; Friedrich Naumann, "Was ist innere Mission? (1888)," *Werke*, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 78.

¹² Friedrich Naumann, "Die Zukunft der innere Mission (1888)," *Werke*, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 96f.

¹³ Naumann, "Die Zukunft der innere Mission," 90f., 96. See also Friedrich Naumann, "Das soziale Programm der evangelischen Kirche (1891)," *Werke*, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 254f.; Friedrich Naumann, "Das Recht eines christlichen Sozialismus (1894)," *Werke*, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 409.

Although Naumann, like Stoecker, conceived of this state (and of society as a whole) explicitly and consistently in national terms,¹⁴ his overarching agenda remained a Christian not national one—even more so than Stoecker in whose thought, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the nation played a significant theoretical role. Naumann advocated “socio-political activity on a Christian basis” so as to synchronize church and modernity and ensure the former’s survival. The church, Naumann was convinced, must address the social afflictions of the modern age if it wishes to remain true to its principles. This adaptation to modernity, furthermore, is indispensable not just for the sake of principled integrity but also for sheer survival, for avoiding a fatal loss of believers.¹⁵

Like Stoecker, Naumann’s Christian standpoint lent his social sensibility an ethical, anti-materialist tone. He rose passionately against the deep, all-encompassing this-worldliness of the materialist spirit shared “both by economic liberalism and by materialist [i.e. Marxist] socialism.”¹⁶ He castigated materialism for its denial of the existence of God and its pretension to guarantee an ideal future of peace and happiness on earth. For “only in God is there happiness, peace, calm ... all happiness that does not come from God is for us an illusion and a dream. ... In short, Social Democracy has no idea about real happiness.”¹⁷

Naumann’s alternative to Social Democracy was to address the social and economic problems distinctive to modernity from an ethical, anti-materialist, Christian perspective. Consider Naumann’s position on wealth. “Jesus,” he declares, “is on ethical grounds a radical adversary of capital accumulation ... The antimammonistic thrust is characteristic of the entire thought of Jesus.”¹⁸ Economic life must never be an end in itself, but only a means in service of the “higher destination” of humanity.¹⁹ In the past, Naumann intimates, wealth was beneficent insofar as it fulfilled the “historical task” of “organizing labor.” But “as soon as the spirit of

¹⁴ For nationalist utterances by Naumann, see Friedrich Naumann, “Arbeiter-Katechismus oder der wahre Sozialismus seinen arbeitenden Brüdern dargebracht (1889),” Werke, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 48, 51-3; Friedrich Naumann, “Christlich-Sozial (1894),” Werke, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 360, 370; Friedrich Naumann, “Soziale Briefe an reiche Leute (1894),” Werke, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 167-71; Friedrich Naumann, “Gedanken zum christlich-sozialen Programm (1895),” Werke, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 67, 69; Friedrich Naumann, “Unsere Stellung zur Sozialdemokratie (1893/4),” Werke, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 89; Friedrich Naumann, “Zum sozialdemokratischen Landprogramm (1895),” Werke, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 107-9; Friedrich Naumann, “Jesus als Volksmann,” Göttinger Arbeiterbibliothek, ed. Friedrich Naumann, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1896), 2.

¹⁵ Friedrich Naumann, “Was tun wir gegen die glaubenlose Sozialdemokratie? (1889),” Werke, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 139f.

¹⁶ Naumann, “Das soziale Programm,” 190.

¹⁷ Naumann, “Was tun wir,” 129. As we shall see, Social Democracy is to remain a chief object of Naumann’s critique in his national socialist phase as well. At that later stage, however, Naumann will direct his critique primarily against the *internationalism* of Social Democracy. In Naumann’s Christian socialism, by contrast, it is the *materialism* of the Social Democrats that draws most of his fire. Cf. Naumann, “Das Recht eines christlichen Sozialismus,” 418f.: “The word ‘Christian’ in front of our name [i.e. the ‘Christian-socials’] is ... a differentiation from that socialism which is materialistic, just as the German-Conservatives want to distinguish themselves from the Particularistic-Conservatives and the National-Liberals from the Cosmopolitan-Liberals.”

¹⁸ Naumann, “Christlich-Sozial,” 349.

¹⁹ Naumann, “Das soziale Programm,” 192f.

Mammon came to dominate the rich, the blessing became a curse.” Wealth therefore must be restored to its original, instrumentally circumscribed role in society.²⁰

With respect to the workers, Christian socialism bears the task of purveying faith as well as material needs. For “the multitude that has been fed with bare political economy for a generation or more . . . will reach out with elementary longing for a faith that offers it more than food, drink, and shelter.” At some point, a desire will arise within Social Democracy to devote oneself to “something higher than transient class-interests,”²¹ and it is Jesus that “our people [*Volk*] will find when it wakes up from its materialism. [It is this Jesus that] we must disclose and render clear [to the people] until the day of awakening. This is the foremost Christian-social task.”²²

Whereas Naumann concurred with Stoecker on the Christian-ethical and anti-materialist framing of social reform, he distanced himself from the court chaplain’s conservatism. In 1881 Stoecker had thrown in his lot with the Conservative Party in a political alliance that ended miserably from Stoecker’s standpoint when, in 1896, the Conservatives decided to oust him from their party, signalling their clear break with any form of social reformism. In the late 1880s, however, Naumann along with a group of young Christian-socials positioned himself in open opposition to the political affiliation with the Conservatives.

Naumann’s conflict with Stoecker, to be sure, never involved the deepest foundations of their Christian socialism, namely their Christian ethics, their anti-materialism, their state socialism and their nationalism. The main bones of contention between the two were closer to the practical than to the theoretical end of the ideological spectrum: Naumann defined himself as less hostile than Stoecker to the Social Democrats, more hostile to the large landowners, and more skeptical than Stoecker of the possibility that social reformism would gain ground in the existing bourgeois political parties, especially the Conservative Party.²³ And yet these differences were sufficient to effect a deep and increasing formalized rift between Stoecker and the young non-conservatives. The latter established themselves gradually over the course of 1895-96 as a formally organized independent faction with its own publication organs, primarily *Die Hilfe* (“Assistance”) edited by Naumann. It is this same group which eventually founded the National-Social Association in November 1896 under Naumann’s leadership.²⁴ Thus Naumann’s repudiation of Stoecker’s conservatism is an important factor in explaining the *organizational* form that Naumann’s national socialism was to take. But it does not account for the deep *ideological* transition in Naumann’s worldview. As we shall see below, at the ideological level it

²⁰ Naumann, “Soziale Briefe an reiche Leute,” 167.

²¹ Friedrich Naumann, “Christlich-sozialer Geist (1893),” *Werke*, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 324. See also Naumann, “Christlich-Sozial,” 345.

²² Naumann, “Christlich-Sozial,” 348.

²³ Friedrich Naumann, “Briefkasten,” *Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe* 27 October 1895: 7. For Naumann’s deep appreciation for Stoecker’s fundamental ideas, see also Friedrich Naumann, “Was wir Stöcker verdanken (1895),” *Werke*, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964). Both of these pieces, we might note, were written by Naumann in the summer of 1895, that is to say, at the height of his break with Stoecker.

²⁴ On the process leading from the conflict with Stoecker to the founding of the National-Social Association, see Dieter Düding, *Der Nationalsoziale Verein 1896-1903: Der gescheiterte Versuch einer parteipolitischen Synthese von Nationalismus, Sozialismus und Liberalismus* (Munich & Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1972), 22-46.

was the rejection of the *ethical* dimension which marked Naumann's definitive break with Christian socialism.

2. Christian Productivism

Naumann's Christian-socialist analysis of modern society was strongly informed by a Christian productivism. "Productivism" denotes the elevation of work and production to the status of a decisive, morally sanctioned organizing principle for society, a key optic through which to make sense of society, order it, and imagine possible avenues for its reconfiguration.²⁵ Productivism tends to bifurcate society into producers and non-producers (or, in a sharper key, "parasites") living at the expense of the producers without any contribution of their own. This distinction is usually construed as cutting across classes; for example, productivism might involve a differentiation between productive (hence desirable) and unproductive (hence undesirable) forms of capital or wealth.²⁶ As we shall see, productivism also figured as a central pillar of Theodor Fritsch's worldview, as it was of modern antisemitism as a whole.

With respect to the Christian-social Naumann, we might say that he adhered to a Christian brand of productivism. As early as 1889, Naumann in his Workers' Catechism explains to his readers the difference between good and bad or "abus[ive]" forms of private property, as determined according to their relation to "useful" work and productivity:

Property must exist! ... But abuse with the help of property must stop! ... Capital should not kill labor, it may not grow immeasurably. ... Capital carries interest and, as we all know, not merely the modest interest of our savings banks and credit associations, but interest reaching heights that the simple man does not even suspect. Lords of big money [*Großgeldherren*] have emerged who hold legendary sway. ... Their business is not the production of useful goods. They trade only in pure gold, which they throw at the same time into all kinds of enterprises and pull it out again when they feel like it.²⁷

Five years later we find the pastor offering a conceptually more sophisticated iteration of this productivist distinction between good and bad capital in the following "anti-mammonistic" formula: "we acknowledge the concentration of enterprises as necessary, but condemn the concentration of capital."²⁸ Naumann anticipates the objection that the "concentration of enterprises" inevitably involves a concentration of capital as well, and refines his formula:

Since concentration [of capital] is at the same time concentration of enterprise only where it lies in the hands of great entrepreneurs (Krupp, Stumm), but is not bound up with concentration of enterprise when it emerges by way of land rent (mortgage interest, house rent), the struggle against the private utilization of land rent is in our view the best way for the practical anticapitalism of the Christian-Socials. ... What marks us as inheritors of

²⁵ See Anson Rabinbach, The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity (New York: Basic Books, 1990); Anson Rabinbach, "The End of the Utopias of Labor: Metaphors of the Machine in the Post-Fordist Era," Thesis Eleven 53.1 (1998); and Charles S. Maier, "Society as Factory," In Search of Stability: Explorations in Historical Political Economy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

²⁶ I am greatly indebted to Zeev Sternhell for this conception of productivism. I draw both on Sternhell's personal teachings and on his writings, esp. Sternhell, The Founding Myths of Israel, 7-9.

²⁷ Naumann, "Arbeiter-Katechismus," 23.

²⁸ Naumann, "Christlich-Sozial," 362.

church history is the new assessment of the age-old problem of interest. ... We find that Luther's political economy is antiquated, but that his clear Christian view is still in the right today: avarice and usury are the chief mortal sins, ethically and economically.²⁹

What these passages all point to is a Christian form of productivism that distinguishes between good and bad capital according to its relation to the productive sphere, a productivism that focuses its ire upon land rent (and upon interest more generally) while exonerating the industrial entrepreneurs. Its specifically Christian character reveals itself above all in the contiguity posited by Naumann with "church history" and with Luther's teachings.³⁰

Another key feature of Naumann's Christian productivism, acquiring special significance in the context of the present study, is its ambivalent attitude towards antisemitism. In the last passage just cited, Naumann distances himself from the antisemites on the grounds of his support of enterprise concentration, but immediately preceding that passage Naumann makes a number of comments that draw him back again into the antisemitic orbit. His reference to "Rothschild, Bleichröder and company"³¹ in the midst of his discussion of capital concentration cannot but carry an antisemitic rhetorical charge (nor could Naumann have been unaware of this). Earlier on in the same paragraph, Naumann explicitly acknowledges that "what Conservatives and Antisemites have taught is of much help to us" in developing a Christian-Social "practical anti-capitalism."³² More concretely, our clergyman lauds two "conservative-antisemitic" legislation proposals, for the restoration of the "usury law" [*Wuchergesetz*] and for taxation of stock exchange dealings, as salutary examples of the kind of "practical anticapitalism" that the Christian-Socials need to pursue. Finally, Naumann expresses his belief that a "mixture of conservative, Marxist, and antisemitic ideas" can serve to awaken a number of social groups that hitherto have "lain dormant under conservative wings."³³

Naumann's entanglement with antisemitism has a long history. His warm, long-standing relationship with Adolf Stoecker speaks for itself,³⁴ as does his active involvement in the early 1880s with the antisemitic Association of German Students [*Verein deutscher Studenten*].³⁵ These affiliations do not in themselves teach us anything concrete about Naumann's beliefs, but

²⁹ Naumann, "Christlich-Sozial," 363.

³⁰ Cf. Naumann, "Das Recht eines christlichen Sozialismus," 413, where Naumann excoriates those who "exploit their brothers through interest and compound interest while they have abundantly enough, who hoard treasures on earth even though Jesus has forbidden it." On Luther's productivism and its relationship to subsequent forms of productivism in German social history, see Holger Schatz and Andrea Woeldike, *Freiheit und Wahn deutscher Arbeit: Zur historischen Aktualität einer folgenreichen antisemitischen Projektion* (Hamburg: Unrast, 2001), 16ff. On the medieval origins of Christian productivism, see Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages* (New York: Zone Books, 1988).

³¹ Naumann, "Christlich-Sozial," 363.

³² Naumann, "Christlich-Sozial," 362.

³³ Naumann, "Christlich-Sozial," 360.

³⁴ In May 1895, at the height—nay more, on the occasion—of his break from Adolf Stoecker, Naumann published an essay praising his political mentor and emphasizing how much they had in common ideologically. This piece betrays just how painful the break was for Naumann. There is no mention of antisemitism in the article. See Naumann, "Was wir Stöcker verdanken." On Stoecker's antisemitic political activity, see Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*, Revised ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 83-97.

³⁵ Naumann founded a chapter of this association at Erlangen in 1881. Heuss, *Friedrich Naumann*, 29. See also Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism*, 192, 248.

they do show that Naumann did not shun the close company of antisemites. Furthermore, our earlier discussion shows that as late as the mid-1890s, on the eve of his conversion to national socialism, Naumann and the antisemites found common ground in the conceptual field of productivism.

From Christian to National Socialism: Weber's Impact on Naumann

Max Weber was the central figure in Naumann's gradual conversion to national socialism in the course of 1894 and especially 1895.³⁶ Weber and Naumann met for the first time at the third Protestant Social Congress in April 1892.³⁷ Their famous, long-lasting friendship was only severed by Naumann's death in 1919, but it took no more than a year or two for Weber's intellectual power to exert a formative impact on Naumann. Naumann was persuaded by Weber's peculiar version of the German tradition of national economy to abandon the Christian-ethical foundations of his socialism in favor of the exigencies of the national struggle for existence; and to abandon the Christian foundations of his productivism in favor of national foundations.

1. From Christian Ethics to National Existentialism

Max Weber's thought during the first half of the 1890s was permeated by an intense nationalism. A nationalist sensibility was not something new in the German tradition of national economy.³⁸ The nation in this tradition had always been conceived as an anthropological category: that is to say, as the fullest, most authentic embodiment of collective human existence. Economic activity, in this context, was understood as merely one aspect of the broader fabric of national existence, a fabric formed out of the threads of politics and law, art and literature and language, as well as economics. The science of economics, accordingly, was conceived as a "science of the whole man" concerned not merely with some abstract *homo oeconomicus*, but with human beings in all the multifaceted richness of their concrete historical existence—as a nation. Similarly, the questions guiding economic inquiry should always be, not strictly economic questions arising from within some autonomous logic of economic activity, but rather broad questions pertaining to national existence in its entirety.³⁹ Furthermore, insofar as it dealt

³⁶ Düding, *Der Nationalsoziale Verein*, 38; Heuss, *Friedrich Naumann*, 100.

³⁷ Wilhelm Spael, *Friedrich Naumanns Verhältnis zu Max Weber* (Sankt Augustin: Liberal Verlag, 1985), 19.

³⁸ Kevin Repp writes: "Often translated as 'political economy,' *Nationalökonomie* (or *Volkswirtschaft*) has no precise equivalent in the English language." Repp, *Reformers*, 29. I follow in Repp's footsteps and resort to the more literal translation "national economy" or "national economics." While Repp does not explicate his terminological choice, mine is guided by the belief that the German usage of *National-* or *Volks-* where the English language has preferred "political" should not be covered over; indeed, it seems to be indicative of a deep-seated ideational commitment to nationalism that goes to the heart of what this paper is about.

³⁹ Cf. Bruch, "Zur Historisierung der Staatswissenschaften," 303, 309; Rüdiger vom Bruch, "Nationalökonomie zwischen Wissenschaft und öffentlicher Meinung im Spiegel Gustav Schmollers," *Gelehrtenpolitik. Sozialwissenschaften und akademische Diskurse in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 312, 320-23; Rüdiger vom Bruch, *Weltpolitik als Kulturmission: Auswärtige Kulturpolitik und Bildungsbürgertum in Deutschland am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieg* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1982), 47f.; Lindenfeld, "The Myth of the Older Historical School of Economics," 414-16; Wilhelm Hennis, "'A Science of Man': Max Weber and the Political Economy of the German Historical School," trans. Keith Tribe, *Max Weber: Essays in Reconstruction* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1988), 119-22, 125-31; Keith Tribe,

with “problems of the whole,” of “entire peoples and states,” it was also deemed to be a “moral” and “political” science,⁴⁰ implying an ethical, Aristotelian conception of politics and conflating the political with the national.⁴¹

To a certain extent, Weber accepted this basic paradigm of German national economy and made it his own. In his Freiburg Inaugural Address of May 1895, Weber proclaims that “the science of political economy is a *political science*,” that it is a “servant of politics”.⁴² a direct nod to the “older” historical school of national economy, to Roscher and Knies. Weber’s statement reaffirms the conception of economic activity as part of the larger whole of national life, and the conception of economic science as examining economic life from the perspective of “political” problems pertaining to the fullness of human existence as embodied in the national whole.⁴³ Weber defines political economy as “concerned above all else with the *quality of human beings* reared under [definite] economic and social conditions of existence,” and specifically with “the particular strain of humankind (*Menschentum*) we find within our own [i.e. German] nature.”⁴⁴ It follows that the problems (or what Weber calls the “criteria of value”) guiding economic scientists are not narrowly economic but broadly national problems or criteria. “The ... criterion of value used by a German economic theorist, can therefore only be a German ... criterion.”⁴⁵

“Introduction,” Reading Weber, ed. Keith Tribe (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 7-9. And see also my discussion of the historical school in the previous chapter.

⁴⁰ As Knies put it: “Since political economy ... contributes to the solution of the moral-political problems of the whole, it is therefore enjoined to take its place with the moral and political sciences.” Quoted by Hennis, “‘A Science of Man’,” 120. For Roscher’s understanding of economic inquiry as inherently “political” and “national,” see Wilhelm Roscher, Grundriß zu Vorlesungen über die Staatswirthschaft. Nach geschichtlicher Methode (Göttingen: Druck und Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1843), iv; cf. Hennis, “‘A Science of Man’,” 118; Keith Tribe, “Historical Economics, the *Methodenstreit*, and the Economics of Max Weber,” Strategies of Economic Order: German Economic Discourse, 1750-1950 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 72f. Hennis and Tribe, however, downplay the nationalistic dimension of this conception. They emphasize the “anthropological” aspect of the historical school’s concern with the fullness of human life or, as Tribe puts it, with “human being and its needs”; but they fail to deal with the question, why does the historical school unquestioningly presuppose that human existence only develops to its fullest extent in the framework of a national political community, rather than any other form of collective life? And what historical-intellectual significance does this privileging of the nation entail? After all, it is precisely the association of the nation with such fundamental “anthropological” aspects of human existence that shows how deep their nationalism goes.

⁴¹ Cf. e.g. Roscher’s statement of adherence to a conception of “politics understood in the Aristotelian sense”; Wilhelm Roscher, Politik: Geschichtliche Naturlehre der Monarchie, Aristokratie und Demokratie (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1892), III. The conjoining of the ethical and the national, on the other hand, is probably most visible in the work of Gustav Schmoller, as discussed in the previous chapter.

⁴² Max Weber, “The Nation State and Economic Policy (Inaugural Lecture),” trans. Ronald Speirs, Political Writings, eds. Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994[1895]), 16. Original emphasis.

⁴³ Cf. Hennis, “‘A Science of Man’,” 119f., 125f. Again, as with his interpretation of the tradition of national economy as a whole, Hennis rejects a nationalistic reading of Weber. At the same time, his persuasive demonstration of the intellectual-historical link between the nationalism of Weber and the historical school is very helpful. Lawrence Scaff and Martin Riesebrodt, by contrast, unconvincingly choose to trace Weber’s nationalism back to List and to Rodbertus (respectively) rather than to the historical school. See Lawrence A. Scaff, Fleeing the Iron Cage: Culture, Politics, and Modernity in the Thought of Max Weber (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 31; Martin Riesebrodt, “From Patriarchalism to Capitalism: The Theoretical Context of Max Weber’s Agrarian Studies (1892-3),” trans. Leena Tanner, Reading Weber, ed. Keith Tribe (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 150f.

⁴⁴ Weber, “The Nation State and Economic Policy,” 15. Original emphasis.

⁴⁵ Weber, “The Nation State and Economic Policy,” 15.

But rather than simply reproducing the traditional nationalist conception of economics, Weber gives this basic template a sharp power-political, existential twist.⁴⁶ The historical development of human qualities in the framework of national communities always occurs, in Weber's view, within the context of an "*eternal struggle*" with other nations "to preserve and raise the quality of our national species."⁴⁷ In other words, although Weber preserves the basic anthropological core of the German tradition of national economy (i.e. the concern with nationally congealed human qualities), he at the same time shifts the emphasis from the human/national qualities themselves to the existential, conflictual, power-political conditions for the very possibility of preserving and fostering those qualities. The same shift is discernible in Weber's conception of economic life, policy, and science. The "economic struggle between the nationalities" is for Weber a "struggle for life,"⁴⁸ which entails the subordination of economic policy to "the enduring power-political interests of the nation."⁴⁹

Thus the anthropological concern of Weber's political economy with "human qualities," bears a double stamp of nationalism: first, these human qualities are collapsed into particular national qualities; second, the very fostering of those qualities always takes the form of a struggle with other nations, which in turn necessitates an engagement in nationalist power politics. This position constitutes a clear break with previous generations of German national economy, for whom the national-political conception of economic science meant the subordination of purely economic questions of accumulation and distribution of wealth to broader considerations of the kind of human being that such economic dynamics sustain. In Weber's thinking, the subordination of purely economic questions to the question of human qualities is still present, but the connection between the two is now mediated by the existential question. That is to say, economic problems are now subordinated, not directly to the concern for

⁴⁶ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Max Weber and German Politics 1890-1920, trans. Michael S. Steinberg (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), ch. 3. Mommsen, though, overlooks the importance of the existential dimension in Weber's outlook. Other scholars, most prominently Wilhelm Hennis, have denied the centrality of nationalism for Weber's outlook altogether. Hennis, for example, does concede that 'the nation is for Weber *the* life order that provides what can be regarded as the greatest scope for the central theme that is here at issue ... it designates the site, the life order, within which the best is to be developed in relation to men and women who only here can give shape to their political existence'. He then shifts, however, the interpretive emphasis: 'But the nation does not represent a transcending purpose, it is no 'indubitable value' in the way that Marianne Weber phrased it ... —Weber certainly *loathed* particular features of the Germans!' (Hennis, "'A Science of Man'," 83; original emphasis). Aside from the truly lame argumentation proffered in this last sentence, Hennis more importantly fails to account for the same question raised earlier with respect to previous generations of the Historical School: namely, why does Weber privilege the nation as that primary framework of human and political existence? And what are the effects of this privileging? Much the same objection may be raised in response to other scholars who acknowledge Weber's nationalism to a greater extent than Hennis but remain largely uncritical of it and/or underestimate its theoretical and historical import: David Beetham, Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974), 119-50; Richard Bellamy, "Liberalism and Nationalism in the Thought of Max Weber," History of European Ideas 14 (1992); Kari Palonen, "Was Max Weber a 'Nationalist'? A Study in the Rhetoric of Conceptual Change," Max Weber Studies 1.2 (2001); and S. H. Kim, "Max Weber's Liberal Nationalism," History of Political Thought 23.3 (2002). By contrast, a much more critical approach is offered by Gary A. Abraham, "Max Weber: Modernist Anti-Pluralism and the Polish Question," New German Critique 53 (1991). Abraham rightly points up and critiques the emphatically ethnic, exclusionary character of Weber's nationalism.

⁴⁷ Weber, "The Nation State and Economic Policy," 16. Original emphasis.

⁴⁸ Weber, "The Nation State and Economic Policy," 14.

⁴⁹ Weber, "The Nation State and Economic Policy," 16.

human/national qualities, but rather to power-political considerations *in the name of* the concern for human/national qualities. And this existential mediation involves, in turn, a rejection of the ethical, eudaemonistic strain that had characterized much of German economic thought from the cameralists down to Gustav Schmoller's generation of the historical school.⁵⁰ In such a world of eternal struggle as described above, Weber claims, it is impossible to posit peace, happiness or well-being as the *telos* of political economy. Instead, the most that can be hoped for is the creation of some "elbow-room" in the "hard struggle of man with man."⁵¹ Political economy must yield to a national-existential *telos*, giving absolute priority to the cold, bare, brutal task of ensuring the nation's future existence.

The existential redefinition of the *telos* of social policy is not only a central moment in Weber's early thinking, but also the major aspect of his intellectual influence on Naumann. In 1892, when Naumann and Weber met, the latter was working together with Paul Göhre (later a co-founder, together with Naumann, of the National Social Association) on an Inquiry into Rural Workers commissioned by the Protestant Social Congress.⁵² Göhre and Weber presented their findings at the fifth Congress in May 1894; Naumann looked forward eagerly to the presentation of this "very valuable piece of detailed work."⁵³ As Weber was bringing his part of the presentation to a close, he launched a critique of Naumann's "endless yearning for human happiness" and his hope to achieve it through social legislation.⁵⁴ Instead, Weber insisted, the most that can be hoped for is "that under the exigency of the unavoidable struggle for existence, ... the traits—physical and mental—that we would like to preserve for our nation will be perpetuated."⁵⁵

At first, Naumann remained uncharacteristically silent in the face of Weber's attack upon him.⁵⁶ But the impact of Weber's critique was eventually to be swift and decisive. From the very beginning of 1895 and throughout that year, Naumann gradually but persistently appropriated all the basic tenets of Weber's national existentialism: the nationalist reframing of political economy, the existential intensification of this nationalism, and the subordination of social policy and reform to the nation's existential struggles and to securing the national order.⁵⁷ Let us reconstruct the process of Naumann's national-existentialist turn.

⁵⁰ Tribe, *Strategies of Economic Order*, ch. 2; Bruch, "Zur Historisierung der Staatswissenschaften," 306; Bruch, "Bürgerliche Sozialreform," 63.

⁵¹ Weber, "The Nation State and Economic Policy," 14, 16, 26f. Cf. Max Weber, "Die deutschen Landarbeiter," *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe. Abt. I: Schriften und Reden. Vol. 4: Landarbeiterfrage, Nationalstaat und Volkswirtschaftspolitik: Schriften und Reden 1892-1899. 1. Halbband*, eds. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Rita Aldenhoff (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (P. Siebeck), 1993[1894]), 338-40; Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics*, 74.

⁵² Rita Aldenhoff, "Max Weber and the Evangelical-Social Congress," *Max Weber and his Contemporaries*, eds. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 194, 198.

⁵³ Friedrich Naumann, "Die Evangelisch-sozialen Kongresse (1894)," *Werke*, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 399; cf. Spael, *Friedrich Naumanns Verhältnis zu Max Weber*, 27.

⁵⁴ Weber, "Die deutschen Landarbeiter," 339f.

⁵⁵ "... daß unter der Not des unvermeidlichen Existenzkampfes ... die Eigenschaften – physische und seelische - , welche wir der Nation erhalten möchten, bewahrt bleiben." Weber, "Die deutschen Landarbeiter," 340.

⁵⁶ On Naumann's surprising silence, see Spael, *Friedrich Naumanns Verhältnis zu Max Weber*, 27.

⁵⁷ Düding and Heuss are basically right to reject Marianne Weber's claim that her late husband's Inaugural Address effected a "decisive metamorphosis" in Naumann's thought. Weber's intellectual impact on Naumann was indeed decisive, but temporally it took place over the course of a whole year. Düding, *Der Nationalsoziale Verein*, 38 n.75; Heuss, *Friedrich Naumann*, 100.

In January 1895, on the occasion of the Kaiser's birthday, we find Naumann asserting the existential importance of German unity. Regional differences within Germany, such as between Bavarians and Prussians and so on, pale in significance in comparison to the opposition between Germany and "foreign nations," because the individual, sub-national German states "cannot survive in the world of nations [*Welt der Völker*]." At the same time, internationalist ideas such as a "United States of Western Europe" belong to the unforeseeable future, whereas at the present "we have so much to do in Germany and for the Germans."⁵⁸

Germany's survival in the world is in Naumann's view bound to take on a violent, conflictual form; struggle is structurally built into the international system. "War," as Naumann puts it, "cannot be wholly avoided so long as nations are and must be independent bodies with their own economic life and spiritual life."⁵⁹ Therefore, "we cannot avoid the possibility of antagonisms that can only be settled with gunpowder and blood. There are questions of power, hence we need power!"⁶⁰ In a more detailed prognosis of world politics, Naumann argues that Germany's geopolitical position makes it prone to being caught up in "a struggle between Russia and England. In this struggle, Germany should not be the worm that lets itself be trodden upon by both sides." For in the wake of military defeat, "our economic life too will fall prey to the great nations of the world [*Weltvölker*]." Therefore, Germany needs to be strong enough to partake in world politics and the "repartition of the earth" it involves.⁶¹

Applied to the field of political economy, Naumann's national existentialism manifests itself in the national reframing of economic life, replacing his earlier Christian-ethical, anti-materialist orientation.⁶² This reframing, along with its existential intensity, is stated by Naumann quite bluntly: "The preservation of German life must become the supreme economic law." Hence

the necessity of acting as Germans also in economic policy. German labor, German agriculture is more important for us than foreign products, because the family happiness and the welfare of countless members of the national community [*Volksgenossen*] rests on the protection of German labor. ... We cannot sacrifice the German industrialists, workers, and farmers to foreign competition [...]⁶³

As this passage suggests, German industry (entrepreneurs and workers alike) and agriculture are considered worthy of protection by virtue of the services they render to national life as parts in

⁵⁸ Friedrich Naumann, "Wochenschau," Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe 14 April 1895.

⁵⁹ Naumann, "Wochenschau [14 July 1895]," 3.

⁶⁰ Friedrich Naumann, "[speech at the 6th ESK, June 1895]," Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe 16 June 1895: 1.

⁶¹ Naumann, "Wochenschau [17 November 1895]," 2.

⁶² The replacement process was actually a gradual one. Throughout 1895, Naumann continued occasionally to give voice to a Christian anti-materialism. See e.g. Naumann, "Wochenschau [10 November 1895]," 1; Naumann, "Wochenschau [29 December 1895]"; Naumann, "Wochenschau [20 October 1895]." This ideational moment was definitively banished from its defining position in Naumann's thought after he had fully absorbed Rudolf Sohm's influence, as discussed below.

⁶³ Naumann, "Wochenschau [14 July 1895]," 2. Cf. Naumann, "Wochenschau [14 April 1895]," 1: "German industry and German agriculture" need to be protected by "a German border." It is interesting to note that Naumann retains in the above-cited passage his eudaimonistic language.

the service of “a whole.”⁶⁴ As such, they all have a stake in the existential, power-political struggles of the nation, a shared national interest overshadowing class differences:

We need ... foreign grains. It follows that we must sell part of our industrial products outwards in order to pay for the grains. We must pursue world trade in order to be able to live. But world trade must be protected by a strong navy. That is a shared national interest [*gemeinsames Volksinteresse*], a state of affairs that at bottom touches upon the German worker as much as the German entrepreneur. From this point of view we are in favor of approving the new war navy demanded by the government.⁶⁵

Naumann also echoes the German historical school’s nationalist anti-economism, namely the idea that every economic phenomenon should be judged by national rather than purely economic criteria. For Naumann, “every entrepreneurial leadership is to be viewed as a service for the national whole [*Volksganze*] and not solely as private speculation.”⁶⁶ Similarly, agriculture is the “sustainer of German national strength [*Volkskraft*] and German family life,” and consequently should not be judged simply by the price of the grains it provides.⁶⁷ For “the more families are employed and fed by German agriculture, the better will our nation [*Volk*] be armed for economic and national [*nationale*] struggles.”⁶⁸

Not only economic life in general, but social reform, too, needs to be subordinated to the exigencies of “national self-preservation”:

Of what use are the prettiest domestic state institutions if the state as a whole collapses, as Prussia did 90 years ago under Napoleon? Reforms are then written in the air. Whoever wants to pursue long-lasting social reform must first know how to secure his fatherland outwardly. One does not secure it, however, with pretty dreams, but only with sacrifices and heavy armaments. That is a hard fact, but nothing is of avail against it.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Naumann, “Gedanken zum christlich-sozialen Programm,” 66: “National life is a whole.”

⁶⁵ Naumann, “[speech at the 6th ESK, June 1895],” 1.

⁶⁶ Naumann, “Gedanken zum christlich-sozialen Programm,” 67.

⁶⁷ Naumann, “Gedanken zum christlich-sozialen Programm,” 68. This seems to be a direct echo of Max Weber’s words: “Out of which standpoints can we ... pursue practical agricultural policy under German circumstances? Can the interest of production be the decisive one for us? ... Is it, in other words, a matter of how the greatest possible quantity of agricultural goods can be produced with the technologically most perfect means ...? I do not believe so.” Weber then goes on to assert the national interest as the decisive one for agricultural and population policy, and specifically the interest in the “preservation of national strength [*Volkskraft*].” Weber, “Die deutschen Landarbeiter,” 334, 339.

⁶⁸ Naumann, “Gedanken zum christlich-sozialen Programm,” 69.

⁶⁹ Friedrich Naumann, “Bismarck,” *Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe* 31 March 1895: 3. This passage, written in March 1895, refutes the claim often made that Weber’s inaugural address (delivered several months later) was a major milestone in Naumann’s conversion from Christian to national socialism and in Weber’s contribution to this conversion. Naumann’s July 1895 response in *Die Hilfe* to Weber’s address is usually brought forth as the evidence for this claim, but in fact it is little more than a repetition (even in its use of rhetorical questions) of the above-cited passage written in March: “Is [Weber] not correct? Of what use is the best social policy if the Cossacks come? He who wishes to carry out a domestic policy must first secure the people [*Volk*], the fatherland, and the borders; he must strive for national power. ... A socialism capable of governing must be German-national.” Naumann, “Wochenschau [14 July 1895],” 2. On the overestimation of the importance of Weber’s Inaugural Address for Naumann, see e.g. Düding, *Der Nationalsoziale Verein*, 36, 38; Ward, *Theology, Sociology and Politics*, 95; and Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics*, 69f., whose translation I follow with slight modifications. If any single text by Weber is to be pointed out as the crucial one for Naumann’s intellectual development, it is his presentation at the Protestant Social Congress of May 1894. As I occasionally point out in

The subordination of social reform to the exigencies of national struggle appears here in *negative* form: national struggle poses temporal and, implicitly, other practical limitations on the feasibility and scope of social reform. The *positive* aspect of this subordination consists in reconceptualizing social reform as an instrument of nationalist power politics, providing the nation with more resources to secure and perpetuate its existence through struggle:

[L]iving men are more important for the preservation of nations [*Völker*] than ships and cannons. He who merely builds fortresses while neglecting the health of children, the feeding of men, the sustenance of women, does not take good care of the fatherland. Hence an efficient social reform is the best armament for coming wars. A free, happy, healthy nation [*Volk*] can achieve much in the world, but a nation [*Volk*] that may not open its mouth properly and that drags itself on from one worry to the next is not a nation [*Volk*] fit for the great exigencies of the future. German must [at some point] stand once again in the midst of a European fire, therefore it must make use of every year of peace to become strong [*kräftig*]. Whoever hinders this strengthening does a disservice to the fatherland.⁷⁰

In Naumann's vision, social reform would serve the nation not just internationally by helping it prepare for violent conflict, but also domestically by deepening the nation-building project initiated by Bismarck:

Without Bismarck, the inner reshaping of our German nation [*Volk*] would have been unthinkable, he has brought to completion the crafting of the state [*die staatspolitische Arbeit*], but now comes the political-economic [*wirtschaftspolitische*] task. For the latter Bismarck is not the pathfinder. ... the new era stands at the doorstep, it is looking for a statesman of social reform and does not find him. We need a domestic Bismarck [...]⁷¹

If social reform is to cement rather than challenge the existing political order, it goes without saying that any revolutionary leap into the future is rejected. Instead, social reform must link past, present, and future in an undisrupted flow of national history. "We cannot break," insists Naumann, "with the hitherto existing political history" of the German nation. That is why Germany needs to remain loyal to the Kaiser.⁷² The Kaiser, in fact, represents not just the continuity of *German* history, but also the very *principle* of historical continuity inherent in monarchy as a regime type, as opposed to the fickleness of republics. The monarch is the

some of the footnotes to this section, Naumann's writings in the summer of 1895, both before and after the publication of Weber's inaugural address, sometimes closely echo Weber's words from his 1894 presentation.

⁷⁰ Naumann, "[speech at the 6th ESK, June 1895]," 1f. Naumann goes beyond Weber here in that the latter was not as enthusiastic as Naumann about extensive social reform. But Naumann's stronger advocacy of social reform did not, *pace* Düding, diminish or dilute in any way his commitment to the idea of the "national *Machtstaat*" in comparison to Weber. In fact, exactly the opposite is true: by extending national existentialism into additional domains of social policy, Naumann was only anchoring the national ever more firmly in the social, providing the nation with more resources to secure and perpetuate its existence and to embark on an aggressive foreign policy of colonialist expansion. For Düding's position, see Düding, *Der Nationalsoziale Verein*, 38f.; and cf. Peter Theiner, "Friedrich Naumann and Max Weber: Aspects of a Political Partnership," *Max Weber and his Contemporaries*, eds. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 302; Nürnberger, "Imperialismus," 528; Conze, "Friedrich Naumann," 358.

⁷¹ "Der 6. evangelisch-soziale Kongreß (Versamlungsbericht). II," *Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe* 23 June 1895: 1.

⁷² Naumann, "Wochenschau [22 December 1895]," 2.

“embodiment of a slowly evolving history,” in contrast to the constantly changing figures of the president of a republic, the speaker of a parliament, or the leader of a political party.⁷³ The continuity of national history embodied in the Kaiser is at the same time a continuity of national unity. Any attempt to alter the constitution would be a “signal for the struggle of all against all” in society. The Kaiser, by contrast, is the bearer of the “task of social reconciliation. No estate [*Stand*] should be crushed by another in the economic struggle.”⁷⁴ Naumann’s conclusion is dramatic: “a break with the imperial regime [*Kaisertum*] would amount to a suicide of the German nation [*Volk*].”⁷⁵

The concern for the continuity of national existence not only involves the rejection of working-class revolution, but also offers itself as an alternative positive agenda for the workers. “A far-sighted workers’ party,” Naumann insists, “must pursue national policy by asking: how can the power of the German nation [*Volk*] be enhanced for generations to come? The prosperity of German labor depends to a great extent on the power of the German nation.”⁷⁶ Such a workers’ party would pursue a “national socialism [*vaterländischen Sozialismus*]” that would be reconciled with a “powerful German workers’ Kaiser, a Kaiser of all industrious, productive people.”⁷⁷ The superimposition of the power-political grid of national existentialism upon the project of social reform is thus mirrored constitutionally in the locking of the productive exertions of German society into the imperial political order.

The idea that social reform can serve to tighten the national order is continuous in its general contours with the entire tradition of the German historical school. The link between reformism and nationalism is, in fact, one of the elements that drew Naumann into the intellectual orbit of German national economy in the first place. In February 1895 Naumann applauded the young generation of national economists for their shared commitment to “practical reform.” In contrast to the utopian dreams of the Social Democrats, “the national-economic science dreams of no state of the future. ... It wants to think today for the nation [*Volk*] of today.”⁷⁸ Naumann endorses here the temporal imagination of German national economy, fastening social reform to the socio-political order of the present and rejecting a leap to the future that would sever the organic trajectory of national history.⁷⁹ Not surprisingly, we find

⁷³ Naumann, “Wochenschau [30 June 1895],” 1.

⁷⁴ Naumann, “Wochenschau [30 June 1895],” 2.

⁷⁵ Naumann, “Wochenschau [22 December 1895],” 2.

⁷⁶ Naumann, “Zum sozialdemokratischen Landprogramm,” 108. Once again, Naumann follows in Weber’s footsteps almost word for word. Consider the following statement by Weber: “The interest in the power of the national state is for no one greater than for the proletariat.” Weber, “Die deutschen Landarbeiter,” 341.

⁷⁷ Naumann, “Wochenschau [22 December 1895]”; see also Naumann, “Wochenschau [15 December 1895]”; and Naumann, “Wochenschau [30 June 1895],” 2, where the term “national socialism [*vaterländischen Sozialismus*]” is perhaps aired for the first time. Cf. Spael, *Friedrich Naumanns Verhältnis zu Max Weber*, 43.

⁷⁸ Naumann, “Wochenschau [10 February 1895].”

⁷⁹ The association of social reform with national-historical continuity had been a central characteristic of the German historical school of national economy from its very beginning. As Rüdiger vom Bruch observes, the “older” Historical School, in contrast to the pessimism of Ricardo and Malthus, advocated state-led social reform based on the belief that “a precise knowledge of historically explicable, national and regional relationships [*Bindungen*] allows for a correct identification of respective social harms” and the proper measures to alleviate them. See Bruch, “Zur Historisierung der Staatswissenschaften,” 306, 309. See also Rüdiger vom Bruch, “Historiker und Nationalökonomien im Wilhelminischen Deutschland,” *Gelehrtenpolitik, Sozialwissenschaften und akademische Diskurse in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 57, where the concern

Naumann's friend Max Weber articulating exactly the same position a year earlier, when he advised both economic liberalism and "internationalist socialism" that it would be "in the interest of the further development" of the German nation not to "fell" the "trunks" of the "historically given national economic units," but rather to "preserve and foster" them "in their naturally given growth."⁸⁰

Just how deeply Weber's national existentialism seeped into the very foundations of Naumann's thinking is attested to by the latter's acknowledgement of struggle as a fundamental principle of human existence. In June 1895, Naumann cites approvingly a Social Democratic article arguing that the struggle for existence is found "under all social forms," although he still hangs on to the belief that "socialism is not to be grounded on Darwinism, but is to be clarified, purified, and energized by Jesus Christ."⁸¹ Only three months later, all such equivocation is gone, and struggle is elevated by Naumann to the status of a benign, divinely ordained motor of world history. In God's hands, "struggle too is at the service ... of progress. World history is built upon the struggles of men," not just armed struggles, but also "economic struggles" and "spiritual struggles."⁸² The following passage suggests a theologized extrapolation to the social domain of the Darwinist idea of the struggle for existence as the motor of biological evolution:

It would be strange if the same God that has constructed the whole of nature on the basis of struggle, the same God that, as far as the eye can see, only bestows progress upon that which fights, —it would be strange if He were then to say: no struggle, only patience! Is it possible for God to wish that today or tomorrow all struggle among men will come to an end? The whole course of culture, the development of humankind, 'world history' would come to an end along with it. Progress must be struggled for, that is an eternal law.⁸³

Cementing the renunciation of the ethical: Rudolf Sohm

In the course of 1895, then, Naumann rearranged his whole social and economic thought around his newly acquired national existentialism. Initially Naumann still tried to fit the latter into his pre-existing Christian-ethical frame. This attempt is evident in a series of articles published by Naumann in Die Hilfe over the second half of 1895, wherein he articulates a theological justification of the idea of a violent struggle of the nation for its existence. Whereas "in the perfect kingdom of God there will be no warship," Jesus "will not demand that the

with the problem of the "social integration of the politically united nation" is mentioned as a central preoccupation of the historical school of national economy. Cf. Repp, Reformers, 31.

⁸⁰ Max Weber, "Argentinische Kolonistenwirthschaften," Max Weber Gesamtausgabe. Abt. I: Schriften und Reden. Vol. 4: Landarbeiterfrage, Nationalstaat und Volkswirtschaftspolitik: Schriften und Reden 1892-1899. 1. Halbband, eds. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Rita Aldenhoff (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (P. Siebeck), 1993[1894]), 303. For another, later example of Weber's historicism-cum-reformism in 1904, see Tribe, "Introduction," 9.

⁸¹ Friedrich Naumann, "Debatterede (1895)," Werke, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 463. In this debate at the Protestant Social Congress, all the speakers seem to agree that the historical ubiquity of the struggle for existence, along with its evolutionary implications, refutes the Social Democratic vision of a radically new and utterly harmonious human society. See Friedrich Naumann, "Unsere Organisation," Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe 10 November 1895: 4-6.

⁸² Naumann, "Wochenschau [22 December 1895]."

⁸³ Friedrich Naumann, "Feindesliebe," Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe 20 October 1895.

national body [*Volkskörper*] of today break the weapons of its self-preservation,” for disarmament will amount to “summoning death into the land.”⁸⁴ Hence God “blesses the struggle” of every nation that possesses enough “fidelity, sense of duty, strength and unity.” In God’s hands, “struggle too is at the service ... of progress. World history is built upon the struggles of men,” not just armed struggles, but also “economic struggles” and “spiritual struggles.”⁸⁵ As we have already observed earlier, Naumann intensified Weber’s idea of struggle by elevating it to the status of a divinely ordained motor of world history.⁸⁶

As it turns out, however, this attempted reconciliation of Christianity with the idea of struggle was no more than a transitory phase on Naumann’s path to national socialism. He eventually ended up divorcing his entire social and political thought from its hitherto Christian and ethical moorings. This decisive break unfolded in the last months of 1895 under the impact of the renowned church historian Rudolf Sohm, who would later become a prominent member of Naumann’s National-Social Association.⁸⁷ The turn away from the religious and the ethical would give Naumann’s national socialism a greater degree of consistency and cohesion, and also a starker, more ruthless commitment to a social-Darwinist principle of national struggle.

As Naumann himself would later observe,⁸⁸ it was a lecture delivered by Rudolf Sohm in September 1895 at the 28th Congress for the Inner Mission in Posen that brought about this crucial shift in Naumann’s thought. In that lecture, Sohm among other things launched a critique of the “conservative idea of the Christian state,” as developed most prominently by Friedrich Julius Stahl in the mid-nineteenth century:

The consequence of the Christian state of the forties and fifties [of the nineteenth century] is Social Democracy. The masses’ hatred of Christianity, of Christ, of the Church, of the pastors, which makes the latter’s work so difficult, is a consequence of the idea of the Christian state.

Hence away with the Christian state! The state is something natural. Christ belongs to no political, indeed to no ecclesiastical party.⁸⁹

Naumann’s immediate reaction, during the Congress itself, to this part of Sohm’s speech was a defensive one. He took Sohm’s criticism to be representative of the idea that Christian intervention in social questions should be limited to non-political charity such as that undertaken by the Inner Mission. As noted earlier, Naumann by contrast wanted to politicize the Christian-

⁸⁴ Naumann, “Wochenschau [27 October 1895],” 2.

⁸⁵ Naumann, “Wochenschau [22 December 1895].”

⁸⁶ Naumann, “Feindesliebe.” In the same article, Naumann observes that Jesus did not say “have no enemies,” but rather “love your enemies.” Naumann takes these words to mean that while enemies and struggle will never vanish from the world, struggle must nonetheless never be undertaken on personal grounds, out of personal hate or self-love. Struggle should always be waged in the name of a cause against the enemy of that cause, e.g. in the name of truth against mendacity, or in the name of welfare against exploitation.

⁸⁷ Sohm was also the scholar from whom Max Weber borrowed the concept of charisma and turned it into a widely recognized sociological category.

⁸⁸ Friedrich Naumann, “Das Ergebnis von Erfurt. I,” *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 3 December 1896.

⁸⁹ “Der Christ im öffentlichen Leben,” *Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe* 6 October 1895: 4. The naturalist dimension of Sohm’s politics here is intriguing. It dovetails perfectly with Naumann’s future social-Darwinist naturalism: see Friedrich Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik* (Berlin-Schöneberg: Hilfe, 1902), 11-13.

social movement by propagating a state-socialist agenda. It is the latter which he now sought to protect from Sohm's attack:

The insufficiency of [the Inner Mission's form of] assistance, for example vis-à-vis unemployment, leaves us with a sore conscience. Here no exercise of love is possible other than through state-socialist organizations.⁹⁰

And yet a few weeks after the Congress, Naumann's defensive stance is replaced with enthusiastic support:

The lecture by Professor Sohm was impressively forceful, a genuine refreshment, a word in its proper time, especially notable for its sharp critique of the conservative conception of the Christian state. This lecture, when it is published, must be read eagerly in our circles, it is excellently suited to form a basis for debates and serves the clarification of minds. That we cannot wholly share the speaker's misgivings about 'Christian socialism' does not change the feeling of extensive, factual agreement. That which he finds dubious we too reject: the Bible is not a political-economic book of laws, but a book of faith.⁹¹

It is evident from this passage that Naumann had come to a more refined understanding of Sohm critique: namely, that it was a critique not just of the state-socialist idea but also, and more fundamentally, of the coupling of state and faith.

By the beginning of 1896, Naumann's detachment of the political from the religious is complete, and in fact forms the cornerstone of the first programmatic statement of his national socialism. In an article constituting the first systematic exposition of his national socialism, Naumann begins by proclaiming the separation of "political" from "religious tasks":

The Christian-Socials have two tasks which touch each other closely, but which should not be allowed to be confused with each other. One task is political and the other is religious. Today both tasks are tended to in the same associations, but it is not impossible that sometime in the future two different associations will be necessary, so as not to damage religion with the details of politics, and so as not to be hindered in associating politically with people who adopt a different religious standpoint from ours.⁹²

Naumann's politics, then, is emptied of its religious content; and his nationalism quickly fills the gap. The "political task," Naumann proceeds to explain in the same article, consists in "preparing the way for a socialism capable of governing." At some point along the existing historical trajectory, a reliance of the Kaiser on the mass of German workers will be unavoidable in providing "for the most necessary national [*vaterländischen*] needs (army, navy, customs policy)." At this point the Kaiser will have to undertake "a peaceful transition to a national socialism," basing himself politically on "all ... that is called labor." But in order to achieve this eventuality, a political movement is needed which is motivated solely by the desire "to pursue national practical socialism." For without a "competent congregation of national socialists, the happy day for Germany that we await will never come at all."⁹³

⁹⁰ "Der Christ im öffentlichen Leben," 4.

⁹¹ Naumann, "Wochenschau [6 October 1895]," 1.

⁹² Friedrich Naumann, "Was wir wollen?" Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe 5 January 1896: 1.

⁹³ Naumann, "Was wir wollen?" 1f.

In sum, Sohm's idea of separating the political from the religious paved the way for fulfilling Weber's idea of suturing the national to the social and subordinating social questions to existential national considerations. Once the Christian-ethical imperative was out of the way, the national-existential agenda could assume pride of place without compunction.

2. From Christian to National Productivism

In May 1894, as we have noted, Weber criticized Naumann's eudaemonistic social agenda from the perspective of national existentialism. Another, much less familiar aspect of Weber's critique of Naumann has to do with the latter's Christian socioeconomic thought.⁹⁴ Weber's economic critique of Naumann is almost entirely concentrated in his review, published in May 1894, of a collected volume of Naumann's essays, Was heißt Christlich-Sozial? ("What Is Christian-Social?"). Weber exposes in this review a fundamental contradiction between, on the one hand, Naumann's full-fledged acceptance of the modern socioeconomic conditions rapidly permeating Germany; and, on the other hand, Naumann's adherence to social and economic categories inherited from pre-modern Christian modes of thinking.

On the one hand, then, Weber is impressed by the "consciously radical, or more precisely: modern-proletarian streak"⁹⁵ in Naumann's thought and his "wholehearted acknowledgement of technological progress with all its consequences, including the modern organization of labor."⁹⁶ Within the Christian-social movement, especially in comparison to its conservative strand, this modern sensibility constitutes in Weber's view a "progress towards realism."⁹⁷ That is to say: a healthy anchoring of social thought and policy in the existing socioeconomic realities.

On the other hand, Weber castigates Naumann for derailing this salutary modern orientation with his reliance on pre-modern Christian concepts. Weber begins with an attack on Naumann's distinction between legitimate "concentration of enterprise" and a supposedly undesirable "concentration of capital" by financial enterprises.⁹⁸ Weber rightly identifies the anachronistic foundations of this distinction in pre-modern, Christian-productivist thought: "It is one of the oldest practices of theological political economy since Thomas Aquinas, that 'commercial capital' was considered to be in the same damnation with the chemically pure rent acquired without labor."⁹⁹

⁹⁴ The economic aspect of Weber's critique of Naumann is absent from almost all of the secondary literature. The only scholars who mention it at all are Spael, Friedrich Naumanns Verhältnis zu Max Weber, 32-4; and Theiner, "Friedrich Naumann and Max Weber," 301f. But their account is merely descriptive and very cursory, and moreover fails to connect between the economic and nationalist dimensions of Weber's critique.

⁹⁵ Max Weber, "Rezension von: Was heißt Christlich-Sozial? Gesammelte Aufsätze von Friedrich Naumann," Max Weber Gesamtausgabe. Abt. I: Schriften und Reden. Vol. 4: Landarbeiterfrage, Nationalstaat und Volkswirtschaftspolitik: Schriften und Reden 1892-1899. 1. Halbband, eds. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Rita Aldenhoff (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (P. Siebeck), 1993[1894]), 350.

⁹⁶ Weber, "Rezension," 351.

⁹⁷ Weber, "Rezension," 352.

⁹⁸ Weber, "Rezension," 355.

⁹⁹ "Es gehört zu den ältesten Gepflogenheiten der theologischen Nationalökonomie seit Thomas von Aquino, daß ihnen die 'Handelskapitalien' mit der chemisch reinen arbeitslosen Rente in der gleichen Verdammnis waren." Weber, "Rezension," 355.

Weber observes that, when Naumann examines modern capitalism through the optic of this pre-modern theological conceptual scheme, he comes up with a distinction between two kinds of capitalist enterprises. He perceives financial enterprises as the modern incarnation of pre-modern “commercial capital” and places them on the same footing as rent, while at the same time he condones industrial enterprises as productive and therefore legitimate. Yet the realities of modern capitalism, Weber argues, belie such pre-modern conceptualization. First, enterprise concentration is with increasing frequency achieved by the accumulation of joint-stock capital. Second, interest cannot be identified exclusive with large financial enterprises; many small- and medium-scale proprietors depend on interest for their very existence. Naumann’s attempt, on the basis of this conceptual anachronism, to combat financial concentration by placing an upper limit on interest rates is therefore bound to backfire: for such a policy will harm those small proprietors more than the large financial institutions, thereby indirectly bolstering the relative strength of the latter.¹⁰⁰

Naumann’s favorable attitude towards large industrial enterprises is anachronistic, Weber goes on to argue, not just because it is mapped onto an outdated productivist conceptual grid, but also because of its personalistic character. We will recall that for Naumann, “concentration [of capital] is at the same time concentration of enterprise [and hence legitimate] only where it lies in the hands of great entrepreneurs (Krupp, Stumm).”¹⁰¹ This “relative sympathy,” as Weber reads it, for the “large industrial enterprise led *personally* by a private entrepreneur” constitutes in his view a “partly unconscious” continuation of the traditional Christian attempt to preserve pre-modern, personal relations of work and domination.¹⁰² This attempt derives, Weber explains, from the fact that such relations are “accessible to religious-ethical interpretation and shaping [*religiös-ethischen Deutung und Ausprägung*]”,¹⁰³ they are amenable to “comprehending in ethical and religious terms.” But modern relations of work and domination, Weber points out, are inherently impersonal class relations impermeable to such religious intervention.¹⁰⁴ Hence “from the religious standpoint,” it is the disappearance of personal relations that constitutes the chief problem of modern life, and “not any kind of economic and social disadvantages attending on property distribution.”¹⁰⁵ Naumann’s acceptance of the “personally led large industrial enterprise” unconsciously (in Weber’s view) embodies this traditional Christian agenda.¹⁰⁶

But at the *conscious* register, as Weber had pointed out at the beginning of his review, it is a modern, class-based, (re)distributive agenda, not a pre-modern personalistic one that Naumann is committed to, even as he relies on traditional Christian premises. The latter, to be sure, still keeps him away from a sweeping rejection of private property. Naumann’s Christian productivism and personalism serve to direct his critical energy towards financial capital and land rent, while exonerating large industry. But sooner or later, if Naumann is to remain true to his principles, he too will be swept up by the inexorable development of social relations based on

¹⁰⁰ Weber, “Rezension,” 355f.

¹⁰¹ Naumann, “Christlich-Sozial,” 363.

¹⁰² Weber, “Rezension,” 356.

¹⁰³ Weber, “Rezension,” 356.

¹⁰⁴ Weber, “Rezension,” 357.

¹⁰⁵ Weber, “Rezension,” 357.

¹⁰⁶ Weber, “Rezension,” 356.

an impersonal class psychology, “forcing [him] to *take sides* against *any* form of private capital.”¹⁰⁷

We have now reached the heart of Weber’s critique of Naumann’s social and economic thought. As noted earlier, the starting point of Weber’s critique was the inner contradiction in Naumann’s thought between his modern, “radical” disposition and his pre-modern Christian productivism. Weber then proceeds to demolish Naumann’s antiquated economics, demonstrating its incompatibility with modern socioeconomic conditions. Weber is not interested, however, merely in a factual refutation of Naumann’s approach. What disturbs him more deeply is the direction in which Naumann is headed on account of the instability of his belief system. Weber’s greatest fear is that Naumann will end up embracing a full-fledged proletarian agenda of anti-bourgeois struggle; that his pre-modern Christian productivism will transmute into a modern, revolutionary class consciousness.¹⁰⁸

What Weber did not foresee, however, is that Naumann would indeed move away from and modernize his traditional Christian economics, but not in a revolutionary-proletarian direction as Weber was afraid he would. It was Weber’s own nationalism that Naumann deployed to preserve his productivism while at the same time reframing it, shunting it from pre-modern and Christian to modern and national tracks.

Let us examine this preservation-cum-transformation of Naumann’s productivism. In his essay “Christian-Social” of 1894 (subsequently published in the collection Was heißt Christlich-Sozial? and so one of the objects of Weber’s critical review of May 1894), Naumann states that the social question comprises the “question of organization” and the “question of capital.” The former refers to the organization of workers in the various sectors of the economy (industrial workers, agricultural workers, white-collar employees and so on). The “question of capital,” in turn, has to do with the problem of the concentration of capital without the exertion of labor and at the expense of others’ exertions. It is in this context that Naumann’s Christian productivism makes its appearance, with its distinction between enterprise and capital concentration and its allusion to the age-old preoccupation of the church with the “problem of interest.”¹⁰⁹

A year later, in the spring and summer of 1895, many of these productivist motifs resurface in Naumann’s writings, but with one important difference: the Christian wrapping had been discarded, and the nationalist framing becomes more noticeable. Thus Naumann reiterates his distinction between the “question of capital” and the “question of organization,” but then goes on to note that these two along with other social and economic questions are intertwined “because national life [*das Volksleben*] constitutes a single whole.”¹¹⁰ Similarly, Naumann remains faithful to his misgivings regarding the concentration of capital, but this time his objection is based on the idea that “every enterprise leadership is to be regarded as a service for

¹⁰⁷ Weber, “Rezension,” 357. Original emphasis

¹⁰⁸ Here we may note that, if Weber’s objection (as articulated in his presentation at the 1894 Protestant Social Congress) to the pastor’s eudaemonism is guided by a nationalist value standpoint, his critique of Naumann’s Christian productivism is informed by a bourgeois value standpoint. While Weber does not explicitly embrace a bourgeois standpoint as he does with respect to his nationalism in his Inaugural Address, he does refer to himself in his Naumann review as “we bourgeois” in the context of a critique of Naumann’s conception of private property: Weber, “Rezension,” 360.

¹⁰⁹ Naumann, “Christlich-Sozial,” 360-3.

¹¹⁰ Naumann, “Gedanken zum christlich-sozialen Programm,” 66.

the national whole [*das Volksganze*].”¹¹¹ Naumann, furthermore, retains his productivist emphasis on the opposition between labor and interest, claiming that “the enjoyment of interest without production [*Zinsgenuß ohne Leistung*] is ethically inferior to wages for labor” and “takes place through portfolios, landownership, and national debt.”¹¹² But there is no mention now of the Christian provenance of this view, so proudly avowed by Naumann in 1894.

By the beginning of 1896, the nationalist turn in Naumann’s productivism is complete. In an article that constitutes the first methodical presentation of his newfangled national socialism, Naumann’s summarizes his agenda in words suffused with a secularized and nationalized productivism:

1. We want to protect the fatherland as the fatherland of hardworking labor.
2. We want to honor the Kaiser because he is the Kaiser of the active and dynamic estates [*thätigen Stände*].
3. We want to represent any reform that can assist labor in the struggle against interest and rent.
4. We believe in the commonality of interests of urban and rural labor.
5. We support any voluntary professional organization, whatever it may call itself.¹¹³

As this passage shows, the nationalist casing of Naumann’s productivism includes an affirmation of the existing national and constitutional order: a commitment to “protect the fatherland” and to “honor the Kaiser.” Once again we see how Naumann’s Weberian nationalism preserves the reformist tendencies of his earlier Christian socialism, keeping him safely away from the slippery slope of revolutionary consciousness that Weber was so fearful of.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the intellectual origins of Friedrich Naumann’s national socialism, highlighting two key elements in his departure from Christian socialism: the abandonment of his ethical conception of social reform in favor of a national existentialism that overrides any ethical imperative; and the transition from a Christian to a national productivism. In the next chapter we shall see how Naumann’s national existentialism and national productivism continued to serve as the ideational foundations of his national socialism.

¹¹¹ Naumann, “Gedanken zum christlich-sozialen Programm,” 66f. See also Friedrich Naumann, “Hoffnung für Großstädte,” *Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe* 21 July 1895: 2, where he condemns the concentration of capital as the core of the problem of unemployment. Exactly the same argument was made by Naumann in 1894 (Naumann, “Christlich-Sozial,” 362), but a year later it is couched in national terminology: “a large part of the annual income of the nation [*des Volkes*] is not spent. Whoever amasses large amounts of capital deprives the nation [*dem Volke*] of labor wages and profit. Whatever he does not spend forms a hole in the general household. Therefore taxation of inheritance and progressive income tax are necessary to hinder the growth of large capitals.”

¹¹² Naumann, “Gedanken zum christlich-sozialen Programm,” 67.

¹¹³ Naumann, “Was wir wollen?” 2. Cf. Friedrich Naumann, “Israelitische Mitarbeit,” *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 29 December 1896: 4: “Our solution is not, as with the old parties, ‘*Bildung* and property,’ but ‘labor and *Bildung*!’ All that is called labor struggles against the superiority of interest and rent.” Although Naumann does not specify what he think falls under the term “labor,” it is quite clear that he understanding of this concept goes beyond the social-class definition of labor as proletariat.

My historical account in this chapter stressed the centrality of Weber's impact in Naumann's intellectual shift. The formation of the intellectual bond between the two friends, however, was in fact merely part of a broader and deeper induction of Naumann into the intellectual tradition of the German historical school of national economy. The pastor became acquainted with a number of national economists through his involvement with the Protestant Social Congress from 1892 onwards, and further absorbed the teachings of German national economy by participating in a political economy course for pastors organized by the Protestant Social Congress in October 1893.¹¹⁴ Just how deeply Naumann appreciated German national economy as an intellectual force is attested to by his celebration of the latter as the "master science of our age" destined to "determine the spirit of the universities for the next decades."¹¹⁵

From this perspective, Max Weber figures as one conduit among others (albeit a particularly important one) transmitting the intellectual tradition of German national economy to Naumann. And the latter's intellectual development in the mid-1890s consists not just in becoming a Weberian, but more broadly in coming to accept the most fundamental theoretical convictions of three generations of German national economists.¹¹⁶ Naumann's rethinking of his Christian socialism bore the stamp of this intellectual tradition; and his national socialism brought out, embodied, and translated to the level of praxis an ensemble of ideas that had been gestating for decades at the heart of German intellectual life. This statement is not meant, of course, to construct Naumann as the teleological culmination of nineteenth-century German social thought. The latter was much too diverse and fluid for such a simplistic historical trajectory to be at all conceivable. My aim is rather to emphasize that Naumann's national-socialist synthesis was attached by the umbilical cord to major intellectual tendencies of his time, and cannot be downplayed as some idiosyncratic or superficial attempt to bring together two supposedly incompatible ideas.

At the same time, it is important to note that Weber's mediation of national economy also involved a repudiation of the latter's ethical dimension in favor of a stark political existentialism. In this sense, Naumann not only built upon the tradition of national economy, but also partook in a crucial break with what in the 1870s was one of the core characteristics of this tradition. This break, in turn, coupled with Naumann's rejection of Stoecker's conservatism, signified a qualitative shift in the history of national socialism, from its initial ethical-conservative instantiation to a new, existentialist phase.

¹¹⁴ Heuss, Friedrich Naumann, 83; Naumann, "Die Evangelisch-sozialen Kongresse," 400.

¹¹⁵ Friedrich Naumann, "Das innere Leben," Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe 28 April 1895. See also Naumann, "Briefkasten [29 September 1895]," where he recommends to the readers of Die Hilfe a number of books "for the study of the social question," all written by bourgeois national economists: Lujó Brentano, Gerhart von Schulze-Gävernitz, Heinrich Herkner, Georg Friedrich Knapp, Theodor von der Goltz, Max Sering, Otto de Terra and Max Weber.

¹¹⁶ That Naumann's outlook cannot be reduced to Weber's influence is evident from the fact that the pastor retained his social sensibility, which Weber tried in vain to cure him of and was later to deride with scorn as "miserabilism." In this respect, Naumann was in fact closer to conservative national economists such as Adolf Wagner or Gustav Schmoller than to Max Weber, who would not tolerate any trace of eudaemonism. A final aspect of Naumann's relative independence from Weber was his continued adherence to productivism, even if in secularized and nationalized form, despite Weber's sharp critique of this aspect of Naumann's thinking.

Chapter 3 | Friedrich Naumann's National Socialism: The Foundations

In the previous chapter we have seen how Naumann founded his national socialism on two ideational elements: national existentialism and national productivism. Now, as we move into a detailed analysis of Naumann's national socialism during its mature, full-blown existence from 1896 to 1903, we shall see how these two principles continued to serve as the foundations of Naumann's worldview. I first turn to Naumann's national existentialism which, as we observed earlier, comprised (in accordance with its Weberian origins) a nationalist framing of collective life; a conflictual understanding of the nation's existence in the world as one of perpetual struggle for its very survival as an independent and unified collectivity; and a belief in the need to subordinate social and economic policy to this alleged national struggle for existence. I will then move on to Naumann's national productivism with its broad conception of labor and its focus on the large landowners as the chief exploiters.

I. NATIONAL EXISTENTIALISM

National-existential framing of collective life

Naumann's national existentialism is grounded in a biologized understanding of human collective existence. In a series of lectures delivered in November 1901—and soon thereafter published under the title Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik¹—Naumann proffers a biologicistic, social-Darwinist conception—a “naturalist” conception, as he calls it—of world and national history.² Darwin's thought, he explains, has opened up the possibility of understanding humanity “no longer as a pulverized amassment [*pulverisierte Nebeneinanderhäufung*] of individuals,” but rather in terms of genera, species, and races.³ And it is the nation to which this social-Darwinist analytic applies first and foremost. What the “biological [i.e. Darwinian] conception sees with its

¹ Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik. It is important to distinguish this publication from Naumann's much better known book by the same title which appeared in 1906. This book was indeed based at its core on the abovementioned lectures, but in substantially revised and expanded form. Moreover, the book was published after Naumann had (at least formally) abandoned national socialism as the organizing principle of his Weltanschauung. So, for our purposes, it is the original lectures that interest us rather than the subsequent book.

² Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 12f. Although prior to these lectures Naumann mentions Darwin only rarely (as he does every other intellectual influence), there is clear evidence that Naumann was already thinking in Darwinian categories as early as 1888. See Naumann, “Was ist innere Mission?” 74f., where he resorts to Darwin's evolutionary theory in explaining the emergence and development of Wichern's Innere Mission (a Protestant organization for social relief wherein Naumann was active at the time). At the same time, it seems that the specifically conflictual character of Naumann's social Darwinism (to be discussed below) is a more recent element. In 1894 (Naumann, “Soziale Briefe an reiche Leute,” 185), Naumann was still using the term “struggle for existence” disapprovingly, presenting it as a feature of materialism and pitting it against the reconciliatory moment of Christianity. Even more dramatically, as late as the 5th of June 1895, after Max Weber's inaugural address (delivered in May) but before its publication (in July), Naumann was still able to utter the statement that “socialism is not to be grounded on Darwinism, but is to be clarified, purified, and energized by Jesus Christ.” Naumann, “Debatterede,” 463. We have noted earlier that at least since 1894, Weber had been articulating the idea of “struggle for existence” in precisely the same way as Naumann would begin using that expression. It would therefore not be unreasonable to surmise that it is Weber's intellectual influence which is responsible for Naumann's Darwinist turn.

³ Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 12.

first glimpse of human history” is “rising and declining nations,” which dynamic in turn constitutes “the first fundamental difference within humankind.”⁴ Judging from the lines that follow this statement, the “fundamental difference” Naumann refers to here seems to be not just the parcellation of humanity into different nations, but also the difference in the respective position of each nation on the “rising and declining” scale.

The idiom of “rising and declining nations” is Naumann’s version of the Darwinist principle of “natural selection.”⁵ This principle in its original Darwinian formulation consists in a bifurcation between those weeded out of existence and those who, on the contrary, not only survive but continue to prosper.⁶ But in contrast to some social Darwinists who have cast “natural selection” into a linear conception of social progress,⁷ Naumann’s Darwinian view of history is emphatically non-linear. The “rising” nations can only be certain of their felicitous survival until the next cycle of conflictual evolution; and, conversely, nations that had at some point in history seemed terminally doomed to extinction can rise (and have risen) up again from the ashes under new circumstances.⁸ The (at this stage tacit) implication is clear: no nation can allow itself to rest on its laurels. “Survival of the fittest” is not a final outcome but an endless process.

Although it is only in 1902 that this social-Darwinist inflection of Naumann’s national existentialism makes its appearance in systematic fashion, all the important elements just described are visible in more fragmentary form throughout the entire period under discussion, scattered across Naumann’s sprawling oeuvre. Naumann repeatedly gives voice to the belief that the struggle of nations for their existence and their consequent rise or fall is the very stuff that world history is made of. Naumann’s injunction to the German nation, therefore, is “be tough and stand firm! Look upon world history as a struggle for existence!”⁹ Whoever thinks that Germany can avoid partaking in the “great [international] struggles of the future” and live at the mercy of other nations without going under “knows nothing of world history. In international struggles [*Völkerkämpfen*] a nation [*Volk*] is worth only as much as it achieves.”¹⁰ And not “declining,” but only “rising” nations—which Naumann defines as nations with a growing population and entrepreneurial drive and upwardly mobile economic strata—can achieve

⁴ “Diese biologische Auffassung sieht mit ihrem erstem Blick in der Geschichte der Menschheit die steigenden und sinkenden Völker, und das scheint ihr der erste Grundunterschied innerhalb der Menschheit zu sein.” Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 12.

⁵ Naumann explicitly links the “rising and declining” metaphor to the idea of “natural selection” in explaining the emergence of aristocracies (i.e. elites): see Friedrich Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum (Köln and Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964[1900]), 140.

⁶ For Darwin, the existential struggle results in “natural selection,” that is to say, “survival of the fittest” and weeding out of the “unfit” species or individuals. Cf. James Allen Rogers, “Darwinism and Social Darwinism,” Journal of the History of Ideas 33.2 (1972): 275. Furthermore, the “fittest” do not merely survive in a minimal and damaged sense of the word; they do so as “vigorous, ... healthy, and ... happy” beings. Survival is felicitous (at least for the survivors). From Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, cited by Rogers, “Darwinism and Social Darwinism,” 271.

⁷ Rogers, “Darwinism and Social Darwinism,” 271.

⁸ Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 12f.

⁹ Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Nationalsozialen Vereins (vierter Vertretertag) zu Göttingen vom 1.-4. Oktober 1899 (Berlin-Schöneberg: ‘Hilfe’, 1899), 35.

¹⁰ Friedrich Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” Werke, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1897), 202.

something in the merciless arena of world history.¹¹ Germany, Naumann happily declares, is a rising nation, whereas France, Spain, and Italy are declining ones.¹² But even with respect to Germany Naumann warns of the danger of slipping back to the nation's pre-unification state of affairs, which in turn would spell its ruin.¹³

So far we can point out two fundamental aspects of Naumann's biologicistic conception of world history. First, it naturalizes and reifies the nation, construing it as a tangible, living entity rising and falling on the waves of history. There is no possibility within this conceptual framework to question the existence of nations as really living beings, to see them as contingent or constructed. Second, it posits the nation as the *only* collective living entity on the stage of world history. Social classes and other collectivities simply do not appear in Naumann world-historical landscape, except for their secondary role within the life of nations. Third, Naumann's biologism makes the existential predicament he attributes to the nation more tangible: by imbuing the nation with life, the prospect of death is made real as well.

The nationalist monopolization and existential intensification of world history spills over to a corollary demand for the monopolization of political subjectivity, involving a conflation of the national with the political. This tendency surfaces most clearly in Naumann's critique of the internationalism of German Social Democracy. In one article Naumann argues:

What does "international Social Democracy" actually mean? It means either a *national political* party participating occasionally in international congresses and negotiations; or an *unpolitical intellectual* orientation [*Geistesrichtung*] that carries in far-away time-periods rather than in the present.¹⁴

The message here is clear: if internationalism is pursued in any systematic fashion beyond the occasional congress (i.e. without retaining its national grounding), it leads its proponents into the realms of the unpolitical. This is because

politics can only be pursued for definite nations and in definite states. The English worker must pursue English politics and the German worker German politics. Were he not to do so, *he would be politically nothing* despite his numbers, his misery, and his enthusiasm.¹⁵

The national framework, in other words, is a necessary condition for the very possibility of politics. It is lexically prior to any other attribute of or motivation for political action, such as

¹¹ Naumann, "National-sozialer Katechismus," 204.

¹² Naumann, "National-sozialer Katechismus," 204; Friedrich Naumann, "Deutschland!" Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 24 June 1897; Friedrich Naumann, "Sedanfeier," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 2 September 1897; Friedrich Naumann, "Nationale Sozialpolitik," Werke, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln and Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1898), 237, 250; Friedrich Naumann, "Wochenschau," Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe 14 August 1898; Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Nationalsozialen Vereins (fünfter Vertretertag) zu Leipzig vom 30. September bis 3. Oktober 1900 (Berlin-Schöneberg: 'Hilfe', 1900), 40, 45.

¹³ Naumann, "Nationale Sozialpolitik," 233f.

¹⁴ Naumann, "Wochenschau [24 July 1898]." Emphasis added.

¹⁵ Naumann, "Nationale Sozialpolitik," 242. Emphasis added. For similar argumentation, see also Friedrich Naumann, "National und International," Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe 22 October 1899 and Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 71.

quantitative mass, moral justification, or inner passion.¹⁶ Elsewhere, Naumann touts the “power of the fatherland and the defense of the fatherland” as an “indispensable fundamental idea of all political activity,” as the “most vital of all political ideas,” as the “key to all other political questions.”¹⁷

In a manner consistent with his Weberian cast of mind, the conflation of the political with the national bears an existential urgency. Power politics is for Naumann a condition for the possibility of national life and prosperity in the context of the international “struggle for existence.”¹⁸ Nations that shy away from power politics in the international sphere are doomed to become subordinate satellites of stronger nations.¹⁹ That is why Naumann, probably under the influence not only of Weber but also of Treitschke,²⁰ considers state sovereignty and military power to be essential marks and guarantors of a living nation.²¹ The engagement in world-power politics is existentially prior to all other aspects of national life, just as we saw earlier that the national framework is prior to all other aspects of political life: “*Bildung*, culture, morality are never, never of any avail in world history if they are not protected and carried by power! ... He who wishes to live must struggle.”²² The policy implications of this view are clear: Germany must prepare itself to war by maintaining a “strong state,”²³ embarking energetically upon naval and other armament,²⁴ and modernizing its army, both technologically and organizationally.²⁵

In order to “gain the upper hand in the struggle for existence,” however, a nation must be not simply “strong” but rather “strong enough”²⁶—that is, stronger than others. Indeed, it seems

¹⁶ I borrow the term “lexical priority” from John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Revised ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 37f. A lexical order, Rawls explains here, “is an order which requires us to satisfy the first principle in the ordering before we can move on to the second, the second before we consider the third, and so on.”

¹⁷ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 154f.

¹⁸ Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 234.

¹⁹ Friedrich Naumann, *Weltpolitik und Sozialreform: Öffentlicher Vortrag* (Schöneberg-Berlin: Hilfe, 1899), 6.

²⁰ Cf. Heinrich von Treitschke, *Politics* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), esp. 14-18. Naumann refers to Treitschke a number of times in connection with these issues of sovereignty and power politics, including a power-political interpretation of the historical process leading to German unification; see e.g. Friedrich Naumann, “Wochenschau,” *Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe* 6 August 1899; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 254f. (where he hails Treitschke as the “literary herald of the new German Reich,” equivalent to Bismarck’s historical position in the political sphere); and Friedrich Naumann, “Bismarck-Probleme,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 15 January 1903. At the same time, Naumann goes beyond Treitschke in recognizing (like Weber) the importance of the national-social or political-economic nexus for the nation’s power-struggles.

²¹ Naumann, “National und International,” ; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 248-50. Accordingly, Naumann ascribes Germany’s existence as a unified nation to Prussia’s military might. See *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Nationalsozialen Vereins (dritter Vertretertag) zu Darmstadt vom 25.-28. September 1898* (Berlin: Eugen Kundt, 1898), 66; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 250f.

²² Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 309.

²³ *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Nationalsozialen Vereins (VII. Vertretertag) zu Hannover vom 2. bis 5. Oktober 1902* (Berlin-Schöneberg: ‘Hilfe’, 1902), 34f.

²⁴ Friedrich Naumann, “Deutschlands Seemacht,” *National-Soziale Volks-Zeitung* 2 January 1897; Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 201; Naumann, “Wochenschau [14 August 1898]”; Friedrich Naumann, “Sozialdemokratie und Heer,” *Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt* 26 April 1903; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, sec. III.6, 317ff.

²⁵ Naumann, “Sozialdemokratie und Heer,” .

²⁶ Naumann, “National und International;” Friedrich Naumann, “Was wollen wir?” *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 20 September 1896.

to be an obvious corollary of the imagery of rising and declining nations that there is an inherent inequality of power in the international sphere: some nations are stronger and healthier, while others are smaller and weaker and therefore face the imminent danger of ruin. This seems to be the logic leading Naumann to maintain that not all nations are in a position to attain full independence and sovereignty. The existence of Germany (and, derivatively, of any nation) as an independent entity is possible for Naumann “not because the nationality principle rules, but because we as a nation are strong enough to rule.”²⁷ In other words, there is no universal justification for the existence of nations, but solely the justification of power.²⁸ Nations with greater power will win the struggle for existence and subordinate the other, smaller nations, reducing the latter to inferior vassals. “The small [nations] have the right to be protected and divided; that is all.”²⁹

The importance of size—and the fear of being small—is in Naumann’s view dramatically amplified in modern times compared to earlier periods. As in his Christian-social phase, Naumann regards modernity as a distinct world-historical era, an “age of large-scale international commercial life [*Verkehrslieben*]”³⁰ in which national states have come to form themselves as “large enterprises [*Großbetriebe*] of a political-economic kind,” and it is in this form that they “struggle with each other” and engage in the “repartition of the globe.”³¹ In this “existential” struggle, the “political dwarf enterprises [*Zwergbetriebe*] of the chieftains in Africa sink of their own accord back into their nothingness.”³² Size, therefore, matters.³³

The fear of smallness quickly manifests itself aggressively in Naumann’s thinking in the form of an expansionist conception of power politics. What is required of a nation is more than just a passive, defensive presence on the world stage, but rather a proactive and expansive one. Thus at one point, Naumann defines “the national” as “the drive of the German nation to extend

²⁷ Naumann, “National und International.”

²⁸ As Naumann puts it: “there is by no means a right to sovereignty for all existing nations.” The introduction of a language of rights here is significant, as will be noted below. Naumann, “National und International.”

²⁹ Naumann also provides examples of nations that “will no longer become sovereign” due to their subordination to greater powers: “the Serbs, the Bulgarians, the Czechs, the Poles, the Finns, the Slavonians, the Greeks and so on.” Naumann, “National und International.” See also Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 308f.

³⁰ Friedrich Naumann, *Bebel und Bernstein: Vortrag* (Schöneberg-Berlin: ‘Hilfe’, 1899), 12; see also Naumann, *Weltpolitik und Sozialreform*, 3.

³¹ Naumann, *Bebel und Bernstein*, 12.

³² Naumann, *Weltpolitik und Sozialreform*, 3. Cf. Naumann, “National und International,” 2: “the political *Großbetrieb* wins. The political *Großbetrieb* is built according to the model of the ancient Roman Empire: national core and vanquished foreign mass. That is the fundamental form of Great Britain, Russia, France and Germany. Our national [*nationale*] politics therefore means: political *Großbetrieb* based on and for the benefit of the German nation [*Volk*].” Other texts wherein Naumann uses the term *Großbetrieb* in various forms and contexts, aside from the texts cited above, include: *Protokoll* (1898), 59; Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 235; *Protokoll* (1900), 45; Friedrich Naumann, “Im Zeitalter Wilhelms II.,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 3 October 1901; Friedrich Naumann, “Arbeit,” *Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt* 5 October 1902; *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Nationalsozialen Vereins* (VIII. Vertretertag) zu Göttingen vom 29. bis 30. August 1903 (Berlin-Schöneberg: ‘Hilfe’, 1903), 25.

³³ Naumann’s concern with size was merely part of a broader imperialist discourse of space in Wilhelmine Germany: see Sönke Neitzel, *Weltmacht oder Niedergang: Die Weltreichslehre im Zeitalter des Imperialismus* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2000), 84-7. This discourse included the notion of *Lebensraum* which was hatched by the Pan-Germans in the Wilhelmine era and later became (in)famous for its central place in Nazi ideology. Further references regarding the Pan-German and *völkisch*-antisemitic brands of the *Lebensraum* idea are provided in Chapter 7, below.

its influence on the globe.”³⁴ Expansionism eventually congeals, in Naumann’s view, into a hierarchical international order governed by power as its self-legitimizing organizing principle and dominated by empires composed of a “national core” and a periphery of “de-nationalized” subordinated peoples (i.e. nations stripped of their political independence).³⁵ This international order is also a violent one, characterized by a permanent horizon of (purportedly existential) war.³⁶ As Peter Walkenhorst has recently pointed out, there is little in this bleak vision to differentiate Naumann from the right-wing Pan-Germans, his contemporaries.³⁷ Naumann contributed in this way to a frightening elevation of the German geopolitical imagination at the turn of the twentieth century from a continental to a global scale, while preserving its violent and imperialistic choreography.

National-existential subordination of the social

It should by now be discernible that Naumann’s concept of the nation is primarily outward- rather than inward-oriented. That is to say, the nation is defined above all in terms of its power-relations vis-à-vis other nations rather than in terms of its inner composition or legitimation. This conception, of course, is directly continuous with Max Weber’s aforementioned shift of emphasis from the human qualities congealed in national life to the latter’s outermost perimeter, i.e. to the existential, power-political preconditions for the fostering of these human qualities. For Naumann, as for Weber, the nation’s domestic life remains within his field of vision but is in the final analysis subordinated to the nation’s inextricable entanglement in a ceaseless struggle for its existence among other nations:

Foreign policy is more important and more momentous than domestic policy. Naturally the two are closely connected ... Both kinds of policy are at bottom merely the workings of the same whole body ... But foreign policy has nevertheless at any individual moment

³⁴ Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 201.

³⁵ Naumann, “National und International.”

³⁶ Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 201; Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 237; Naumann, “Wochenschau [10 April 1898]”; Naumann, “Wochenschau [14 August 1898].”

³⁷ Peter Walkenhorst, Nation - Volk - Rasse: Radikaler Nationalismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1890-1914 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 177f: “the conviction regarding the existential necessity of territorial expansion was no specificity of the radical nationalists, but was widely prevalent in educated bourgeois circles ... Friedrich Naumann for example advocated an explicit conjoining of expansive ‘world politics’ and social reform. ... [T]he members of the ‘National-Social Association’ found themselves in extensive agreement with the agenda of the Pan-Germans, differentiating themselves only by their domestic goals.” Walkenhorst, however, seems to share the prevalent tendency to conceive of Naumann’s nationalist politics and social reformism as two discrete elements that are merely ‘conjoined’ rather than fused into a new, distinctive synthesis.

Naumann and the National-Socials, like the Pan-Germans, were also actively involved in the nationalist Navy League: see Geoff Eley, Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980), 85-98. Yet Eley writes anachronistically and teleologically about “Naumann’s nascent social liberalism” (97) at a time when Naumann’s ideological commitments and practical agenda are best captured by the term he himself preferred: national socialism. Eley similarly misconstrues the National-Social Association as liberal in Geoff Eley, “Defining Social Imperialism: Use and Abuse of an Idea,” Social History 1.3 (1976): 289.

For favorable comments by Naumann on the Navy League, see Friedrich Naumann, Flotte und Reaktion: Vortrag (Schöneberg-Berlin: ‘Hilfe’, 1899), 4.

the greater responsibility; for all inner reforms, all liberty, justice, welfare, *Bildung* fall and break at the moment when the outward power falls.³⁸

In order to understand how exactly Naumann conceives of the relationship between the international and the domestic, we must take Naumann's biologization-cum-nationalization of world history as our point of departure. For it is the national-existential reading of world history that leads Naumann to scour the social in search of forces and domains capable of sustaining the life of the nation in the context of its "existential" predicament. And it is the biologicistic reading of world history that leads him to cast those social forces and domains in biological terms. In other words, the biologization of the nation in its outward existence on the choppy waves of world history inevitably trickles down to the inner composition of the nation as well, coming to rest conceptually (as we shall presently see) in the category of *population*.

What is the crucial factor that, in Naumann's view, distinguishes "rising" nations from "declining" ones? It is above all the respective state of their populations, or more specifically: the traits embodied in the "quantity and quality" of the "human material" in both its physical and mental aspects.³⁹ Population is a repository of "human energies," and world history itself is nothing but "a history of migrating focal points [*wandernder Centralpunkte*]" of these energies.⁴⁰ Countries that lack what Germany is lucky enough to possess, namely "the mass of children," display "weariness and lassitude" in all aspects of their existence, including "technical incompetence" and the development of "political languidness."⁴¹ This lack of energy eventually translates itself into national "decline" and, ultimately, death.

Thus population is in Naumann's thought a category that captures the biological, energetic, vitalistic aspect of society. When Naumann looks at the social, he sees it before and above all else as population, as congealed energy; and he wants to harness this energy in the service of the nation's violent and expansionist endeavors in the outer world. In an article published just a few weeks after the founding of the National-Social Association, Naumann exclaims: "What an abundance of national energies [*vaterländische Kräfte*] lies bound and oppressed in the German working class!" Elsewhere Naumann maintains that the German army needs the "childbirth rate and physical strength" [*Kinderzahl und Körperkraft*] of the farmers and the workers in order to prevent the German nation from becoming a "Russian Gouvernement."⁴² Most blatantly, Naumann raises a passionate demand for "men, men, so that we can wage war! The masses are decisive in modern war."⁴³ Thus domestic society, framed biologically as

³⁸ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 268f.

³⁹ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 11f.

⁴⁰ In earlier times those "focal points" were "the Assyrians and the Babylonians"; in the present they are "the nations situated around the northern half of the Atlantic Ocean." Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 13.

⁴¹ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 13.

⁴² Naumann, "Wochenschau [1 May 1898]."

⁴³ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 301. Naumann's repeated deployment of the term *Kraft* seems to echo an intellectual current that had taken hold in Germany (as well as other European countries) during the second half of the nineteenth century: namely, the migration of the concept of "energy, or *Kraft*," from the natural sciences to the consideration of social and economic questions. "The metaphor of *Kraft*," writes Anson Rabinbach who has documented this phenomenon, "was ... adopted by physiologists and social thinkers who saw in the new principle of energy conservation implications for the conservation of energy in society as well as in nature." Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*, 68. The preoccupation with social energy, however, was accompanied by concerns about the *dissipation* of energy and its potentially pernicious implications. In the "paradoxical relationship between energy and entropy" that gradually emerged within this naturalistic discourse, "[t]he powerful and protean world of work,

population, becomes an instrument of international violence rather than an arena of emancipatory change. Even Naumann's call for the political inclusion of the workers in the national state is tainted by his biological instrumentalization of the population; it is designed primarily, not to bring about political emancipation, but rather to emancipate the workers' energy so it can be yoked for national purposes: "Liberated serfs are the strength [*Kraft*] of the fatherland, for they bring with them youthful energy [*Jugendkraft*], new burning fire, enthusiasm."⁴⁴

It is in the same light that we need to understand Naumann's departure from the Malthusian paradigm regarding population. Although Naumann shares with the Malthusian-Darwinian tradition a preoccupation with population growth, he departs from that line of thought in two crucial ways. First, Naumann differs in his conception of the relationship between population and the struggle for existence. For both Malthus and Darwin, population growth was the fundamental, originary fact of human existence. From that basic fact flowed everything else: the scarcity of resources; the struggle for existence; and natural selection with its bifurcated outcome of survival for some and extinction for others.⁴⁵ For Naumann, by contrast, it is the struggle for existence among nations which constitutes the basic fact of world history.⁴⁶ Population loses in Naumann's account its causal primacy vis-à-vis the struggle for existence, but it also and more fundamentally loses its logical primacy, for it is only from within the conceptual framework of the struggle for existence that the category of population is picked up as a category capturing examined and acquires its significance to begin with. This conceptual ordering underscores the instrumentalization of the social for power-political ends.

This instrumentalization, in turn, makes clear the meaning of Naumann's second point of departure from the Malthusian line of thinking: his optimism with regard to population growth. If Naumann rejects Malthus's pessimism, it is not primarily because of any intrinsic value he attaches to the life of human individuals, but because he covets the vitalistic, energetic properties of the population *en masse* in order to domesticate and harness it in the service of the nation's "struggle for existence."⁴⁷ Nor is Naumann perturbed like Malthus—and like most nineteenth-

production, and performance is set against the decrescent order of fatigue, exhaustion, and decline." Rabinbach, The Human Motor, 63. While there is no explicit evidence that Naumann was drawing directly upon this discourse of *Kraft*, the resemblances are too striking to ignore: not just his thinking in terms of energy, but also the duality of rise and decline, which we have seen is endemic to his social Darwinism. At the same time, Naumann differed from other propagators of this discourse (at least as surveyed by Rabinbach) in embedding it within a social-Darwinist framework, asserting that the energy contained in the population is to be funnelled into the nation's struggle for existence.

⁴⁴ Friedrich Naumann, "Vaterland und Freiheit," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 27 November 1896.

⁴⁵ Gregory Claeys, "The 'Survival of the Fittest' and the Origins of Social Darwinism," Journal of the History of Ideas 61.2 (2000): 228-33; Richard Weikart, "The Origins of Social Darwinism in Germany, 1859-1895," Journal of the History of Ideas 54.3 (1993): 476; Rogers, "Darwinism and Social Darwinism," . Cf. Darwin's succinct statement in *Descent of Man* as cited by Rogers (p. 275): "Natural selection follows from the struggle for existence; and this from a rapid rate of increase."

⁴⁶ Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 12.

⁴⁷ Cf. Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 19f. This revision of the traditional Malthusian suspicion of population is not one of theoretical carelessness; it reflects a deep-seated hostility apparently harbored by Naumann against Malthus' ideas, a hostility developed during his days as a Christian socialist. See Naumann, "Unsere Stellung zur Sozialdemokratie," 78-81; Friedrich Naumann, "Der Christ im Zeitalter der Maschine," Werke, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964[1894]), 316. See also Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 15f.

century liberals and conservatives—by the threat that the juggernaut of population, constantly spinning out of control, presents for the maintenance of order.⁴⁸ Instead, Naumann exudes a sense of confidence in the possibility of subduing the population and turning it into a collective “human motor” (to borrow Anson Rabinbach’s image):⁴⁹ a physico-energetic mass supplying energy to the nation’s “existential” endeavors, military as well as economic.⁵⁰ Nor do the socioeconomic problems attending on population growth present to Naumann an insurmountable obstacle, for they can be adequately addressed through new technology, productive labor, and social reform.⁵¹ “Keeping up the human quality” of the nation constitutes in fact the very *raison d’être* of social reform,⁵² for “the nation [*Volk*] as a whole is a growing body” and “socialism” is part of this “living becoming of the nation [*lebendigen Werden des Volkes*].” Hence “if we stop growing, then social reform will stop, but as long as children grow, new needs never stop arising.”⁵³

Let us recapitulate the sequence of theoretical moves comprising Naumann’s national existentialism: a biologicistic conception of world history as a social-Darwinist struggle for existence spills over into a biologicistic understanding of nations themselves as real, living beings. The social is then recast through this biologicistic prism as population: not primarily a collection of juridico-political or any other kind of subjects, but a bundle of energies that needs to be redesigned as a collective human motor. I use the metaphor of the motor advisedly, for Naumann’s concept of population as energetic mass is perfectly congruent with Anson Rabinbach’s insight concerning the metaphor of the motor as “refer[ring] ... to the industrial model of a calculable and natural channeling of energy.”⁵⁴ Just as “motors convert the supply of nourishment into heat, and heat into force,”⁵⁵ so too Naumann’s national population converts the food, clothes, and raw materials provided to it into national force, producing (inter alia) industrial goods with which Germany sets out to conquer the world market and secure its material means of existence. Population is a source of national energy, “that national energy of physical and mental nature, that creative energy [*Schöpferkraft*] that enables a nation to become

⁴⁸ Throughout the nineteenth century the Malthusian category of population was a mark of the general anxiety about the unruliness of the masses. Adolph Wagner is an example of a leading conservative intellectual and economist in the *Kaiserreich* who accepted Malthus’s theory. See Kenneth D. Barkin, *The Controversy over German Industrialization 1890-1902* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 147. Naumann himself in fact explicitly attacked Wagner’s Malthusianism: Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 56f. In addition to Wagner, Heinrich von Treitschke—another stellar intellectual of the time—also implicitly accepted the Malthusian logic: see Treitschke, *Politics*, 107. Finally, Richard Weikart apparently includes economic liberals among those social Darwinists who “took Darwin’s exposition of Malthus as a legitimation of Malthus’s ideas on human population pressure.” Weikart, “Origins,” 474.

⁴⁹ Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*.

⁵⁰ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 20.

⁵¹ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 15f., 21f.; cf. Naumann, “Unsere Stellung zur Sozialdemokratie,” 78-81; Naumann, “Der Christ im Zeitalter der Maschine.”

⁵² Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 22.

⁵³ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 111f.

⁵⁴ Rabinbach, “The End of the Utopias of Labor,” 39. Rabinbach, however, while offering tremendously illuminating insights into productivism and the image of the motor, nevertheless overlooks this collective modality of the human motor, restricting his account to the application of that metaphor to individual bodies alone.

⁵⁵ Rabinbach, “The End of the Utopias of Labor,” 40.

something at all, the energy that ... injects an abundance of strong, whole, healthy men into the nation.”⁵⁶

Naumann’s energetic approach to population inserts the latter into a matrix of domination that eludes the seminal theoretical framework developed by Foucault in his attempt to understand the concept of population and the mechanisms of power that accompany it. Foucault considers population and asserts its historical significance from the standpoint of its relationship to the emergence of a “technique of security,” with population “as both the object and subject of these mechanisms of security.”⁵⁷ While the notion of “security” may well be fecund in trying to make sense of liberal and/or post-1945 concepts of population (which is what Foucault’s analysis is mostly focused on),⁵⁸ it is not the most productive theoretical angle for understanding non-liberal concepts of population in the 1870-1945 period—and this is precisely where Friedrich Naumann is located. In Naumann’s thinking, population is not imbricated in mechanisms of security, but rather in projects of *mobilization*. Naumann sees in the population an energetic mass, a potentiality that needs to be unleashed and put into motion, albeit in a carefully orchestrated way such that it serves the national-existential, power-political ends assigned to it. Population for Naumann is not in need of regulation designed to protect individuals and society from danger,⁵⁹ but in need of assembling with the aim of producing national power; and in need, also, of ongoing maintenance through social policy and reform to ensure the uninterrupted working of the power-machine. In this sense, Naumann foresaw and at the same time contributed ideationally to the rise of one of the defining features underlying the European catastrophe of the first half of the twentieth century: namely, what the conservative-revolutionary thinker Ernst Jünger has called “total mobilization.”⁶⁰ Consider the following passage from Jünger’s essay by the same name, which is worth quoting at length because the similarity to the overall thrust of Naumann’s thinking—and even to some of his specific utterances cited earlier—is striking:

⁵⁶ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 30.

⁵⁷ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 11.

⁵⁸ In Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, the concepts of population and security coalesce in the theoretical context of liberal political economy. In Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79*, trans. Graham Burchell (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), we find the same liberal context with a greater historical focus on the post-1945 period. More precisely, Foucault is interested in theoretical developments within economic liberalism that began in the 1920s and 1930s and reached their height after 1945 (see e.g. 68f).

⁵⁹ Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 65f.

⁶⁰ Ernst Jünger, “Total Mobilization (1930),” trans. Joel Golb and Richard Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993). Mobilization as a distinctive principle of government of population has eluded Foucault. In his 1975-76 lectures, Foucault does take a step towards identifying a power mechanism which is not security and which links biopolitics to “existential” wars, namely “racism”—the labelling of a collective other as a mortal enemy to one’s own collectivity: “the emergence of ... biopower ... inscribes [racism] in the mechanisms of the State. It is at this moment that racism is inscribed as the basic mechanism of power, as it is exercised in modern States. ... the first function of racism [is] to fragment, to create caesuras within the biological continuum addressed by biopower.” Michel Foucault, ‘*Society Must Be Defended*’: *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 254f. But Foucault analysis of racism as a power mechanism is very limited; he does not show in any detail what forms of government of population are contoured by racism and how they are deployed. In fact, racism ends up in his discussion merely as a *justifying* principle for conducting war in a “political system centered upon biopower”; it does not tell us anything about the actual governmental mechanisms that go about placing the population at the service of war. It is in order to cover this blind conceptual spot that I propose the notion of “mobilization.”

We can now pursue the process by which the growing conversion of life into energy, the increasingly fleeting content of all binding ties in deference to mobility, gives an ever-more radical character to the act of mobilization ... [B]ecause of the huge increase in expenses, it is impossible to cover the costs of waging war on the basis of a fixed war budget; instead, a stretching of all possible credit ... is necessary to keep the machinery in motion. In the same way, the image of war as armed combat merges into the more extended image of a gigantic labor process. In addition to the armies that meet on the battlefields, originate the modern armies of commerce and transport, foodstuffs, the manufacture of armaments—the army of labor in general. ... [T]here is no longer any movement without at least indirect use for the battlefield. In this unlimited marshaling of potential energies ... we perhaps find the most striking sign of the dawn of the age of labor. ... In order to deploy energies of such proportion, fitting one's sword-arm no longer suffices; for this is a mobilization [*Rüstung*] that requires extension to the deepest marrow, life's finest nerve. Its realization is the task of total mobilization: an act which ... conveys the extensively branched and densely veined power supply of modern life towards the great current of martial energy.⁶¹

National holism

An interesting way in which Naumann's nationalist subordination of social life and social reform reveals itself is his broad, holistic conception of social classes; a national holism registered terminologically in his recurring usage of the expressions *Volksteile* and *Volkskörper* ("parts of the nation" and "national body" respectively). The following passage offers itself as a good starting point for analyzing this motif:

A state needs certain parts of the nation [*Volksteile*] that push the state forward by way of lifting themselves up. In such parts there is energy and appetite and self-consciousness, in them men really capable of governing emerge, and occasionally the thinking of such up-and-coming parts raises itself above its usual scope. In such a way the Junkers had their time of greatness, ... and in the same way the German bourgeoisie started to become state-forming [*staatsbildend*] in the middle of our [i.e. nineteenth] century.⁶²

Naumann then goes on to claim that under existing conditions, there is no single part of the nation on which the Kaiser can rely: neither the Junkers, because they no longer represent the historical progress of the nation;⁶³ nor the bourgeoisie, since they are no longer internally united; nor yet again the "working masses," because they are not yet sufficiently "organized and nationalized."⁶⁴

In this passage, Junkers and bourgeoisie and workers are all equally construed as "parts of the nation." The fundamental criterion for evaluating these social groups is the way they relate

⁶¹ Jünger, "Total Mobilization," 126f.

⁶² Friedrich Naumann, "Das persönliche Regiment," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 14 July 1897.

⁶³ On the Junkers as a *Volksteil* in decline in terms of its economic and political significance, see also Naumann, "National-sozialer Katechismus," 211.

⁶⁴ Naumann, "Das persönliche Regiment." On another occasion Naumann says of the workers that, like all the other "classes of the nation [*Volksklassen*]," they too have a right to a greater share in the national income. Naumann, "Nationale Sozialpolitik," 238.

to the national whole as it moves through history. Naumann determines the past, present, and future contribution of each part to the national whole according to whether they are rising or declining, the degree of “energy and appetite” that they possess, and how these energies are assembled and deployed: are they “united?” Are they “organized and nationalized?”

In another piece, Naumann subjects the farmers and the artisans to the same evaluative procedure. He starts by praising them for being “admirable component parts of the nation [*Bestandteile des Volkes*],” only then to proclaim that politically they are not in a position to play a central, leading role in national life:

In government they have always been weak, their drive to organize [*Organisationstrieb*] is not great, their point of view is the preservation of the existing stock. ... [T]hey will impede German big industry and will pose even greater difficulties to the German navy than today’s Zentrum [Party].⁶⁵

Not only, then, do they possess insufficient and improperly mustered energy, but furthermore their phlegmatic comportment occludes the proper flow of the national energies that do exist elsewhere.

In addition to construing all social groups as parts of the same national whole and judging them from that perspective, Naumann’s concept of *Volksteile* possesses several other dimensions. First, it conveys the idea that all social groups share common interests deriving from the whole that they form. Consider, for instance, the following statement: “It is the life of the whole nation [*Volk*] in all its parts that ... for the next century depends on the German navy.”⁶⁶ And again: “All parts of the nation [*Volksteile*] in city and countryside are interested in our [i.e. Germany] obtaining these commodities.”⁶⁷ The various “parts” also share the consequences of national adversity. Thus Naumann likens the grain tariffs to “cold snow ... [falling] on all parts of the nation [*Volksteile*].”⁶⁸

Second, the concept of *Volksteile* involves the idea of interdependence between the parts and the whole. The nation, we have seen, is dependent on the existence of certain “rising” parts that carry the whole nation with them in their upward movement. At the same time, the rising *Volksteil* must also consciously acknowledge the fact that its fate is bound up with that of the nation: “A rising *Volksteil* serves itself and the fatherland at the same time if it says: I rise along with the fatherland!”⁶⁹ Referring specifically to the working masses, Naumann argues that they

⁶⁵ Friedrich Naumann, “Ein Mittelstandsparlament,” *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 2 April 1897. See also Naumann, “Wochenschau [20 February 1898]”: “The farmer ... is still a very sizeable and very important part of the nation [*Volksteil*], but he is no longer the nation [*Volk*] itself.” As for the *Mittelstand*, Naumann elsewhere points up its inner heterogeneity, claiming it is composed of a multitude of different “*Volksteile*” with different social and political interests. See Naumann, “Wochenschau [9 January 1898].”

⁶⁶ Naumann, “Deutschlands Seemacht.”

⁶⁷ Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 239.

⁶⁸ Friedrich Naumann, “Zolltarif und Weihnachten,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 18 December 1902.

⁶⁹ Friedrich Naumann, “Gegen Göhre,” *Werke*, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964[1899]), 265.

are “one of the most important parts of the life of the state [*Teile des Staatslebens*]. ... Every progress of the masses is in our eyes a progress of the whole nation [*Volk*].”⁷⁰

Third, the holistic imagery implies interdependence among the parts themselves. This element appears in connection to Naumann’s support for elevating the living standards of industrial workers:

The welfare [of the wage laborer] entails the welfare of those parts of the nation [*Volksteile*] that serve him as artisans, merchants, physicians, teachers, men of letters. Therefore the social question is in no way simply an affair that belongs purely to industrial workers. It is a national and educational question [*Volks- und Bildungsfrage*] in the widest and highest sense. Whoever labors on the spiritual condition of the industrial worker, works on the national spirit [*Volksgeist*] of the future.⁷¹

The interdependence of all “parts of the nation” thus entails a nationalization of the whole social question. National holism transmutes into national socialism.

This brings us to the final point concerning Naumann’s quasi-organic language of *Volksteile* and *Volkskörper*, namely its embodiment of a distinctively national-holistic perspective for making sense of social and political problems. Thus Naumann understands social reform as having the aim of developing an “elasticity of the German national body [*Volkskörper*].”⁷² In 1896, apparently before the founding of the National-Social Association, Naumann claims the main task of socialism consists in integrating the workers as active, energetic participants in the “overall national body [*Gesamtkörper des Volkes*]. ... Rousing this will to act in concert in the national body seems to us more of a socialist task than extending the area of [social-philanthropic] aid.”⁷³ Naumann also raises the need for a national-holistic mode of knowledge/power. Speaking of the role of entrepreneurs in national life, he suggests that, while superior in their technical and business-related knowledge, they nevertheless need to be complemented at the national leadership by figures who are familiar with “national life in all its parts.”⁷⁴

Naumann’s holistic terminology extends back into his Christian-social phase. For the pastor, writing in the early 1890s, the various parts of society constitute discrete “organs” of a single “national body.”⁷⁵ Accordingly, the Christian-socials “place all [their] energy on healing the national body.”⁷⁶ Much of this effort is directed at the excessive concentration of capital,

⁷⁰ Friedrich Naumann, “Weshalb nennen wir uns Sozialisten?” Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe 10 December 1899.

⁷¹ Friedrich Naumann, “Nationaler Sozialismus (1899),” Werke, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 256. See also Naumann, “Weshalb nennen wir uns Sozialisten?” where he argues that socialism does not need to base itself exclusively on the industrial workers, but on all those who live in interdependence with the labor wages, i.e. “artisans, merchants, farmers.” The “representatives of *Bildung*” also have a strong stake in the elevation of the masses, though more on “moral and national” rather than material grounds.

⁷² Naumann, “Deutschland!”

⁷³ Friedrich Naumann, “Einige Gedanken über die Gründung christlich-sozialer Vereine (1896),” Werke, ed. Walter Uhsadel, vol. 1 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 501f.

⁷⁴ Friedrich Naumann, “Unternehmerpolitik,” Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt 25 May 1902.

⁷⁵ Naumann, “Christlich-Sozial,” 360.

⁷⁶ Naumann, “Unsere Stellung zur Sozialdemokratie,” 89.

which is in danger of leading to “a deadly illness in the national body.”⁷⁷ Naumann’s holistic imagery from his Christian-social period possesses a more intensely organicist hue compared to the national socialist phase, yet a clearly discernible sediment of this organicism continues to haunt Naumann’s social imagination.

Beyond his own Christian-social past, however, Naumann’s continued adherence as a national socialist to an organicist mode of thinking may perhaps also be attributed to the intellectual impact of national economy. Organicism had lodged itself in German national economy as early as Wilhelm Roscher in mid-century, but perhaps it is to the influence of national economist Gerhart von Schulze-Gaevernitz that we should turn our attention. Naumann befriended Schulze-Gaevernitz in the early 1890s, at exactly the same time when the latter was propounding an organic, holistic view of society in his two major works, Social Peace and Carlyle.⁷⁸ In Social Peace, for example, Schulze-Gaevernitz writes:

It is in the idea of a social organism ... that we find the higher unity [between liberalism and socialism] that we are seeking. The characteristic of organic development is found in the progressive subordination of the part to the whole and the progressive differentiation of the parts into organs. This is accompanied by a process of adaptation of the units composing the whole to the conditions of the whole [...]⁷⁹

We are once again impelled to acknowledge that, while Naumann’s Christian-social origins may go some way towards explaining the existence of certain elements in Naumann’s national socialism, additional factors may nevertheless be needed to explain how those elements were able to survive in the new nationalist context. The evidence for linking Naumann’s national holism with Schulze-Gävernitz’s organicism is, to be sure, merely circumstantial; but it is highly suggestive of the ways in which the intellectual tradition of national economy may have mediated between the two phases, the Christian and the national, in the development of Naumann’s socialism.

II. NATIONAL PRODUCTIVISM

The previous chapter ended by showing how Naumann replaced the Christian foundations of his productivism with nationalist foundations. Naumann remained faithful to his national productivism throughout the national-social phase of his public life. In his National-Social Catechism of 1897, Naumann argues as follows:

135. What kind of state should Germany become?

A labor-state [*Arbeitsstaat*].

⁷⁷ Naumann, “Soziale Briefe an reiche Leute,” 171.

⁷⁸ Gerhart von Schulze-Gaevernitz, Social Peace: A Study of the Trade Union Movement in England, trans. C. M. Wicksteed (London: Sonnenschein, 1893), originally published in 1890; Gerhart von Schulze-Gaevernitz, Carlyle: Seine Welt- und Gesellschaftsanschauung, 2nd expanded ed. (Berlin: Hofmann, 1897), originally published in 1892. Naumann recommends both of these books by Schulze-Gaevernitz to the readers of Die Hilfe, among others written by bourgeois national economists, as guides “to the study of the social question.” Naumann, “Briefkasten [29 September 1895].”

⁷⁹ Schulze-Gaevernitz, Social Peace, 289. For organicist statements in the book on Carlyle, see Schulze-Gaevernitz, Carlyle, 16, 26f., 51-4, 69, 80, 83, 91, 94.

136. *What does that mean?*

The national income should belong first and foremost to labor.

137. *To whom does it belong now?*

Almost half of it belongs to interest and rent [*Zins und Rente*].⁸⁰

Two pivotal national-productivist features appear in this short passage. First, labor is elevated here to the status of the defining attribute of the future German state. This position is reiterated by Naumann several years later when he extols labor as the foundation of all life and culture.⁸¹ Secondly, labor is contrasted in the passage just cited, not with capital (as in the prevailing socialist discourse in Germany at the time), but with “interest and rent.” This second feature is subsequently elaborated further in the same text as Naumann turns to distinguish between good and bad forms of interest and rent, judged according to their conduciveness or impediment to productivity. The good forms are among the “preconditions of progress,” while other forms are bad because they reduce the “returns of labor.” These bad forms of “interest and rent” include: “empire-, state-, and municipal debts and urban and rural land rent *earned without labor* [*arbeitslose Bodenrente*; emphasis added].” Naumann accordingly proposes the nationalization of mortgage banks so as to prevent “unlabored [*mühelos*] profit out of the rising land rent.”⁸² Elsewhere Naumann makes a similar productivist distinction between good and bad rent whereby the former is that of the “poor random house owner ... who conducts his laborious business [*sein mühevolltes Geschäft macht*] like any other businessman,” whereas the bad form of rent is that of the

comfortable big money that ... collects duties from every person who has set his foot in the city. Here it is a matter of unlabored earnings [*mühelosen Gewinn*], of wealth that is not ‘extracted labor’ [*gewonnene Arbeit*], at any rate not the labor of the proprietor and his assignor.⁸³

Not only is this kind of rent *non-productive* since it does not derive from labor; it is also *anti-productive* because it exacts disproportionate costs from the rent-paying industrial enterprises. Juxtaposing productive industry with anti-productive land rent and casting the opposition into a national mold, Naumann concludes: “if our industry is to conquer the world market, it must take up the struggle against the land-duties.”⁸⁴

Let us continue to follow Naumann as he develops his productivism still further in the Catechism:

156. *Who belongs to the working masses?*

Anyone whose income is based more on work than on interest and rent.

157. *So do you also reckon merchants, entrepreneurs, clerks, artisans, farmers among the working people?*

⁸⁰ Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 216.

⁸¹ Naumann, “Arbeit.”

⁸² Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 216-18. See also Friedrich Naumann, “Der Bodenzoll,” Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 22 October 1896.

⁸³ Naumann, “Der Bodenzoll.”

⁸⁴ Naumann, “Der Bodenzoll.”

Fully, and we want to represent their interests insofar as they are interests of labor vis-à-vis property.⁸⁵

Not only “interest” and “rent,” but also “property” is construed in this passage as income not derived from labor. And at the same time, the concept of labor is expanded to include the bourgeoisie and the farmers, such that the scope of the “property” against which “labor” needs to struggle is greatly circumscribed.

Naumann remained faithful to this broad, inclusive conception of labor throughout the period under discussion. Thus in 1898 he envisions the “laboring strata, farmers and industry” working together to drive the (non-productive) large landowners out of political power and back into their castles.⁸⁶ And in 1902, speaking of his age as “the age of labor,” he once again extols labor “of all strata” as the foundation of all culture and of life as such.⁸⁷

This kind of labor holism is reiterated by Naumann in the context of discussing Germany’s struggle on the world market. The aim of the “industrial world-struggle of our nation,” declares Naumann in one of his lectures, is the “victory of German work over English work.”⁸⁸ On other occasions he writes about “introduc[ing] German work into the world market”⁸⁹ and about “the German nation [*Volk*] with its work” going “from Hamburg and Bremen ... out into the world.”⁹⁰ In all of these cases, the term *Arbeit* obviously refers, not specifically to the working-class, but to the products of German industry as a whole. When confronting other nations in the world market, German industry sheds its inner heterogeneity and appears as a single laboring body at the service of the nation’s struggle for existence.

If farmers and artisans, entrepreneurs and factory workers are all part of Germany’s “laboring strata,” it is the large landowners, mainly the agrarian but also the urban landowners, who are the most important non-productive force, the arch-enemies of the national-productive interest. The Junkers or large landowners [*Großgrundbesitzer*] concentrated mostly east of the Elbe are a “stumbling block for the entire German nation [*Volk*].”⁹¹ They are the “main obstacle” to the “policy of preserving the German nation and state.”⁹² They stand in the way of reforms through which “a recuperation felt throughout all the veins of national life would be achieved.”⁹³ Their ascendancy is the “fundamental detriment [*Grundscha-den*] of German politics.”⁹⁴

⁸⁵ Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 219.

⁸⁶ Naumann, “Wochenschau [3 April 1898].”

⁸⁷ Naumann, “Arbeit.” See also Friedrich Naumann, “Das Ergebnis von Erfurt. IV,” Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 17 December 1896: “We do not stand up for merely one kind or form of labor, but for its various kinds and forms (large enterprise, medium enterprise, small enterprise, each in its proper place).”

⁸⁸ Naumann, Weltpolitik und Sozialreform, 10.

⁸⁹ Friedrich Naumann, “Zur Hundertjahrfeier Wilhelms I.,” National-Soziale Volks-Zeitung 20 March 1897.

⁹⁰ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 327.

⁹¹ Friedrich Naumann, “Der Kampf um’s Brot,” Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 20 July 1897; Friedrich Naumann, “Der Grossgrundbesitz,” Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 22 July 1897; Naumann, Weltpolitik und Sozialreform, 14.

⁹² Friedrich Naumann, “Ostelbien,” Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 26 August 1897.

⁹³ Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 249.

⁹⁴ Naumann, “Wochenschau [10 September 1899].”

Accordingly, the political defeat of the big landowners is a “precondition” for the “political greatness and well-being of our entire fatherland.”⁹⁵

Naumann’s hostility to the Junkers derives from his national productivism: the social and economic policy promoted by the Junkers is pernicious to the entire productive metabolism of the nation. If farmers, workers, and industrial entrepreneurs are all components of the national population-motor discussed above, the large landowners—both urban and agrarian—are not merely external to that motor but also impede its proper functioning. In one of his articles, Naumann takes the reader three or four decades into a German future extrapolated from the present as he perceives it. In that future Germany, no more than three out of every seven individuals live either directly or indirectly from the land. “The rest . . . are industrial Germany. These [people] are under the strain of the land-lords [*Bodenherren*].”

The rent for all the stores and factories is so high that [the worker] can scarcely buy a coat or bread without paying the land-lord a tax in pennies and dimes. All social progress is swallowed up by the rising ground rent. Landownership holds sway, the large landowners in the countryside, the land sharks in the cities.

Not only ground rent, but also the price of bread has shot up in this hypothetical future due to the protectionist policies promoted by the agrarian landowners. Consequently, “all industries are bleeding on account of the prices of land and bread, and yet these industries are told every day that one cannot live without them.”⁹⁶ In this piece, then, the entrepreneurs and workers making up “industrial Germany” suffer together at the hands of the anti-productive urban as well as agrarian landowners. Naumann ends the article with an exhilarating vision of the flowering of the nation’s “greatness” in the wake of a gradual shift by the Kaiser away from the Conservatives (who are consistently regarded by Naumann as the political arm of the large landowners)⁹⁷ and towards the “productive people [*schaffenden Volk*]” of the Left. When thus set free,

the German spirit will . . . conquer the world. In the great world-struggle of the Continent against Englishdom [*Engländertum*] Germany will have the lead, a Germany full of social progress and full of competent, self-conscious citizens.⁹⁸

This dramatic ending situates the national productivism permeating the whole article within a national-existentialist horizon. It is the latter that provides Naumann’s productivism with its ultimate justification and *telos*.⁹⁹

While the article just discussed focuses on the opposition between urban industry and large landowners, the productivist coalition struggling against the latter comprises the independent farmers as well. Naumann views the farmers very approvingly as an essential

⁹⁵ Friedrich Naumann, “Getreidezölle und innere Kolonisation,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 31 October 1901: 71.

⁹⁶ Naumann, “Wochenschau [24 September 1899].”

⁹⁷ This is discussed further in the next chapter.

⁹⁸ Naumann, “Wochenschau [24 September 1899].” Cf. Naumann, “Der Bodenzoll”: “if our industry is to conquer the world market . . . it must take up the struggle against the land-duties” which drain businesses and workers of their capital.

⁹⁹ The (social-)liberal strain surfacing in the above-cited passage, we might note, is peripheral in comparison to the national productivism guiding the article as a whole.

element in the German nation.¹⁰⁰ They belong to the “great laboring strata” along with the industrial sector, and as such they number among the “bearers” of the German state.¹⁰¹ In one of his articles Naumann envisions the three “great laboring classes”—farmers, industrial workers, and industrial entrepreneurs—rising up together to take over the political leadership of the nation, to “carry the state” on their shoulders while “the oppressors” (i.e. the Junkers) “retreat into their castles!”¹⁰² The agricultural workers [*Landarbeiter*], too, are “brothers of our people [*Volk*], they are supposed to bear our arms, they must cultivate our land and put their labor into the bread that we eat.”¹⁰³

Naumann is particularly at pains to stress the interdependence and commonality of interests between farmers and industrial labor. As population growth continues, argues Naumann, and the industrial sector comes to constitute an ever larger part of the nation, farmers become increasingly dependent on the industrial population to buy their goods. Farmers would therefore benefit if industrial workers were to earn higher wages, for the latter are responsible for most of the population growth and comprise the majority of the industrial population.¹⁰⁴ Higher wages would also cause entrepreneurs to introduce more efficient machinery so as to hire less workers, thereby slowing down the flow of workers to the city and the concomitant loss of rural labor-power.¹⁰⁵ Naumann also claims that farmers share the workers’ interest in low grain tariffs, which would cheapen the price of bread, thereby enabling industrial workers to buy greater quantities of other agricultural goods besides bread.¹⁰⁶ Farmers and industrial laborers, furthermore, share the struggle against the high rates of land rent and mortgages in both urban and rural areas.¹⁰⁷ Politically, farmers and workers share a common antagonism towards the conservative elites, the large landowners and the big industrialists.¹⁰⁸ And they both have a “shared interest in German power,” an interest to which they also contribute together by furnishing the army with its mass of soldiers.¹⁰⁹ All these considerations lead Naumann to exclaim in national-productivist fashion, “Industry and farmers! Both together constitute Germany’s national strength [*Volkskraft*].”¹¹⁰

To sum up, Naumann’s national socialism contains all the elements of national productivism: a vision of Germany as a “labor-state”; an expansive conception of labor as contribution to the wealth and prosperity of the national collectivity, encompassing industrial entrepreneurs, independent farmers, and the petty bourgeoisie as well as the working class *stricto*

¹⁰⁰ Naumann, “Wochenschau [6 February 1898]”; Naumann, “Wochenschau [20 February 1898]”; Naumann, “Wochenschau [17 April 1898]”; Naumann, “Wochenschau [4 September 1898].”

¹⁰¹ Naumann, “Wochenschau [3 April 1898].”

¹⁰² Naumann, “Wochenschau [3 April 1898].”

¹⁰³ Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 246.

¹⁰⁴ Naumann, “Wochenschau [6 February 1898]”; Naumann, “Wochenschau [20 February 1898]”; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 161f.

¹⁰⁵ Friedrich Naumann, “Bauer und Arbeiter,” *Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt* 11 May 1902.

¹⁰⁶ Naumann, “Bauer und Arbeiter.”

¹⁰⁷ Naumann, “Bauer und Arbeiter”; *Protokoll (1902)*, 41.

¹⁰⁸ Naumann, “Wochenschau [1 May 1898].”

¹⁰⁹ Naumann, “Wochenschau [1 May 1898].”

¹¹⁰ Naumann, “Wochenschau [6 February 1898]”; see also Friedrich Naumann, “Kolonisation und Flotte,” *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 13 July 1897; Naumann, “Der Kampf um’s Brot,” ; Friedrich Naumann, “Der Bund der Landwirte,” *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 21 July 1897; Naumann, “Ostelbien.”

sensu; an antagonistic distinction between producers and non-producers as a decisive cleavage within the nation; and a condemnation of “interest and rent” rather than of capital as the nemesis of the nation’s productive exertions.

Conclusion

Taken together, national existentialism and national productivism provided Naumann with solid, comprehensive ideational foundations for his synthesis of nationalism and socialism. The existential reconceptualization of the nation enabled Naumann to posit the nation’s international power-struggles as both the precondition and the ultimate rationale for social reform. The productivist reconceptualization of society as divided primarily into the productive and the non-productive enabled Naumann to avoid the Marxist social-class imaginary and to stress commonality rather than conflict of interest across the “productive” strata of national society. Finally, these two reconceptualizations together engendered a conception of social reform geared, not towards social justice, but rather towards harnessing the productive energies of German society to serve the nation-state’s aggressive power politics. The next chapter will discuss Naumann’s views on German politics and social policy and show how they rest on and embody the ideational matrix described above.

Chapter 4 | Friedrich Naumann's National Socialism: The Politics

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the way in which Naumann's practical political agenda embodied the ideational foundations of his national socialism, namely national existentialism and productivism. I will examine two major aspects of Naumann's practical ideas. The first section of the chapter looks at his conception of national politics, specifically his ideas on the proper constitutional relationship between the Kaiser and the industrial masses; his desire to integrate the industrial workers into national political life; his advocacy of cross-class political cooperation between the industrial "aristocracy" and masses; and his analysis of Wilhelmine party politics. The second section surveys Naumann's conception of social and economic policy, focusing on the policy areas that preoccupied him the most: land reform, housing, inner colonization (of eastern Germany), international trade and the question of grain tariffs. Just as Naumann's conception of national politics is underpinned by a basic affirmation of the imperial political order, so his conception of social and economic policy is embedded in an affirmation, even enthusiastic acceptance, of the industrial-capitalist order. The clear picture that emerges from this chapter is that the practical surface of Naumann's thinking was consistently anchored in the bedrock of his national socialist ideology. I end the chapter with concluding reflections on Naumann's national socialism as a whole and its place in the conceptual history of socialism.

I. CONCEPTION OF NATIONAL POLITICS

Affirmation of the Imperial order

The main constitutional problem Naumann grapples with is how to preserve the Imperial order while integrating the industrial masses into the nation's political edifice. The centrality of the relationship between Kaiser and masses for Naumann can only be understood against the backdrop of his national existentialism and productivism. In his book Demokratie und Kaisertum, the formation of the German nation-state in the nineteenth century—the coming into being, that is, of the German national body—is portrayed by Naumann as fundamentally a political-economic process, one driven by the "idea of political and economic unity"¹ and "rest[ing] on very concrete economic and political presuppositions."² Political unification accompanied and complemented Germany's "economic unity in the sense of commercial, financial, and industrial development."³ "From this perspective," in fact, "it is not at all incorrect to call the German Reich a 'capitalist establishment' [*kapitalistische Gründung*]."⁴ Now, it is not long before the reader of Demokratie und Kaisertum encounters an existential intensification and productivist inflection of this general political-economic template. The existential dimension is the first to appear, when capitalist development is rendered inseparable from—indeed, founded upon—military might:

¹ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 238.

² Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 247.

³ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 238.

⁴ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 240.

The system that won in 1870 was militaristic-capitalistic. It continues to function in this form and constitutes the ground on which we stand, and on which democracy must also labor. . . . There is no victorious non-military capitalism. There is no socialism without capitalism. Socialism therefore can hardly avoid the logic that, if it understands itself as a sequel [*Folgeerscheinung*] to capitalism, it must accept militarism.⁵

Thus if at first it seems that Naumann is interpreting the German state in almost Marxist fashion as a superstructure of modern capitalism, the latter nevertheless ends up being itself rooted in an even more fundamental military-existential constellation, as will also be the case with the socialist successor of the capitalist order. Naumann sums up this point in characteristically blunt fashion: “States can only be founded militarily. . . . there are no dawns of new ages without gunpowder and lead. This is morally and aesthetically lamentable, but it is the reality!”⁶

After the case for the existential foundations of national unification has been made, the productivist element makes its appearance as well, albeit embedded in the existential problematic. “Power,” Naumann intimates, “cannot be produced with mere ideas. It is only accumulated through the organization of discrete human and material forces.”⁷ This “material aspect” of the “German question” involves, more specifically, the need “to form a fighting economic body out of the productive forces of Germany.”⁸ The nation’s productive energies, in other words, need to be mobilized in the service of Germany’s struggle for existence: a typical national-productivist formula.

It is only within this overarching political-economic, existential-productivist framework that Naumann ventures into constitutional issues, primarily that of defining the respective roles of the Imperial and mass or “democratic” moments in Germany’s constitutional architecture. The Kaiser is for Naumann a “national *Imperator*, embodiment of the general will [*des Gesamtwillens*],”⁹ a claim justified in existential terms, for “no one guarantees as well as [the Kaiser] the outward defense of German life.”¹⁰ By contrast, “diplomacy and military command are . . . not the strong sides of democracy and parliamentarism.” Naumann also defines the Kaiser’s constitutional status in national-productivist terms: “The Kaiser leads the nation [*Nation*] as a dictator” of the “new [industrial] aristocracy.”¹¹ He is an “industrial dictator” of Germany charged with the task of assembling the nation’s productive forces—including Germany’s growing population¹² and the “labor of millions of heads of families”¹³—in the service of the national struggle for existence. “If this dictatorship of industry had not emerged out of the Prussian monarchical house,” Naumann maintains, “the ‘German question’ would have remained unresolved, that German question of which the material aspect was to create a unified market and to form a fighting economic body out of the productive forces of Germany.”¹⁴

⁵ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 245.

⁶ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 249f.; cf. 255.

⁷ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 248.

⁸ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 267.

⁹ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 266.

¹⁰ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 267.

¹¹ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 273.

¹² Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 271.

¹³ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 272.

¹⁴ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 267.

It is Kaiser, then, not democracy, that represents the national whole, defending its existential interests and organizing its productive energies for this purpose. The “democratic” moment, by contrast, represents for Naumann merely a part of the national whole, albeit a cardinal one; “democracy is the political expression of the aspirations of the new German industrial masses.”¹⁵ Naumann acknowledges these political aspirations, not primarily on emancipatory grounds, but in recognition of the political and economic might of the masses. As Germany’s industrialization progresses, the industrial masses are increasingly becoming a sociopolitical force to be reckoned with if only by virtue of their sheer numbers. “The power of the monarch and the aristocracies is confronted with the power of the headcount,”¹⁶ and “it is only a question of time before industrialism obtains the political leadership, in other words, when on the basis of the universal suffrage the wage laborers become party-politically decisive.”¹⁷ Similarly, Naumann also welcomes mass political participation through party politics and elections, not primarily as a step towards liberation, but only insofar as it is conducive to national integration: “it is only through [universal suffrage] that we have a politically breathing collective body [*Gesamtkörper*].”¹⁸

Democracy, in short, is both an inescapable power-political reality and conducive (at least *in potentia*) to the stabilization and consolidation of the nation’s sociopolitical order. But insofar as the democratic principle is attempting to assert itself as an *exclusive* constitutional principle for Germany, it is locked in a political “struggle for existence” with the monarchical principle. Between democracy qua “political domination of the majority principle” and the imperial principle qua “national domination of the One” there is “no definitive formal reconciliation,” and at the same time the balance of forces is such that neither “absolute monarchy” nor “absolute democracy” are attainable.¹⁹ The conflict can only be resolved, exhorts Naumann, with the compromise of “constitutionalism,” a “way of practical cooperation of both factors for the development of the nation.”²⁰

Constitutional compromise is not just a necessity imposed on the contending parties exogenously by the sheer balance of forces. It is also in the substantive interest of both sides. An alliance with the Kaiser is a precondition for socialism to be able to attain a position of real power, for the government will continue to serve the ruling classes as long as the workers refuse

¹⁵ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 39. The industrial masses, organized party-politically by the Social Democrats, have inherited the position of the liberal bourgeoisie as the chief bearers of democracy (62-7).

¹⁶ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 81; cf. 82: “The strength of the industrial working people [*des industriellen Arbeitsvolkes*] is based ... on their growing number. We are becoming millions! This is the fundamental idea of the politics of the people of industry [*Grundgedanke der Politik des Industrievolkes*].” The subsequent pages continue to develop this basic idea.

¹⁷ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 47.

¹⁸ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 88.

¹⁹ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 272f. Naumann seems to be following here, as in his constitutional analysis as a whole, in the footsteps of Roscher, Politik: Geschichtliche Naturlehre der Monarchie, Aristokratie und Demokratie, esp. 6-9. Although Naumann does not cite this book by Roscher in Demokratie und Kaisertum, he does so in another article devoted to the same constitutional issues, in support of his claim that Germany is well on its way towards a Bonapartistic regime, or what Roscher defines as “Caesarism.” Friedrich Naumann, “Auf dem Wege zum Bonapartismus,” Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift 12 February 1903: 627f.

²⁰ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 81; see also 273.

to participate in preserving and extending national power.²¹ And from the Kaiser's perspective, a *rapprochement* with the workers is imperative because "the fatherland cannot be defended without the masses."²² Under modern conditions, wherein the German army is steadily acquiring a mass character and warfare is becoming increasingly industrialized, the "growing number of proletarians," their industrial skills, and their subjectivity are of enormous import for "the power of the nation [*Nation*]" and for the "preservation of the national state."²³ The dependence of national existence upon the masses is at the same time, moreover, a dependence of the masses upon national existence; hence "a democracy that wishes to represent the nation [*Volk*] as a whole cannot but wish for the creation of a nation [*Volk*] in arms. Only nations in arms are, from a historical point of view, free."²⁴ Thus Kaiser and democracy, those two seemingly antagonistic constitutional principles, find themselves fused together under the pressure of a common national struggle for existence:

The fatherland, whose future will be struggled for, is [also the masses'] fatherland. ... An unmediated national will [*Volkswollen*] and life instinct will speak in the soul of the masses: you and your Kaiser, you belong together, for you have the same struggle! ... Many an old misunderstanding will rapidly melt away in the fire of the common work for the well-being of the entire German nation [*Volk*].²⁵

And Naumann closes the passage with a jab at the internationalism of Social Democracy: "Who ... will want to transcend a Germany in which Kaiser and masses have found each other?"²⁶

The constitutional "compromise" between monarchy and democracy as advocated by Naumann amounts, of course, to no democracy at all, not even in the liberal rendering of the concept, just as there can be no "compromise" between pregnancy and non-pregnancy. Whatever Naumann offers under the rubric of "democracy"—universal suffrage; democratization of municipal and other local and regional levels of political life; democratization of economic life, including a greater share for the workers in the management of production and allowing the establishment of producers' and consumers' cooperatives²⁷—all these measures are in Naumann's constitutional scheme merely a set of governmental technologies to be deployed for the purpose of taming the workers and integrating them into the national-Imperial circuit. Democracy, in other words, is the instrument; a Kaiser-led nation is the end.

Qua instrument, democracy will always be for Naumann on probation. It is acceptable to the extent that it fulfills its national-integrative function, but calls for curbing when it goes beyond its prescribed limits. The demand for democracy becomes a nuisance for Naumann

²¹ Friedrich Naumann, "Der soziale Kaiser," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 19 January 1897; Friedrich Naumann, "Die Flottenablehnung," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 23 March 1897.

²² Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 299; cf. 296: "Germany [cannot] do without the political patriotism of its industrial masses. ... The great institutions of German power must be borne by the general sentiment of the people [*Volksempfinden*]." See also Naumann, "Deutschland!"; Protokoll (1898), 27, 65. The anti-socialist legislation planned by the Kaiser, by the same token, would make it much harder to win the workers over to the national cause. Naumann, "Wochenschau [18 September 1898]"; cf. Naumann, "Nationale Sozialpolitik," 244.

²³ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 299-305.

²⁴ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 317.

²⁵ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 289; cf. 342.

²⁶ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 289.

²⁷ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 84-137.

when, as in Wilhelmine politics, it is skewed by a “false internationality”²⁸ and overladen with a multitude of “negations” of every important aspect of the German sociopolitical order without any “positive ideals” to compensate for them.²⁹ The “negation of the sovereignty of the Kaiser and of the military” as well as the “negation of industrial entrepreneurship” are especially worrisome to Naumann, and must undergo “a full rethinking . . . if German democracy wishes to cross over from an essentially negative period to a positive epoch.”³⁰ Naumann, in short, is only willing to accept “a national-patriotic [*vaterländische*] democracy” that would function as “the bearer of the national future [*Volkszukunft*].”³¹

Cross-class cooperation

The Kaiser and the industrial masses, however, are not the only actors in Naumann’s constitutional designs. A third major actor is what he calls the “industrial aristocracy,” adding yet another elitist qualification to his “democratic” vision. “Aristocratic elements,” Naumann insists, are an inescapable “necessity” in political life, including in “democratic” politics.³² There is not, however, just one homogeneous aristocracy but a plurality of aristocracies,³³ and all aristocracies are not equal in their political beneficence. Thus in the *Kaiserreich*, according to Naumann’s analysis, one finds a fundamental opposition between two major aristocracies, agrarian and industrial.³⁴ The “agrarian aristocracy,” consisting of the large landowners, is a relic of the old, declining world of “natural economy” and is pitted against industry, mass democracy, and the new “money economy” of capitalism. It is inimical, in other words, to the nation’s entire trajectory of socioeconomic and political development. And from its persistently central position in German political life it is engaged in an increasingly ferocious battle for its survival.³⁵

Whereas the agrarians are constantly striving to drag Germany back into the past, it is the industrialists that are compatible with the nation’s political-economic future. But the industrial aristocracy has thus far allied itself with conservative-agrarian forces to its right, rather than with liberal-industrial forces to its left, in its attempt to secure a social base for itself.³⁶ If it is to seize the steering wheel of German history and further the industrialist cause, the industrial aristocracy will have to base itself on the industrial working masses, especially given the reality of universal

²⁸ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 100.

²⁹ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 63. The older bourgeois democracy took a negative stance against the sovereignty of the German princes, the churches, the aristocracy, the state bureaucracy, and the military. The Social Democrats inherited those negations and added the negation of the new industrial entrepreneurship and the new German nation-state, in the name of an internationalist proletariat. All of these together form “seven democratic negations.” Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 62-7.

³⁰ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 67.

³¹ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 100.

³² Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 138-42.

³³ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 147.

³⁴ A third aristocracy discussed by Naumann is the “clerical aristocracy,” represented by the political leadership and the *Zentrum* party of German Catholicism. In line with his divorce of the political from the religious, Naumann admonishes this elite for obfuscating the religion-politics divide and for making it difficult for a clear political confrontation to emerge between Germany’s two major political camps, the agrarian and the industrial. Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 190-208.

³⁵ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 147-74.

³⁶ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 183-9.

manhood suffrage existing in the *Kaiserreich* at the federal level.³⁷ Hence the industrial masses need to take their place in a national-industrialist triumvirate including the Kaiser and the industrial aristocracy as well as themselves.³⁸

In other words, the two collective bearers of German industry—workers and bourgeoisie—must supersede the Marxist idea of class conflict and forge instead a cross-class political cooperation.³⁹ Indeed, most of Naumann’s advocacy of cooperation between workers and bourgeoisie concentrates on the political rather than the socioeconomic level and is justified with reference to a common national interest. Thus when at the founding congress of the National Social Association Naumann calls upon the educated bourgeoisie to join hands with the social movement, he refers to the educated as “prophets and representatives” of the national interest, and it is for the sake of this national interest that he urges them to promote social reform.⁴⁰ Five years later, the formula remains unchanged. For the sake of the nation, Naumann writes, “the educated members of our nation must relinquish their indifference towards the mass movements and . . . devote the best of their powers to the social reshaping of economic, ethical, artistic action and thought.”⁴¹ Other utterances reinforce the pattern. Cooperation between workers and bourgeoisie is needed to secure a “free and optimistic German politics, in which the imperial regime [*Kaisertum*] and the majority [of the people] can go together.”⁴² All “liberal-minded” forces need to cooperate in support of “tasks necessary for the fatherland and its military and cultural development.”⁴³ Naumann insists that “a German leadership can only come from the Left, from bourgeoisie and socialism together.”⁴⁴ He rejects any rigid and antagonistic distinction between proletariat and bourgeoisie. “The bourgeoisie, despite its anti-worker tendencies, . . . lives and thrives on the same soil as the workers: the ascent of German trade and traffic [*Handel und Wandel*].”⁴⁵ Germany’s struggle for economic as well as political existence among other nations trumps the class conflict: when England’s economic might becomes overwhelming, warns Naumann, then “entrepreneur and worker, then the whole nation [*Volk*] will know that [the struggle for the world market] is a matter of our economic existence.”⁴⁶ No wonder, then, that Naumann excludes class conflict from the very concept of socialism.

³⁷ Naumann, “Nationaler Sozialismus,” 255.

³⁸ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 272f.

³⁹ At this point a brief terminological note is necessary. Naumann employs the term “labor” (*Arbeit*) sometimes in the wide, productivist sense presented earlier and at other times more narrowly to denote the industrial working-class. It will not be difficult to notice that, in some of the passages I cite below, the word “Arbeit” appears in its stricter modality. Such is the case, for example, with the slogan, “*Arbeit und Bildung!*” (Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 226), or in another variation: “*Arbeit und Bildung* means: ‘national socialism.’” (Naumann, “Weshalb nennen wir uns Sozialisten?”). From the immediate textual surroundings of these utterances it is clear that “*Bildung*” refers here to the educated middle-class (the *Bildungsbürgertum*), while “*Arbeit*” refers to the industrial working-class. See also *Protokoll über die Vertreter-Versammlung aller National-Sozialen in Erfurt vom 23. bis 25. November 1896* (Berlin: Verlag der “Zeit”, 1896), 39.

⁴⁰ *Protokoll (1896)*, 44.

⁴¹ Friedrich Naumann, “Dem Leser besten Gruss!” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* September 1901.

⁴² Friedrich Naumann, “Die innere Lage,” *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 22 May 1897.

⁴³ Friedrich Naumann, “Die parlamentarischen Kanonen,” *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 23 May 1897.

⁴⁴ *Protokoll (1900)*, 44.

⁴⁵ *Protokoll (1899)*, 38f.

⁴⁶ Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 237.

Referring to his friend Paul Göhre's espousal of the Social-Democratic idea of class conflict as the basis of socialism following his departure from the National-Social Association, Naumann states flatly: "This concept of 'socialist' is one we have not had and do not have today."⁴⁷

What is striking (though hardly surprising) about the way Naumann construes the cooperation of worker and bourgeois is that it has almost nothing to do with the inner workings of the sphere of production. Among the hundreds of articles, lectures, and books written by Naumann in those years, the number of pieces dealing with relations between workers and employers and related issues can be counted on the fingers of one hand. When he does, he naturally sides with the advocates of cooperation and "harmony" between the classes;⁴⁸ but this aspect of the problem is peripheral to his understanding of class relations. In other words, the political cooperation between the two classes does not emerge as a resolution or transcendence of the conflicting socioeconomic demands that each side raises with respect to the shared domain of the factory (say, higher wages and more comprehensive social insurance on one side, a right to possession of capital and profits on the other). Instead, Naumann's idea of cross-class cooperation is a projection onto the political sphere of his national productivism wherein the factory itself figures as a "black box," as it were, an undifferentiated energetic unit hooked up to the nation's power-political endeavors.

Nationalizing socialism and the workers

But how is the political cooperation of workers and bourgeoisie, of the aristocracy and the masses of German industry, to be brought about? In Naumann's view, one of the most important preconditions for achieving this state of affairs is a greater degree of inclusion, both political and economic, of the workers in the national order. Now this inclusionary drive, let us not be mistaken, is a double-edged sword. On the one hand it promises the workers a greater role in steering the national ship as well as a higher material standard of living. Yet at the same time it also involves domesticating the workers, excluding them from the domain of internationalist politics, neutering their revolutionary energies, and casting their subjectivity into a German-national mold.

In order to achieve political inclusion, Naumann demands an array of reforms designed to deepen the workers' political and civil liberties. Naumann mentions on various occasions the need for greater freedom of association, freedom of speech, formal recognition of cooperatives and "vocational organizations," expansion of the Prussian suffrage, correcting distortions in existing suffrage mechanisms that disadvantage urban and industrial areas, and more decentralized mechanisms of administration and representation.⁴⁹ At the economic level, the workers should be in a position to enjoy the benefits of international trade and the concomitant

⁴⁷ Naumann, "Gegen Göhre," 260.

⁴⁸ Friedrich Naumann, "Ein seltener Vorgang," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 4 July 1897; Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 106f., 114.

⁴⁹ Naumann, "Was wollen wir?"; Friedrich Naumann, "Das allgemeine Reichstagswahlrecht," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 26 September 1896; Friedrich Naumann, "Das deutsche Reichstagswahlrecht," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 2 October 1896; Friedrich Naumann, "Der nationalliberale Parteitag," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 7 October 1896; Friedrich Naumann, "Arbeitergenossenschaften," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 5 May 1897; Naumann, Weltpolitik und Sozialreform, 12f.; Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 84-111.

increase in national income.⁵⁰ The workers, serving as the “soldiers” of Germany’s industrial world-struggle, are entitled to an “unconditionally secure guarantee that the profits made by the nation as a whole would benefit [them] as well.”⁵¹ Naumann also advocates the democratization of economic life by way of organization of the workers in trade unions and in producers’- and consumers’-cooperatives in all economic areas. Trade unions would imbue business enterprises with a democratic spirit by claiming for the workers a share in the management of production and by “concluding peace” between employers and employees.⁵²

The inclusion of the workers is for the most part legitimated on national-industrialist grounds. The workers are needed as the mass base of an industrial national order. More broadly, national power needs to have the “will” of the “working masses” behind it if it is to endure.⁵³ To be sure, political and economic inclusion is sometimes justified by Naumann as a blessing for the workers themselves, as a precondition for social reform and for diminishing the degree of their exploitation.⁵⁴ And yet even this care for the workers seems to be embedded in a consideration of the workers’ position as “soldiers” in Germany’s industrial as well as military army.⁵⁵ Again we may observe how social reform is to Naumann merely part of his strategy of mobilization.

Naumann’s nationalist inclusion/mobilization of the workers possesses an additional, deeper dimension. Naumann is not content merely with ensuring that the workers are integrated *structurally* into the national sociopolitical order. He wants to see a new form of *subjectivity* emerging in the workers themselves, fastening them to the German political project from within. “Patriotism,” Naumann declares,

is more than love of the country [*Heimat*]...; it is love of the German national state, it is the feeling of belonging to the state [*Staatsgefühl*] that should permeate all citizens, the spirit of unity in which they all want to defend German life.⁵⁶

The structural or external inclusion and the subjective or inner inclusion presuppose each other. Together they grow and together they form a precondition for the development of national power:

Only he who cooperates [*mitarbeitet*] can participate [*mitsprechen*], and he who cooperates and participates, who has to participate, can attain a love for the great whole to which he belongs and with which he cooperates. We cannot unfold our power [*Kraft*] outwardly without a strong national consciousness of the masses of the people [*Nationalsinn der Volksmassen*] domestically.⁵⁷

The workers are needed to bear the weapons defending the fatherland. But it is impossible to oppress the workers and then ask them to march into the battlefield. “Whoever wants to have a

⁵⁰ Naumann, “Wochenschau [4 September 1898].”

⁵¹ Naumann, *Weltpolitik und Sozialreform*, 11.

⁵² Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 111-37. See also Naumann, “Unternehmerpolitik.”

⁵³ Friedrich Naumann, “Neujahr,” *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 1 January 1897. See also Naumann, “Die Flottenablehnung.”

⁵⁴ *Protokoll (1896)*, 42; Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 204.

⁵⁵ Naumann, *Weltpolitik und Sozialreform*, 12f. See also Naumann, “Wochenschau [24 September 1899].”

⁵⁶ Naumann, “Zur Hundertjahrfeier Wilhelms I.”; see also *Protokoll (1902)*, 17.

⁵⁷ *Protokoll (1896)*, 41. On “*Nationalsinn*” see also Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 201f.; Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 239-41.

nation in arms needs a nation of patriots. ... The fatherland must be made lovable to the worker, in order that he think, create, and fight for this fatherland.”⁵⁸

The development of a national subjectivity is in the interest, not only of the fatherland, but also of the workers themselves, since the fate of the two is inextricably intertwined. Referring to Social Democracy as the political arm of the worker, Naumann states that

[a]ny party that wants to be of some significance in the fatherland must foreground the over-all questions of the entire fatherland and nation. ... A part of the nation [*Volksteil*] cares best for itself when it achieves politically more than just a short-sighted politics of the moment dealing with particular interests.⁵⁹

In addition to pressing for a nationalization of the workers' subjectivity, Naumann also makes their inclusion conditional upon an abandonment of their oppositional and revolutionary politics within Germany. Naumann thereby contributes to discrediting the emancipatory thrust of the workers' struggle, seeking instead to funnel their political energies into the nation-building project. When he declares that “we are socialists in that we are convinced that the future politics of Germany must be borne by the working class,”⁶⁰ this should not be read as a call for a proletarian revolution in Germany. Instead, what Naumann believes as a “socialist” is that Social Democracy needs to assume an active, leading role in consolidating Germany's nation-building project by refashioning itself as an improved, mass-based version of the National-Liberal party that led Germany to its national unification in the 1860s and 1870s.⁶¹ What the German project needs is a socialism that is “a constructive blessing for our nation [*Volk*],”⁶² “a practical socialism ... that wishes to work and succeed within this [existing] society, on the basis of German nationality, within the state that we have.”⁶³ Social reform, concomitantly, needs to be undertaken from the standpoint, not of class-interest, but of the “entire fatherland.”⁶⁴ for

Only the Social Democrats are in the party-political position to lead the construction of a “German industrial Left,” and its revolutionary stance has so far prevented it from committing itself politically and ideologically to bringing about such a change within the existing political-economic order. Hence, Naumann concludes, it is the task of the National-Social Association to help Social Democracy in its evolution towards reformism by permeating the Marxian heritage with “the spirit of the national idea.”⁶⁵ Political inclusion betrays here its faces of Janus: Social

⁵⁸ Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 241. See also Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 304f.

⁵⁹ Naumann, “Gegen Göhre,” 264f. On the identity of workers' and national interest, see also Protokoll (1898), 28.

⁶⁰ Naumann, “Nationaler Sozialismus,” 252.

⁶¹ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 344.

⁶² Naumann, “Was wollen wir?” See also Friedrich Naumann, “Die evangelische Arbeitervereine,” Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 24 April 1897.

⁶³ Naumann, Bebel und Bernstein, 6.

⁶⁴ Protokoll (1896), 44.

⁶⁵ Friedrich Naumann, “Was wird aus der Sozialdemokratie?” Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift 25 September 1902: 806. On the historical role of national and Left leadership assigned by Naumann to the Social Democrats, see also Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Nationalsozialen Vereins (sechster Vertretertag) zu Frankfurt am Main vom 29. September bis 2. Oktober 1901 (Berlin-Schöneberg: ‘Hilfe’, 1901), 100f.; Friedrich Naumann, “Die Nationalsozialen und die Wahlen (1903),” Werke, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 295f.; and Friedrich Naumann, “Die Niederlage (1903),” Werke, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 5 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 300. On the revolutionism of the Social Democrats as an obstacle to the rise of the German left, see also Friedrich Naumann, “Liberalismus und

Democracy is tantalized with the prospect of seizing the helm of the German Left and, ultimately, of the German polity as a whole, but only at the price of enveloping Marx with the formalin of nationality.

Naumann's positive argumentation regarding the importance of socialism to the nation-building project is complemented by a negative argumentation against the idea of a socialism unmoored from nationalism. The idea of an international socialist order, he claims, is implausible given the great divergence in the socioeconomic state of development of different nations. If one accepts the Social Democratic assumption that international socialism is supposed to arrive at and out of an advanced stage of capitalism, in reality there is a very small number of states in which capitalism has made any significant headway at all. Moreover, even the most capitalistically advanced nations of western Europe exhibit a great diversity in the respective degree of industrial-capitalist development of each country. The only country, submits Naumann, that has completed its transition to capitalism is England; and even in that purportedly model historical case, "half a century of industrial development has not sufficed to lead England substantially closer to socialism in the communist sense!"⁶⁶ Hence, while both capitalism and socialism are international phenomena in the general sense of being present in more than one country, "the course of development of the social movement in the individual countries is dependent on the development of these nations as individual bodies."⁶⁷

Another factor working against the desirability of an international socialism is the differential social geography of capital and labor. Whereas capital is mobile and so can easily flee the country in times of hardship, labor is essentially sedentary.⁶⁸ In view of its inability to shift its location *en masse*, "the multitude, as a multitude, has a fatherland." It consequently has to think, not about worldwide tendencies towards some vague "new economic organization," but rather "in localized fashion" about the economic questions specific to Germany.⁶⁹ Naumann's conclusion is that as long as the workers and the social movement fail to embrace the national idea and to take upon themselves the responsibility for the nation's future, socialism would continue to be out of touch with the basic realities of the time and hence in imminent danger of petering out.⁷⁰ Thus if the workers are acknowledged by Naumann as a legitimate, even pivotal collective actor, this recognition only comes at the cost of national embeddedness, of a field of socio-political vision restricted to the Rhine and the Elbe.⁷¹

Sozialdemokratie," *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 24 October 1901: 109; Friedrich Naumann, "Das Wahlergebnis," *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 2 July 1903. On the mission of the National Social Association to nationalize Social Democracy and rid it of its international revolutionism, see also Naumann, "Wochenschau [24 July 1898]"; and *Protokoll (1901)*, 13.

⁶⁶ Friedrich Naumann, "Sozialistische Ideale und soziale Wirklichkeiten," *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 27 December 1901: 392.

⁶⁷ Naumann, "Sozialistische Ideale," 393. In the same spirit, Naumann praises Werner Sombart's book, *Socialism and the Social Movement in the Nineteenth Century*, for highlighting in his historical narrative the national differentiation between the various European social movements. See Friedrich Naumann, "Nochmals Marxismus," *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 6 January 1897.

⁶⁸ Naumann, "Sozialistische Ideale," 394; Friedrich Naumann, "Bernsteins äußere Politik," *Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt* 20 July 1902.

⁶⁹ Naumann, "Sozialistische Ideale," 394.

⁷⁰ Naumann, "Was wird aus der Sozialdemokratie?"

⁷¹ This geographical metaphor (which at the same time is more than a metaphor) appears in Naumann, "Sozialistische Ideale."

Party politics

One of the spheres in which Naumann sought to realize his nationalist vision of cross-class cooperation was the sphere of party politics. Beneath the surface of political programs and maneuvers, Naumann identified a deeper level of political action linked to fundamental socioeconomic dynamics,⁷² and his aim was to align party politics with these powerful undercurrents.⁷³ Specifically, Naumann envisioned a rearrangement of the German party system along the lines of the British two-party (or “majoritarian”) model, pitting against each other two competing conceptions of socioeconomic order: industrialism (to be represented by a left-wing party comprising the Liberals, the Social Democrats, and the big industrialists) vs. agrarianism (to be represented by a right-wing, Conservative party).⁷⁴

Within this context, the goal of the National-Social Association is to prepare the groundwork for forming “a German-national Left of industrial character [*deutsch-vaterländische Linke industriellen Charakters*].”⁷⁵ This “new Left,”⁷⁶ in Naumann’s vision, would comprise both workers and industrial entrepreneurs, both the Social Democrats and the liberals.⁷⁷ Ideologically and programatically, the new German Left would “fuse nationalism and socialism together as a political unity”⁷⁸ resting on a “strong national sensibility,”⁷⁹ and a “political sense for power and reality.”⁸⁰ It would be a national-social Left more open to the “real history of the present,” but also to certain elements of Marxian theory.⁸¹ For this vision to materialize,

⁷² Friedrich Naumann, “Ein sozialreformerischer Konservativer,” *Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt* 21 September 1902.

⁷³ Friedrich Naumann, “Die Parteien,” *Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt* 13 July 1902.

⁷⁴ Naumann, “Wochenschau [20 August 1899]”; Naumann, “Wochenschau [3 September 1899]”; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 78; *Protokoll (1901)*, 95, 100f.; Friedrich Naumann, “Nationalliberale Jugend,” *Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt* 27 April 1902; Naumann, “Was wird aus der Sozialdemokratie?”; Friedrich Naumann, “Obstruktion und Parlamentarismus,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 11 December 1902. Naumann also included the “clerical” Center Party in the right-wing camp, but as noted earlier and as will be discussed below in the section on industrialism, it is agrarianism which constitutes for Naumann the defining element of the German Right. On the clerical dimension, see Naumann, “Nationalliberale Jugend”; Naumann, “Obstruktion und Parlamentarismus”; Naumann, “Das Wahlergebnis”; Friedrich Naumann, “Die moralische Wahlpflicht,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 30 April 1903.

⁷⁵ Naumann, “Nationaler Sozialismus,” 253. On the role of the National-Social Association as ideological pioneer of a new, national-social German Left, see also Naumann, “Wochenschau [24 July 1898]”; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 347f.; *Protokoll (1901)*, 106; Naumann, “Die Parteien”; Naumann, “Was wird aus der Sozialdemokratie?”; Naumann, “Die moralische Wahlpflicht”; Naumann, “Die Nationalsozialen und die Wahlen,” 296.

⁷⁶ Naumann, *Flotte und Reaktion*, 15f.; *Protokoll (1901)*, 103; Naumann, “Die moralische Wahlpflicht”; Naumann, “Die Nationalsozialen und die Wahlen,” 295; Naumann, “Die Niederlage,” 300.

⁷⁷ Naumann, *Flotte und Reaktion*, 15f.; *Protokoll (1900)*, 44; *Protokoll (1901)*, 106; Naumann, “Obstruktion und Parlamentarismus.”

⁷⁸ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 348.

⁷⁹ *Protokoll (1900)*, 47.

⁸⁰ Naumann, “Die Niederlage,” 300.

⁸¹ Friedrich Naumann, “Die Geschichte des Kapitalismus,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 6 November 1902. Naumann does not elaborate here on the elements of Marxism he deems acceptable. Indeed, he hardly ever engages Marxian theory at all. In a series of articles reviewing Sombart’s *Die moderne Kapitalismus* he does discuss Marx’s definition of capitalism and his dialectical method, but his discussion is very superficial. See Naumann, “Die Geschichte des Kapitalismus”; Friedrich Naumann, “Das Wesen des Kapitalismus,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 13 November 1902; Friedrich Naumann, “Die Zukunft des Kapitalismus,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 20 November 1902.

bourgeois liberalism would have to overcome its hostility and condescension towards the workers, and reconnect with the industrial masses and with mass politics.⁸²

The Social Democrats, on their part, would have to embrace the existing German national order along with the existential injunction of building a strong military apparatus to defend the nation.⁸³ By the same token, their refusal to embrace German nationalism and imperialism was the chief factor keeping Naumann away from membership in the Social Democratic party. The chasm that Naumann's nationalism had opened up between him and the Social Democrats revealed itself most decisively in the dramatic days following the sweeping defeat of Naumann's National Social Association in the Reichstag elections of summer 1903, when Naumann had to decide about his future political course. While a small number of Naumann's followers decided to join the SPD, this option was ruled out categorically by Naumann himself because of his commitment to nationalism.⁸⁴ But Naumann's nationalist critique of Social Democracy was not restricted to this liminal moment in his career. Throughout the entire period under scrutiny here Naumann never tired of chastising the Social Democrats for their lack of national sensibility.⁸⁵ In some of his statements the national question is presented as *the* crucial issue differentiating the National-Social Association from Social Democracy, and the national reorientation of Social Democracy as one of the major tasks of his Association.⁸⁶ The nationalism-internationalism divide also constitutes for Naumann the primary cleavage within the Social Democratic Party.⁸⁷

The same ideologically driven approach is discernable in Naumann's critique of the Conservative Right as well, a critique revolving for the most part around Naumann's two ideational pillars, the national and the social. In previous years, Naumann muses, the Conservatives used to be much more friendly to social issues and to national interests, as evidenced by figures like Rodbertus and Adolph Wagner.⁸⁸ Since then, however, they have

⁸² Protokoll (1901), 95-8.

⁸³ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 285f.; Protokoll (1901), 95, 100f.; Naumann, "Liberalismus und Sozialdemokratie," 109; Naumann, "Was wird aus der Sozialdemokratie?"; Friedrich Naumann, "Heereslast und Sozialdemokratie," Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt 17 May 1903. In fact, Naumann already detects in the rise of Bernstein within the Social Democratic Party a "transition from Marxism to national socialism." Naumann, "Wochenschau [13 February 1898]." See in this connection also Naumann, "Gegen Göhre," 262f.; Protokoll (1899), 39; Naumann, Bebel und Bernstein, 16; Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 7, 14, 17-19, 347.

⁸⁴ For Naumann's public statements on this issue, see Naumann, "Die Nationalsozialen und die Wahlen," 303; Protokoll (1903), 26f. In a letter to Lujo Brentano from 3 July 1903, Naumann seems to narrow down his differences with the Social Democrats merely to the question of military armament, rather than nationalism as a whole. However, we must remember that the military issue is of supreme import in the framework of Naumann's national existentialism. So this letter serves to underscore the existential intensity of Naumann's nationalist self-demarkation from the Social Democratic. See Friedrich Naumann, Letter to L. Brentano, 3 July 1903, Nachlass Friedrich Naumann (N 3001), Berlin-Lichterfelde.

⁸⁵ Naumann, "Was wollen wir?"; Naumann, "National-sozialer Katechismus," 223; Naumann, "Wochenschau [8 May 1898]"; and see also the other footnotes to this section.

⁸⁶ Naumann, "Wochenschau [24 July 1898]"; Naumann, "Wochenschau [4 September 1898]"; Naumann, "Weshalb nennen wir uns Sozialisten?"

⁸⁷ Friedrich Naumann, "Marxistische Sozialdemokratie," Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 11 December 1896. Similarly, Naumann bifurcates the intellectual legacy of Social Democracy into the (outmoded) nationalist legacy of Lassalle and the (ascendant) internationalist legacy of Marx. See Naumann, "Wochenschau [17 July 1898]."

⁸⁸ Cf. my discussion of these figures in the introduction to this dissertation.

degenerated into a mere interest-group representing the large landowners.⁸⁹ This identification with a narrow, antiquated elite has turned the Conservatives into enemies of the masses, a stance endangering national unity and power.⁹⁰ “The goals of German world politics,” in fact, “are in direct opposition to the Conservative circle of interests.”⁹¹ The latter are opposed to the buildup of the Navy as it would constitute from their standpoint a step backward in the struggle against industrialism, export, and modern commerce in general.⁹² Furthermore, the Conservatives’ policies and party-political predominance are an impediment to land reform in eastern Germany⁹³ and are bringing about the latter’s polonization, entailing a deterioration in the conditions of the German workers.⁹⁴ This state of affairs not only renders Conservatism inimical to the national interest, but also invalidates the very possibility of a “social conservatism.”⁹⁵ Whatever tactical attempts have been undertaken to develop a “conservative socialism,” they were put to an end with the ousting of Stoecker from the Conservative Party in 1896.⁹⁶

Naumann’s party-political agenda, in short, was not bound up with any individual party, be it socialist or liberal, nor even his own National-Social Association. Naumann was convinced that the historical “development towards national socialism” would occur on the basis of the growth of the industrial population, independently of questions of electoral success or failure.⁹⁷ Instead, his party-political strategy was much more ambitious. He strove to bring his national

⁸⁹ Friedrich Naumann, “Konservativ?” Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 17 September 1897; Naumann, “Wochenschau [10 September 1899]”; Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 151.

⁹⁰ Friedrich Naumann, “Gesunde Entwicklung!” Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 18 May 1897.

⁹¹ Protokoll (1898), 63. The German nation-state itself, Naumann claims, was formed in “thoroughly unconservative” fashion, driven as it was by the capitalistic thrust of the bourgeoisie allied with the “military-revolutionary” thrust of Bismarck’s “power instinct [*Machtrieb*]” on the other. Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 244, 255. The national idea as such, in fact, collides directly in Naumann’s view with the old conservative idea of “authority not majority,” which is an inherently “pre-national” idea. This collision was one of the factors leading to the decline of the old conservatism in the wake of unification. Friedrich Naumann, “Wandlungen im konservativen Denken,” Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift 12 March 1903.

⁹² Naumann, Flotte und Reaktion, 12.

⁹³ Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 249.

⁹⁴ Naumann, “Wochenschau [24 September 1899].”

⁹⁵ Friedrich Naumann, “Sozial-konservativ?” Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage 13 March 1897; Naumann, “Wochenschau [10 September 1899]”; Naumann, “Ein sozialreformerischer Konservativer.”

⁹⁶ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 172f. Similarly, Naumann is opposed to antisemitism, which he considers to be an “un aristocratic species of conservatism” (168) based socially on the *Mittelstand*. While the anti-Jewish program is not in Naumann’s view sufficient to build a long-lasting political formation, it does have sufficient political presence to do the “service” of being an “element of decomposition” within the conservative camp, posing an obstacle to achieving political unity and cohesion of conservatism. Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 168f. On the thinness of antisemitism as a political program, see also Friedrich Naumann, “Die Imponderabilien in der Politik,” Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift 26 June 1902. Even though Naumann clearly declares his hostility to antisemitism, he nevertheless regards the Jews (as he does “Wends, Lithuanians, Poles, Danes, Frenchmen”) as “of different stock [*ein anderer Stamm*] than the Germans.” Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 214; see also Naumann, “Wochenschau [13 August 1899].”

⁹⁷ Naumann, “Die Nationalsozialen und die Wahlen,” 294. After the Association’s sore defeat in the 1903 Reichstag elections, Naumann reminded his followers that as early as 1896 he had believed that “the national-social idea is at the present not in a position to take the form of a political party.” At the same time, he insists that electoral failure proves nothing about the validity of the national-social idea itself. Naumann, “Das Wahlergebnis”; Naumann, “Die Niederlage.”

socialist ideology to bear upon the party *system* as a whole, to “reshape the old party forms” and “party relationships”⁹⁸ as such, in a way that would turn parliamentary politics as a whole into an instrument of nationalist mobilization.

II. CONCEPTION OF SOCIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY

Affirmation of the industrial-capitalist order

Underlying Naumann’s approach to social and economic policy is a fundamental affirmation of capitalism. Naumann is overawed by the sheer existence and magnitude of industrial capitalism: “our political economy is becoming ever more great-industrial [*großindustrieller*], ever more great-capitalist [*großkapitalistischer*].”⁹⁹ This reality fills the entire horizon of both Germany’s present and future. Not only are “industrialism and capitalism” an all-encompassing reality in the present, they are furthermore still in a process of growth, and there is no way of knowing if and when this historical stage will ever be superseded.¹⁰⁰ The mammoth spatial and temporal magnitude of industrial capitalism leads Naumann to dismiss sarcastically the revolutionary aspirations of the Social Democrats: “as if social orders can be changed like clothes!”¹⁰¹ The more one thinks about the “intermediate stages . . . that exist between today and that imagined ideal [of a socialist society], the more the ideal recedes into the distance.”¹⁰²

If the recalcitrance of capitalism is not enough to dissuade the champions of revolution, Naumann points at the mighty power constellation that is bound to easily thwart any attempt at overturning the existing order. “The state has in the past 50 years become in every respect more securely consolidated than it had ever been. It is in possession of means and weapons, against which the unarmed proletarians . . . can do nothing.” And since “only the stronger [power] has the historical right” to overturn existing political orders, as for example Bismarck had done,¹⁰³ it follows that revolutionary socialism is on the wrong side, not merely of practical politics, but more deeply of moral and historical justification. Moreover, Social Democracy does not enjoy a majority in the nation, and even within its own supporters the proponents of violent revolution have become a minority as the party has ceased to be revolutionary in all but the empty word.¹⁰⁴

The invincibility of the titanic political-economic machine that is the German capitalist nation-state is powerfully encapsulated in one of Naumann’s deployments of the concept of *Großbetrieb* or large enterprise:

⁹⁸ Respectively: Naumann, “Konservativ?”; and Naumann, “Nationaler Sozialismus,” 252. In both of these articles, two years apart, Naumann uses the same word, *Umgestaltung* (“reshaping”).

⁹⁹ Naumann, “Sozialistische Ideale,” 389.

¹⁰⁰ Naumann, “Sozialistische Ideale,” 390.

¹⁰¹ Friedrich Naumann, “Der Kapitalismus vor Gericht,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 31 July 1902: 547.

¹⁰² Naumann, “Sozialistische Ideale,” 388.

¹⁰³ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 22f.

¹⁰⁴ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 25-36.

Revolution is a petty-bourgeois and small-state idea. Whoever has the *Großbetrieb* and the age of commerce and transport [*Verkehr*] under his belt feels instinctively that revolution is no longer modern. The small enterprise can weather the storm [of revolution]; the large enterprise cannot tolerate any disruption. And those who call themselves revolutionary live off the large enterprise. ... The masses, out of a drive to self-preservation, cannot be revolutionary in the age of *Verkehr*. The modern state has now become a part of the big business enterprise off of which we all live. The agglomeration of all forces interested in quiet progression vis-à-vis any revolutionary attempt would be enormous.¹⁰⁵

The ensemble of features characterizing the *Großbetrieb* coalesce to overdetermine the failure of revolution: the enormity of scale; the *perpetuum mobile* of production; the overwhelming power of the state attached to this gigantic factory; and the existential dependency of the masses upon the uninterrupted working of the enterprise. So deep is the immunity to upheaval in Naumann's eyes that he scoffs at the very idea of a modern revolution as a contradiction in terms.

Industrialism

If Naumann adopts a generally affirmative stance towards industrial capitalism as a whole, it is the industrial dimension which he is most enthusiastic about. Naumann, it is well known, was one of Wilhelmine Germany's staunchest supporters of industrialization over against conservative attempts to retain the nation's rapidly receding agrarian character. Naumann's "industrialism" identifies modern industry as the leading, most dynamic and promising productive moment within the national economy and seeks to reinforce it with a policy roadmap that would ensure its primacy over agriculture, that would provide it with the optimal conditions for sustained and healthy growth, and that would—crucially—tether it to the nation's power-struggles. In short, Naumann's industrialism, like every other major aspect of his national socialism, is rooted in his national existentialism and productivism.

It is important for Naumann to stress that the debate between industrialism and agrarianism is not a matter of life or death for either of the two, for industry *will* not and agriculture *should* not disappear from the German landscape.¹⁰⁶ Instead, the question at stake is a more restricted one, namely which of the two would be the leading force, the "main direction" of German collective life.¹⁰⁷ Industrialism would entail in Naumann's view a policy agenda of building up a navy, acquiring overseas colonies in tropical areas (for securing raw materials), opening up to international trade and breaking the political ascendancy of the landed aristocracy (all of which measures will be explained below); whereas agrarianism would entail protectionism (especially vis-à-vis the importation of grains), turning Germany's back to world trade, and

¹⁰⁵ Friedrich Naumann, "Revolutionärer Sozialismus," Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift 2 April 1903: 13.

¹⁰⁶ On industrialization as a "fact" of German life, see Naumann, "Wochenschau [3 September 1899]"; on the indispensability of agriculture, see Naumann, "Wochenschau [17 April 1898]"; Naumann, "Wochenschau [4 September 1898]."

¹⁰⁷ Friedrich Naumann, "Was heißt Industriestaat?" Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt 6 April 1902.

abolishing universal manhood suffrage so as to curb the political power of the industrial masses.¹⁰⁸

Naumann's advocacy of industrialism may seem to be in line with economic liberalism; indeed, in one article he actually construes the debate between industrialism and agrarianism as an economic continuation and thickening of the earlier, politically oriented struggle between liberalism and conservatism.¹⁰⁹ Yet when we move beyond the outermost surface of Naumann's argumentation to examine the grounds on which Naumann *justifies* industrialism and its concomitant openness to international trade as Germany's "main direction," we discover that they do not draw upon the language of liberalism, that is, on the ideas of *laissez-faire* or free competition or a desire to limit the purview of state activity. Instead, we are led back to Naumann's national productivism and existentialism.

Industrialization for Naumann is needed in order to meet the challenges posed by population growth: "Because our nation is a growing nation," he explains, "it must become a nation of machines, for the domestic agriculture is not in a position to absorb the human numbers that are born in our midst." Hence "The accrual of children compels us to take up industrial labor, the benefit of large-scale circulation of money, of transportation [*Verkehr*], of the machine, in short, to take up and take advantage of modernity in every respect."¹¹⁰ Once again we encounter Naumann's biologicistic reasoning, whereby the reproduction of the species is taken as a point of departure for addressing questions of economic policy.

It is not only the scope of procreation that matters to Naumann, but also its dispersion across socioeconomic sectors. Under the conditions of industrialization, he points out, most of the newborn are children of industrial workers and are subsequently themselves inducted into the industrial work-force. The agrarian-to-industrial population ratio is consequently shifting inexorably in the direction of the latter. Since every hundred farmers, in Naumann's view, can only feed a hundred other people besides themselves,¹¹¹ and the agrarian population has already dropped to less than half of the total population, it follows that Germany's existing agricultural infrastructure can no longer feed all of the country's inhabitants. The food, as well as clothes and raw materials, needed for the remainder of the population must be imported; and how is Germany going to pay for the imported foodstuff if not by exporting industrial goods? Hence industry and free international trade are existentially indispensable for sustaining Germany's growing masses, and they become increasingly so in direct proportion to the progressive contraction of the agrarian population.¹¹²

This mode of reasoning may seem to resemble a Malthusian understanding of population growth as a kind of blind, elemental force that imposes its logic on the nation, forcing it *nollens*

¹⁰⁸ Friedrich Naumann, "Deutschland am Scheidewege," *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 3 April 1902: 5f.; Naumann, "Was heißt Industriestaat?" 3.

¹⁰⁹ Naumann, "Was heißt Industriestaat?" 3.

¹¹⁰ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 21.

¹¹¹ Naumann does not clarify the grounds for this claim; perhaps it is a clumsy attempt at alluding to Malthus's claim that the production of means of subsistence by agriculture grows arithmetically whereas population growth is geometric (if unchecked). See Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989[1803]), 12-15.

¹¹² Naumann, "Wochenschau [20 February 1898]"; Naumann, "Wochenschau [17 April 1898]"; Naumann, "Nationale Sozialpolitik," 238f.; Naumann, "Wochenschau [20 August 1899]."

vollens to shunt itself onto modern-industrial tracks. But this image is deceptive. From the two pages immediately preceding this passage it is clear that Naumann *chooses* to embrace population growth as a blessing, as an existential necessity for the nation:

By virtue of these forthcoming 80 millions ... we are in the hope that our German nation as a nation [*Nation*] among other peoples [*Völkern*] will survive in the struggle for existence of which we have spoken earlier.¹¹³

So, if industrialism is grounded in population growth, the embrace of the latter is itself, as always, grounded in something deeper still, in an unquestioning commitment to aggressive nationalist power politics.

Nationalization of social policy

Earlier we noticed how Naumann's national holism entails the nationalization of the whole social question. By turning the latter into a holistic problem that involves all *Volksteile*, Naumann shifts the perspective from which social issues are grasped in the first place. The core of the late nineteenth-century social question, i.e. the relations of production between labor and capital, does not entirely disappear from view; yet Naumann's gaze no longer tarries upon it, but has moved elsewhere, to an entirely different register of social relations. The social question now becomes more diffuse, spread out across a whole network of professions and classes. Furthermore, it acquires a wholly different rationale that holds its different aspects together, namely the nationalist context with its existential and productivist injunctions.

Let us now examine how various areas of social and economic policy are shunted by Naumann onto national tracks in tandem with this broader shift of perspective. My analysis will focus on two policy areas that absorb most of Naumann's attention. One is actually a cluster of policy areas having to do with the geographical dispersion of the national population, namely land reform, inner colonization, and housing. The other policy domain is that of international trade, including the question of grain tariffs. My discussion will be concerned not so much with the details as with the ideational underpinnings of Naumann's policy proposals.

Land reform, housing, and inner colonization

Naumann's consideration of land-reform issues is linked directly to Germany's dramatic population growth and the need to provide it with proper living conditions. Since Germany's population tends to concentrate in the cities where more jobs are available in the industrial sector, there is an impending danger that chaotic, overcrowded megalopolises would emerge. Naumann's prognostication associates the spontaneous pursuit of individual self-interest in the domain of housing, neither with a classical liberal vision of a harmonious social outcome, nor with a Marxian vision of an alienated or commodified society, but with social chaos or absence of social order:

If no regulating, ordering hand intervenes,¹¹⁴ if in the meantime no large-scale state measures are introduced to regulate the settlement of these new millions [of Germans],

¹¹³ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 19f.

¹¹⁴ It is unclear whether Naumann was deliberately using this imagery to contrast his approach with Adam Smith's faith in the "invisible hand" of the market.

then in all likelihood these new 24 millions will place themselves on Germany's territory in basically the same fortuitous, unordered way as has hitherto been the case, each individual according to his individual needs, living together all piled up and packed into certain locations. ... In all these places a kind of human jungle will be formed, where man is heaped upon man, interdigitated, [their houses] built over one another, huddled against each other.¹¹⁵

Such a state of affairs would bring miserable living conditions in its train, sapping the industrial masses of their energies and mutilating their physical and mental qualities:

We who hope that the new population figures [*Volksziffer*] should be a blessing for Germany cannot but say at the same time: if our housing relations did not change fundamentally, then this population growth [*Volkszuwachs*] would after all signify no increase in the morality and bodily recuperation of the nation [*des Volkes*]¹¹⁶

We already know that Naumann's view of population growth as a "blessing for Germany" derives from the social-Darwinist function he assigns to the national population. The outcome of the nation's existential struggles, as of any Darwinian struggle, depends not just on the quantity but also on the physical and mental traits of the population.¹¹⁷ It is precisely this consideration—and not human development as a goal of intrinsic value—that generates Naumann's anxiety regarding the consequences of overcrowded cities for the "morality and bodily recuperation" of the national population. It leads him, furthermore, to regard the regulation of the housing and spatial distribution of the German population as a "colossal state task" of paramount national significance.¹¹⁸

The state-led solution, however, is not to rein in population growth but to disperse the growing population more evenly over the nation's surface in farmsteads and small industrial towns.¹¹⁹ Yet this goal cannot be achieved without significant land reform and the "inner colonization" of eastern Germany. First, there is need for "quite a few tracts of land ... in which

¹¹⁵ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 59. On the existing unevenness of the German dispersion of population, see also Friedrich Naumann, "Die Volkswanderung," *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 17 October 1896.

¹¹⁶ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 70. See also Friedrich Naumann, "Zehn Millionen Menschen," *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 9 October 1896, where Naumann foresees a deterioration in "hygienic and ethical strength [*gesundheitliche und sittliche Kraft*]" in the big cities. Bemoaning the deplorable ethical consequences of the housing problem, Naumann harangues: "Imagine the forthcoming Germanic millions ... enclosed in little cubicles, and think: these are the people who are supposed thereafter to foster and uphold the German spirit, these are the people who are supposed to educate our future soldiers in their homes, these are the people of whom we demand all the ethics that the German nation [*Volk*] is supposed to possess!" The nationalist framing of the housing question—even its national-existential implications for the quality of the German army—is never lost sight of. Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 69.

¹¹⁷ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 22.

¹¹⁸ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 62. Cf. Friedrich Naumann, "Wohnungsreform als politische Frage," *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 24 September 1896, where he states that the "housing question" is a "great national [*vaterländische*] matter, on which the healthy advancement of German big industry depends."

¹¹⁹ Naumann, "Zehn Millionen Menschen"; Naumann, "Die Volkswanderung"; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 109; Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 63-5.

private speculation is not allowed to make the land dearer.”¹²⁰ Second, the large estates of the Junkers in the east need to be divided into small farmsteads.¹²¹ Once the land is thus prepared and the population is spread out over the national territory, new industrial towns will gradually emerge, relieving the great industrial cities of the demographic pressure bearing down upon them.¹²²

The combined strategy of land reform and inner colonization is meant by Naumann to bring about, not just the proper dispersion of the population and consequently its mental and physical qualities, but also its ethnic purification.¹²³ By replacing the large estates east of the Elbe with “farmstead upon farmstead all the way to the Russian border” populated by independent farmers and employing German workers,¹²⁴ a “harmonious German development” would be achieved, “a German east full of German farmers” forming “a wall against Slavdom, a national fountain of youth.”¹²⁵ It is on the same grounds that Naumann was in principle sympathetic to voices within the National-Social Association calling for the closing of the eastern border to foreign labor or “non-German elements”:

The Polish worker has in our view the same human rights [as German workers do], but not the same political and national rights [*Staats- und Volksrechte*]. The Polish worker as a mass phenomenon is a dangerous competition for the German worker, and such a demand [as raised within the Association] for a national protection of workers against the influx from foreign nations is indeed justified.¹²⁶

His opposition to an official endorsement by the Association of this policy position was merely practical and economic-utilitarian rather than principled.¹²⁷ To avoid detrimental economic consequences,¹²⁸ the closing of the eastern border is only desirable if accompanied by state measures keeping the German peasants on the land and diminishing their inner migration from east to west.¹²⁹ As we have seen, those state measures consist for Naumann above all in land reform and the establishment of small farms.

Naumann also points up the ramifications of the housing problem with respect to ground rent, thereby linking it to another aspect of his national productivism. As the national population grows, Naumann recounts, the demand for housing increases, which leads to a correlative rise in

¹²⁰ Friedrich Naumann, “Landgebiete ohne Bodenwucher,” *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* 8 November 1896.

¹²¹ Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 219; Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 63; Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 249.

¹²² Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 63-5.

¹²³ On this issue, as on many others, Naumann was following closely in the footsteps of Max Weber, who in the early and mid-1890s had already pointed out how the combined processes of migration of German peasants from east to west along with the influx of cheap Polish and Russian labor into those eastern regions led to the gradual “de-Germanization” of these borderlands.

¹²⁴ Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 248f.; Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 63.

¹²⁵ Naumann, “Ostelbien”; see also Naumann, “Getreidezölle und innere Kolonisation,” 141; Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 249: “the German fatherland” will be protected “with a living wall of German families against the Slavic onslaught.”

¹²⁶ *Protokoll (1899)*, 36. The expression “non-German elements” appears in Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 215.

¹²⁷ *Protokoll (1899)*, 35f.; and *Protokoll (1902)*, 52.

¹²⁸ This is the concern raised by Naumann at the 1902 assembly: *Protokoll (1902)*, 52.

¹²⁹ Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 215.

the value of land and in the rate of land rent. This dynamic in turn drives an increasing portion of society into more and more crowded housing.¹³⁰ The “burden of [rising] land value”¹³¹ is borne not only by the population at large, but also industrial enterprises that must pay for use of the land on which their factories are built.¹³² Moreover, the profits go to the pockets of the landowners who “have done nothing” to earn it; for the value of land rises solely “because [the number of] men grows, because the big state with its military protects its big industry, it rises by virtue of the industriousness of the masses, it rises by virtue of the navy, it rises because the whole of Germany moves upward.”¹³³ In short, the profits from land rent duly belong to all those involved in the productive exertions of the nation and in the power-political framework shielding those exertions.¹³⁴ The disconnect between the (productive) origins of land profits and their (unproductive) terminus provides Naumann with all the “moral” justification he needs to advocate state taxation of profits from land rent.¹³⁵ Through taxation, “the money created by the multitude simply by the fact that it exists and wishes to live somewhere will ... flow back into the nation as a whole [*in das Volk als Gesamtheit*].”¹³⁶

The national-productivist reasoning suffusing this entire discussion is unmistakable. The conception of social justice underpinning Naumann’s social policy makes no substantial distinction between entrepreneurs and wage laborers and farmers;¹³⁷ all are lumped together in the “nation” that only “as a whole” is entitled to redress, to the restitution of what is rightfully its own. And the exploiters are those who “do nothing,” the idle. In this way Naumann’s housing, rent, and taxation policy is brought into the ideational fold of a national socialism that elides class conflict.

International trade and grain tariffs

Naumann was a proponent of opening Germany up to international trade, as manifested by his persistent opposition to the imposition of grain tariffs. Indeed, one of his main points of objection to the agenda of the Junkers and their political arm, the Conservatives, is their support of protectionism.¹³⁸ Yet his underlying conception of international trade and engagement in it is

¹³⁰ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 68f.

¹³¹ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 71.

¹³² Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 70.

¹³³ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 73.

¹³⁴ This argumentation is consistent with Naumann’s national-productivist critique of rent as discussed in the previous chapter.

¹³⁵ Naumann, on the other hand, opposes land nationalization on the grounds that it would be too risky to place such an important foundation of national life at the hands of a handful of bureaucrats. Certain limits must be imposed upon state socialism, cautions Naumann, if any confidence in it is to be preserved. This is one of the rare occasions on which Naumann explicitly adheres to a “liberal” skepticism towards state bureaucracy. Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 73.

¹³⁶ Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, 74.

¹³⁷ On the commonality of interest between city-dwellers and farmers on the question of land rent, see Friedrich Naumann, “Junker und Bauer,” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 17 October 1901; Naumann, “Bauer und Arbeiter”; *Protokoll (1902)*, 41, 44.

¹³⁸ Naumann, “Der Kampf um’s Brot”; Naumann, “Der Bund der Landwirte”; Naumann, “Der Grossgrundbesitz”; Naumann, “Deutschland am Scheidewege”; Naumann, “Bauer und Arbeiter”; Friedrich Naumann, “Lerne leiden, ohne zu klagen!” *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* 7 August 1902; Friedrich Naumann, “Handwerk und Zölle,” *Die Hilfe: Nationalsoziales Volksblatt* 16 November 1902; Naumann, “Obstruktion und Parlamentarismus”; Naumann, “Die Nationalsozialen und die Wahlen,” 295.

not liberal but national-existentialist. Since there are not enough resources in the world to satisfy all nations, it follows that international trade is inevitably conflictual: “the struggle for the world market is a struggle for existence.”¹³⁹ And since Germany cannot satisfy all of its needs domestically, it follows that engagement in this conflictual market is an indispensable “national duty, and neglecting it would be an injustice to the entire nation.”¹⁴⁰ International trade is for Naumann a continuation of the national pursuit of power by other means, a modality of nationalist expansionism that is tightly intertwined with the military modality. “In order to maintain maritime trade,” explains Naumann, “nations [*Völker*] need a military fleet.”¹⁴¹ Hence Germany’s military fleet, the world’s sixth largest, needs to be expanded so as to correspond to the size of the merchant fleet, the world’s second largest.¹⁴² No trace is to be found here of the liberal belief in the ultimate harmony of the pursuit of self-interest in the market. Gone also is the individual as the basic actor in the market; self-interest figures in Naumann’s thought as a national category. And the core value informing this vision is not individual liberty but national survival. International trade is a collective and conflictual, and a political no less than an economic, sphere of action.

Naumann’s argumentation regarding international trade, we might note, is national-productivist as well as national-existentialist. The specific role assigned to international trade in the framework of Germany’s struggle for existence is that of securing the food and raw materials needed for the nation’s industrial masses.¹⁴³ And by extension, the military fleet would do more than merely protect Germany’s merchant fleet; by doing so it would secure nothing less than “the new industrial Germany.”¹⁴⁴

The national-productivist concern for the fate of the “new industrial Germany” is also the primary motivation for Naumann’s objection to grain tariffs. That this objection is driven by national-productivist rather than laissez-faire principles is demonstrated by the fact that

¹³⁹ Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 203.

¹⁴⁰ Naumann, “Wochenschau [17 April 1898].” (The concept of justice, we may note, is once again nationalized here.) Germany’s growing population is dependent on other countries for a significant part of its food, therefore international trade (export as well as import) is needed for “the entire nation [*Volk*].” Naumann, “Nationale Sozialpolitik,” 239; cf. Friedrich Naumann, “Deutschland und Österreich (1900),” *Werke*, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 4 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 413: “Our trade policy must be at the service of overall national policy [*nationaler Gesamtpolitik*]!” See also Naumann, *Bebel und Bernstein*, 15.

¹⁴¹ Naumann, “Deutschlands Seemacht.”

¹⁴² Naumann, “National-sozialer Katechismus,” 208.

¹⁴³ Cf. Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 317-32, where the section titled “The German Military Fleet” lays out the following line of argumentation regarding international trade and its connection to Germany’s industrial realities on the one hand and national power-politics on the other:

1. Germany is increasingly dependent on the importation of food and raw materials (or “bread and labor,” as he puts it) (319-23);
2. Import requires, in turn, export (predominantly of industrially produced goods) as the major form of paying for the imported goods (324, 326);
3. Export occurs through international trade, which in turn requires political support to handle any political tension that might arise, especially between Germany and Britain, as a result of the expansion of Germany’s international trade (325f);
4. Germany’s consuls provide such political support to German citizens abroad, but their effectiveness depends in turn on the existence and presence of a military fleet on the seas (328);
5. Hence, “whoever wants the new industrial Germany must want the [military] fleet.” (328)

¹⁴⁴ Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, 328.

Naumann has nothing against the use of protectionism to enable the growth of the nation's infant industries. Such a protectionist strategy does have the effect of "boosting production" in the protected industries.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, Naumann rallies Friedrich List to his support in arguing that there is no sense in applying this strategy to the domain of agriculture because the productivity of the land will not be changed by virtue of its being protected from foreign competition.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, the traditionalist, pre-capitalistic psychology characterizing much of the German agricultural sectors means that the profits from higher grain prices will not be invested back in agriculture as a capitalist enterprise, but will be sunk in immediate consumption.¹⁴⁷ Hence grain tariffs will not be conducive to economic growth, as is the case with the protection of infant industries. Instead, higher grain prices will not only enrich the Junkers east of the Elbe as well as those landowners with the most productive land,¹⁴⁸ but more importantly, they will generate a significant rise in bread prices which will impede population growth, thereby hampering the growth of Germany's industry and status as a world power.¹⁴⁹

Conclusion

The analysis presented in the last three chapters leaves no doubt that Naumann's national socialism is more than a simple arithmetical aggregate, so to speak, of nationalism and socialism as two discrete ideas; nor can it be easily dismissed as some purely rhetorical strategy designed to usurp the concept of socialism from the Social Democrats. Instead, what we have is a complex theoretical matrix that rethinks fundamental concepts ranging from "population" to "socialism" to "labor" by filtering them through the national principle, giving rise on this basis to a distinctive interpretation of the contemporary social and political constellation, its inner dynamics and its past and future trajectories. In short, what we have is a full-fledged ideological formation; and it is an ideology, furthermore, that brings Naumann perilously close to the radical right. The analysis of Theodor Fritsch to which I now turn will make this disturbing ideational relationship more tangible.

¹⁴⁵ Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 47, 52f.

¹⁴⁶ Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 48. Cf. Friedrich List, The National System of Political Economy, trans. Sampson S. Lloyd (London: Longmans, Green, 1916), 173-6. It is surprising, indeed, that List does not appear more prominently in Naumann's writings, given his nationalist approach to political economy.

¹⁴⁷ Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 51f. This argument is reminiscent of Max Weber's juxtaposition between capitalist and traditionalist psychologies of economic action: see Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976), 58-60.

¹⁴⁸ Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 54; Naumann, "Der Kampf um's Brot."

¹⁴⁹ Naumann, Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, 55-7.

Chapter 5 | Theodor Fritsch's National Socialism: Introduction & Origins

I. INTRODUCTION

Compared to parallel endeavors on the bourgeois left, attempts to fuse nationalism and socialism in the European radical right have been submitted to much closer scrutiny in the existing literature. This is true especially for the French and Italian scenes, where national socialism has been shown by Eugen Weber and Zeev Sternhell to have played an important role in the emergence of fascist ideology.¹ Andrew Whiteside has also examined Austrian national socialism at the turn of the twentieth century.² These studies, carried out mostly in the 1960s and 1970s, are still valuable today and, in fact, were the principal intellectual inspiration leading to the current dissertation.

Surprisingly, however, very little comparable work has been done on pre-1914 national socialism in Imperial Germany. One reason for this gap is suggested by George Mosse when he acknowledges, on the one hand, that in “Western Europe the Right did attempt to establish relations with the labour movements, especially the more radical Right which can be called national socialist,” but then downplays the importance of Imperial Germany with respect to right-wing national socialism, claiming that “before the first world war it is France, not Germany, which offers the best example of how the Right tried to gain a working class following and of the success it achieved.”³ This statement is accurate insofar as right-wing national socialism in Imperial Germany did indeed orient itself predominantly towards the *Mittelstand* or petty bourgeoisie (as did many variants of French national socialism as well) rather than towards the working class. But at the same time, Mosse’s statement implies a narrowing of the phenomenon of national socialism to endeavors aimed at the working class alone; and when taken as a yardstick for the German case, this reconceptualization may well lead one to overlook the presence of other forms of national socialism.

Whatever the reason, one searches in vain in recent comprehensive studies of the radical right in the *Kaiserreich* for any serious mention—indeed, for hardly any mention at all—of national socialism.⁴ Consider the Handbook to the Völkisch Movement 1871-1918 published in 1999.⁵ In this voluminous compendium, spanning almost a thousand pages and comprising dozens of essays on multifarious aspects of Volkism or radical right-wing German nationalism,

¹ Weber, “Nationalism, Socialism, and National-Socialism in France,” 39f.; Eugen Weber, Varieties of Fascism: Doctrines of Revolution in the Twentieth Century (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1964), esp. 44-62; Sternhell, “National Socialism and Antisemitism: The Case of Maurice Barrès”; Sternhell, “Fascist Ideology”; Zeev Sternhell, Neither Right Nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Sternhell, The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution. See also George L. Mosse, Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism (New York: Harper Colophon, 1980), 150-68, where national socialism is discussed in the framework of a history of racism rather than fascism.

² Whiteside, “Nationaler Sozialismus in Österreich vor 1918”; Whiteside, Austrian National Socialism.

³ Mosse, “The French Right and the Working Classes: Les Jaunes,” 185f.

⁴ See Stefan Breuer, Grundpositionen der deutschen Rechten (1871-1945) (Tübingen: Edition diskord, 1999); Stefan Breuer, Ordnungen der Ungleichheit: die deutsche Rechte im Widerstreit ihrer Ideen 1871-1945 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001); Puschner, Die völkische Bewegung.

⁵ Uwe Puschner, Walter Schmitz and Justus H. Ulbricht, eds., Handbuch zur ‘Völkischen Bewegung’ 1871-1918 (München: Saur, 1999).

only one chapter deals directly with the *Völkisch* critique of capitalism;⁶ three or four other chapters cover related topics of secondary importance like land-reform settlements, nudism, and environmental protection;⁷ two chapters are on antisemitism and racial hygiene;⁸ and there is no chapter devoted to cardinal aspects of *Völkisch* social thought that are also central to *Völkisch* national socialism, such as corporatism, productivism, and the *Mittelstand*. No wonder, then, that national socialism itself is overlooked. Most dramatically, in one of the tone-setting essays at the beginning of the handbook, titled “*Völkisch* Ideology,” the elements associated by the author with Volkism include antisemitism, “life reform” (a general term referring mostly to movements aiming at a return to nature in response to the decadence of “civilization”), and racism; the national-social synthesis, under any terminological guise, simply does not appear.⁹

Another area of the secondary literature where national socialism could potentially be discussed is the literature on German antisemitism. The abovementioned classic studies of the French, Italian, and Austrian scenes have frequently pointed out the intimate link between right-wing national socialism and antisemitism. As Sternhell puts it, “National socialism was anti-Semitic, for anti-Semitism . . . was the perfect tool for the integration of the proletariat within the national community and had the advantage of rallying the petty bourgeoisie in danger of proletarianization.”¹⁰ Might we find, then, discussions of pre-Nazi national socialism embedded in studies of German antisemitism? Here we find a persistent disconnect between inquiries into the social aspects and the national aspects of German antisemitism, notwithstanding a few rare (and, precisely for this reason, important) exceptions.¹¹ The most extensive discussions of the socioeconomic aspect of antisemitism appear in studies informed by a Marxist approach, such as the work of Moishe Postone and Detlev Claussen; but these studies rarely link up this aspect to the nationalist dimension of antisemitism.¹²

⁶ Heike Hoffmann, “Völkische Kapitalismus-Kritik: Das Beispiel Warenhaus,” Handbuch zur ‘Völkischen Bewegung’ 1871-1918, eds. Uwe Puschner, et al. (München: Saur, 1999), where many of the themes characterizing *völkisch* national socialism are mentioned, but in the framework of a very brief and ideationally shallow discussion.

⁷ Ulrich Linse, “Völkisch-rassistische Siedlungen der Lebensreform,” Handbuch zur ‘Völkischen Bewegung’ 1871-1918, eds. Uwe Puschner, et al. (München: Saur, 1999); Uwe Schneider, “Nacktkultur im Kaiserreich,” Handbuch zur ‘Völkischen Bewegung’ 1871-1918, eds. Uwe Puschner, et al. (München: Saur, 1999); Joachim Wolschke-Bulmann, “Heimatschutz,” Handbuch zur ‘Völkischen Bewegung’ 1871-1918, eds. Uwe Puschner, et al. (München: Saur, 1999).

⁸ Rolf Peter Sieferle, “Rassismus, Rassenhygiene, Menschenzuchtideale,” Handbuch zur ‘Völkischen Bewegung’ 1871-1918, eds. Uwe Puschner, et al. (München: Saur, 1999); Werner Bergmann, “Völkischer Antisemitismus im Kaiserreich,” Handbuch zur ‘Völkischen Bewegung’ 1871-1918, eds. Uwe Puschner, et al. (München: Saur, 1999).

⁹ Günter Hartung, “Völkische Ideologie,” Handbuch zur ‘Völkischen Bewegung’ 1871-1918, eds. Uwe Puschner, et al. (München: Saur, 1999).

¹⁰ Sternhell, “Fascist Ideology,” 341; cf. George L. Mosse, Toward the Final Solution, 151.

¹¹ The most notable exception to the rule is Schatz and Woeldike, Freiheit und Wahn deutscher Arbeit, or in a more condensed version: Holger Schatz and Andrea Woeldike, “Nationalisierung der Arbeit, Antisemitismus und Vernichtung,” Antisemitismus - die deutsche Normalität: Geschichte und Wirkungsweise des Vernichtungswahns, ed. Arbeitskreis Kritik des deutschen Antisemitismus (Freiburg: ça ira, 2001). The disconnect I refer to here is at the level of systematic investigation rather than the occasional, sporadic identification of the existence of a national socialism in antisemitic discourse. For the latter case, see e.g. Pulzer, The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism, 44, 50, 104.

¹² Moishe Postone, “Anti-Semitism and National Socialism: Notes on the German Reaction to ‘Holocaust’,” New German Critique 19 (1980); the bulk of Postone’s classic analysis figures antisemitism as fetishized anti-capitalism, with the national dimension appearing almost as an afterthought toward the end of the article (113). The

By the same token, scholarly interest in the centrality of nationalism for antisemitism (and vice versa) has witnessed dramatic revival over the past decade, but there is very little acknowledgement or sustained discussion of the inextricable intertwinement of this nationalist dimension with the socioeconomic side of antisemitism.¹³ Most recently, Daniela Weiland in her important and otherwise useful study of Otto Glagau—one of the founding fathers of modern German antisemitism—does not raise the national-social conceptual nexus in Glagau’s antisemitism to systematic reflection, even when she puts her finger on it by explicitly referring to the “tight bond” between the “socialism” and the nationalism of the antisemites as a “national socialism.”¹⁴ Despite this acknowledgement, the national-social conceptual nexus takes up only a small portion of the book as a whole.¹⁵ It is also absent from the book’s general interpretive framework: in her introduction to the book, Weiland places her study in the context of the recent revival of interest in the nationalist dimension of antisemitism, while hardly mentioning the social dimension.¹⁶ This is all the more striking given the fact that Glagau was famous for coining the expression “the social question is the Jewish question.”

The literature on Theodor Fritsch himself has not fared much better in spotting his national socialism. Perhaps this is because Fritsch, like most pre-Nazi German antisemites, did

same sporadic kind of attention to nationalism is also evident in Detlev Claussen, Grenzen der Aufklärung: Die gesellschaftliche Genese des modernen Antisemitismus (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1994), e.g. 206-8. See also Andrea Woeldike, “Kapitalismus und deutscher Wahn,” Antisemitismus - die deutsche Normalität: Geschichte und Wirkungsweise des Vernichtungswahns, ed. Arbeitskreis Kritik des deutschen Antisemitismus (Freiburg: ça ira, 2001), which advances a similar argument to Postone; and again, the national dimension is present but in a secondary rather than core position in the overall structure of the argument. Members of the first generation of the Frankfurt School analyzed the phenomenon of antisemitism in connection to capitalism and social psychology, but apparently not in connection to nationalism: see Martin Jay, “The Jews and the Frankfurt School: Critical Theory’s Analysis of Anti-Semitism,” Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). In non-Marxist scholarship, Moshe Zimmermann asserts that “the identification of the so-called ‘Jewish question’ with the ‘social question’ was the key to the rise or decline of antisemitism,” but this point remains unconnected to the nationalist dimension of antisemitism. Moshe Zimmermann, “עלייתה ודעיכתה של האנטישמיות הגרמנית” (The Rise and Decline of German Antisemitism), Ha-antishemiyut ha-Germanit: ha’arakhah me-hadash [German Antisemitism (Hebrew)], eds. Jacob Borut and Oded Heilbronner (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2000). In another piece, Zimmermann notes the antisemites’ self-understanding as holding the key to the resolution of “the ‘social and national question’,” but this point remains undeveloped: see Moshe Zimmermann, “Die ‘Judenfrage’ als ‘die soziale Frage’: Zu Kontinuität und Stellenwert des Antisemitismus vor und nach dem Nationalsozialismus,” Faschismus und Faschismen im Vergleich, ed. Christof Dipper (Köln: 1998), cit. 153. For another example within non-Marxist scholarship, see Matthew Lange, Antisemitic Elements in the Critique of Capitalism in German Culture, 1850-1933 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

¹³ The most prominent exemplars of the revived interest in the connection between antisemitism and German nationalism are Peter Alter, Claus-Ekkehard Bärsch and Peter Berghoff, eds., Die Konstruktion der Nation gegen die Juden (München: Fink, 1999); and Holz, Nationaler Antisemitismus. An earlier work in the same interpretive vein is Werner Jochmann, “Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1871-1914,” Gesellschaftskrise und Judenfeindschaft in Deutschland 1870-1945 (Hamburg: Christians, 1988). In all of these works, the social aspect of nationalist antisemitism makes an occasional appearance but on the whole plays a minor role. For a similar interpretive thrust, see also Jochmann, “Stoecker”; and Lutz Hoffmann, “Der Antisemitismus als Baugerüst der deutschen Nation,” Antisemitismus - die deutsche Normalität: Geschichte und Wirkungsweise des Vernichtungswahns, ed. Arbeitskreis Kritik des deutschen Antisemitismus (Freiburg: ça ira, 2001).

¹⁴ Daniela Weiland, Otto Glagau und “Der Kulturkämpfer”: Zur Entstehung des modernen Antisemitismus (Berlin: Metropol, 2004), 164.

¹⁵ Weiland, Otto Glagau, 147-60.

¹⁶ Weiland, Otto Glagau, 11-20.

not use the term “national socialism” as French antisemites did (although adjacent terms such as “German-social,” “German reform,” and “German workers’ party” were employed profusely). At any rate, the small handful of works devoted to Fritsch, mostly written during the first decade of the twenty-first century,¹⁷ has tended to place more emphasis on his biological racism and his anti-Christianity and advocacy of a Germanic religion than on his fusion of national and social ideas.¹⁸ Matthias Piefel’s examination of Fritsch’s organizational activity in Saxony and Dirk Schubert’s inquiry into Fritsch’s vision of urban reform have not associated these aspects of Fritsch’s endeavors with national socialism either.¹⁹ Finally, Michael Bönisch’s survey of the “Hammer movement,” a term referring to the semi-organized following that gathered around Fritsch’s periodical Hammer, presents Fritsch’s social agenda without connecting it to his nationalism.²⁰

Thus, while my study of Fritsch’s national socialism stands on the shoulders of previous research on national socialism in France, Italy, and Austria, it explores a *terra incognita* as far as Wilhelmine Germany is concerned. Although many aspects of Fritsch’s national socialism as presented in the next chapters will be very familiar to anyone acquainted with the relevant primary and secondary literature on the interwar era and on non-German national socialism, covering the same ideational ground for Wilhelmine Germany as well can yield important historiographical fruit. First, analyzing *völkisch* antisemites like Theodor Fritsch from the perspective of national socialism counters a tendency to reify them and their thought as antisemitic in a way that occludes the possibility of identifying other ideational formations in their thinking. Fritsch was certainly a rabid and vocal antisemite, and this aspect of his activity must no doubt be studied; it will also figure prominently in my own investigation, simply because it is so central to Fritsch, permeating every corner of his worldview. At the same time, this does not mean that other aspects of Fritsch’s thinking do not have a historical significance that cannot be collapsed into his antisemitism.²¹ Such is the case, I believe, with his national socialism.

¹⁷ Among the very few earlier works devoted to Fritsch, at least post-1945, is Reginald H. Phelps, “Theodor Fritsch und der Antisemitismus,” Deutsche Rundschau 87.5 (1961), which is a telegraphic and mostly descriptive survey of Fritsch’s public activity; and Moshe Zimmermann, “Two Generations in the History of German Antisemitism: The Letters of Theodor Fritsch to Wilhelm Marr,” Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute 23 (1978), which unearthed Fritsch’s important correspondence with one of the founding fathers of modern antisemitism (and the one who coined the term “antisemitism” itself in the late 1870s). Yet Zimmermann focuses on Fritsch’s “organisational criticism which he voiced [in his letters to Marr] against his forerunners and comrades in the [antisemitic] movement” (96) rather than on Fritsch’s ideas.

¹⁸ See Serge Tabary, “De l’antijudaïsme religieux à l’antisémitisme politique,” Revue d’Allemagne et des Pays de Langue Allemande 32.2 (2000); Massimo Ferrari Zumbini, “Theodor Fritsch,” Die Wurzeln des Bösen: Gründerjahre des Antisemitismus: von der Bismarckzeit zu Hitler (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2003).

¹⁹ Matthias Piefel, Antisemitismus und völkische Bewegung im Königreich Sachsen 1879-1914 (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2004); Dirk Schubert, ed., Die Gartenstadtidee zwischen reaktionärer Ideologie und pragmatischer Umsetzung: Theodor Fritschs völkische Version der Gartenstadt (Dortmund: Institut für Raumplanung, Universität Dortmund, Fakultät Raumplanung, 2004); and a condensed English-language version: Dirk Schubert, “Theodor Fritsch and the German (*Völkische*) Version of the Garden City: The Garden City Invented Two Years Before Ebenezer Howard,” Planning Perspectives 19.1 (2004).

²⁰ Michael Bönisch, “Die ‘Hammer’-Bewegung,” Handbuch zur ‘Völkischen Bewegung’ 1871-1918, eds. Uwe Puschner, et al. (München: Saur, 1999).

²¹ Exactly this point is also made by Puschner, Die völkische Bewegung, 58.

Second, an analysis focused on the pre-Nazi era can help to avoid the teleological pitfall discussed in the introduction to this dissertation: that is to say, the danger that *völkisch*-antisemitic national socialism will be assessed exclusively in terms of its implication in the Nazi movement. This is particularly important in the case of Theodor Fritsch, since his connection to the Nazi phenomenon was empirical and personal, not merely speculative or teleological. Fritsch was an enthusiastic supporter and member of the NSDAP from the mid-1920s onward; following his death in 1933 he was hailed by Nazi leaders as one of the forefathers of the Third Reich; and Adolf Hitler himself testified to the formative influence that Fritsch's Antisemitic Catechism had exerted on him in his early Vienna years.²² While the Wilhelmine phase of Fritsch's national socialism is certainly connected to—and help us better understand—his subsequent association with Nazism, it might also have a synchronic significance in the context of Wilhelmine Germany itself; this additional dimension should not be covered over by the Nazi connection.

Third, the hermeneutic strategy of synchronic rather than diachronic interpretation opens up the possibility of juxtaposing the national socialism of Theodor Fritsch and of Friedrich Naumann, as undertaken in this dissertation. This juxtaposition is extremely valuable because it enables us to grasp the startling scope of national socialism as a distinctive strand of political thought that exceeds conventional classificatory templates of Left and Right, bourgeois and anti-bourgeois, Christian and non-Christian, antisemitic and non-antisemitic. This is not to say that these distinctions are to be discarded entirely; only that they are insufficient in important ways, and may sometimes obstruct rather than facilitate historical understanding. Rather than letting such pre-given taxonomies cloud our vision, the Naumann-Fritsch juxtaposition allows us to see that the menace presented by national socialism can only be understood in terms of its distinctive ideological content: namely, its attempt to develop a form of socialism driven by an ideal of national order, homogeneity, and power rather than by a vision of social justice.

The affinity, however, between the national socialisms of Naumann and Fritsch—their manifold differences notwithstanding—extend beyond their general, overarching agenda. It also consists more concretely in a twofold ideational foundation comprising national productivism and national existentialism. This commonality is reflected in the structure of the next chapters, wherein Fritsch's national socialism will be discussed under the same headings used in the Naumann section of this dissertation. After presenting the intellectual origins of Fritsch's national socialism in the present chapter, the next chapter will examine Fritsch's national existentialism and productivism. These two foundations will at the end of the chapter be shown to have blended together in Fritsch's antisemitism. The third chapter on Fritsch, just like the equivalent chapter on Naumann, will then turn to explore the ways in which Fritsch's existentialism and productivism manifested themselves in his practical political and socioeconomic agenda.

Although in the specific features of these two foundational pillars, existentialism and productivism, Naumann and Fritsch diverge in many ways, this commonality is more than merely happenstance. What I called “productivism” in this dissertation constitutes a deep ideational current in modern European social and political thought, its genealogy extending back at least to Luther and experiencing substantial proliferation throughout the nineteenth century thanks to prominent thinkers such as Henri de Saint-Simon in France and Friedrich List in

²² Puschner, Die völkische Bewegung, 57-9; Phelps, “Theodor Fritsch und der Antisemitismus,” 442f., 447-9.

Germany.²³ By the mid-nineteenth century productivism had become a major theoretical alternative to the social imaginary of Marxism on the one hand and liberalism on the other. It is therefore hardly a coincidence that national socialism, which typically positions itself as an alternative to precisely these two ideological currents, would embrace productivism in one form or another on both sides of the political spectrum. As for national existentialism, this feature may be traced back in both our case studies to a generational sea change in German intellectual life, a fundamental shift in temperament shared by Naumann and Fritsch among many others. Moreover, for both of our protagonists this generational shift involved a repudiation of the ethical conservatism of their predecessors, especially Adolf Stoecker.

A final, technical note before we turn to the origins of Fritsch's national socialism. Theodor Fritsch was in the habit of writing under a variety of pseudonyms in addition to his own name. In the sources perused for this study, two pseudonyms have surfaced: Thomas Frey and F. Roderich-Stolthelm. These pseudonyms will be retained in the footnotes and references. Another appellative issue is the appearance in Hammer of many unsigned articles. Of these articles, I have allowed myself to use those which have appeared as the opening pieces of their issue. Given their prominent position on the title page, there is a good chance that Fritsch was indeed their author; and even if that is not the case, he would certainly not have published a lead article with which he did not wholly concur.

II. ORIGINS

Biographical overview

Born in a village near Leipzig, Saxony in 1852 to a poor family of peasants, Theodor Fritsch graduated from the Royal Vocational School in Berlin in 1875 as a milling engineer. In 1878 he returned to Leipzig where for the next few decades he edited and published the trade journal Kleines Mühlen-Journal ("Small Milling Journal," later Deutsche Müller or "The German Miller") from 1880 onward, and was co-founder and executive director of the *Verein Deutscher Obermüller* (Association of German Millers) starting in 1883. In the framework of both of these endeavors, Fritsch saw himself as a representative of the small businesses in the milling trade,²⁴ thereby aligning his social consciousness with the *Mittelstand* from the very beginning of his career. Fritsch's life-long activity in behalf of the *Mittelstand* thus has independent roots in his own biography and self-understanding, and cannot therefore be reduced merely to political tactics designed to win over the social group most susceptible to antisemitic propaganda.

²³ I use the term "genealogy" in its Foucauldian sense so as to suggest the contingent and convoluted nature of the conceptual history of productivism; see my more detailed discussion of this methodological point in Chapter 1.

²⁴ Piefel, Antisemitismus, 54-7; Bönisch, "Die 'Hammer'-Bewegung," 342; Rudolf Linke, "Im Zeichen des Hammers: Vorgeschichte und Geschichte des Hammer-Verlags. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der völkischen Bewegung," Festschrift zum fünfundzwanzigjährigen Bestehen des Hammer. Den Mitstreiter zugeeignet (Leipzig: Hammer, 1926), 38.

The early 1880s were the years in which Fritsch's worldview, shaped above all by the writings of Wilhelm Marr and Eugen Dühring (to be discussed below), acquired the fundamental features that would characterize it until Fritsch's death in 1933: a combination of antisemitism, German nationalism, biological racism, and national existentialism and productivism.

After his intellectual maturation and his entry into significant political and publicistic activity within the antisemitic movement in the mid-1880s, Fritsch quickly emerged as arguably the single most important and indefatigable propagator of *völkisch*, antisemitic, racist and national-socialist ideas, as well as organizer and mobilizer of the *Mittelstand*. In 1885 he helped to jumpstart the antisemitic movement after a few years of near standstill by founding and editing the Antisemitische Correspondenz, a bi-monthly (and, from 1887, monthly) publication that circulated in limited numbers among the "trusted" members of the movement, and which served as a platform for exchanging ideas on ideological, strategic, and organizational questions. Also in 1885, Fritsch founded the *Deutsche Reformverein* (German Reform Association) in Leipzig, which he led until 1890.²⁵ In 1886 he led the founding of the *Allgemeinen Deutschen Antisemitischen Vereinigung* (ADAV; General German Antisemitic Union). Three years later, Fritsch began a short-lived flirtation with party politics when he co-founded the Leipzig-based *Deutsch-Soziale Partei* (DSP; German Social Party). In 1892, Fritsch withdrew from party-political activity due primarily to his radical rejection of Christianity in its traditional form in favor of the idea of a Germanic religion. This stance was anathema to many in the DSP and collided with the party's collaboration with Stoecker's Christian-Social Party. Fritsch, on his part, was unwilling to subordinate his by now well-consolidated worldview to party-political considerations, especially since he had always been ambivalent about the value of party politics.²⁶ Only in the Weimar era did Fritsch return to party-political activity; he was elected to the Reichstag in 1924.

After receding to the background of the *völkisch*-antisemitic movement in the years following his withdrawal from the DSP—which included resigning from the editorship of the Antisemitische Correspondenz, by then (in effect if not officially) an organ of the DSP—Fritsch catapulted himself back to the center of attention in the first decade of the twentieth century with two new projects. First, in 1902 Fritsch launched a new periodical, Hammer, which within a few years became a cultural and literary focal point of the biological-racist kind of antisemitism, volkism, and national socialism propagated by Fritsch.²⁷ Second, in mid-decade Fritsch contributed significantly to a surge in the *völkisch*-antisemitic organization and mobilization of the *Mittelstand*. In 1904 he was a leading figure in the establishment of the *Deutsche Mittelstandsvereinigung* (DMV; German *Mittelstand* Union), followed shortly thereafter by Fritsch's own regionally based *Mittelstands-Vereinigung im Königreich Sachsen* (MVKS; *Mittelstand* Association in the Kingdom of Saxony), founded in 1905.²⁸ The MVKS quickly grew to be the largest and most robust branch of the national movement, so that when Fritsch led the secession of his regional movement from the DMV in 1909, many other branches followed

²⁵ Bönisch, "Die 'Hammer'-Bewegung," 343; Ferrari Zumbini, "Theodor Fritsch," 365; Piefel, Antisemitismus, 58.

²⁶ Piefel, Antisemitismus, 98-101; Ferrari Zumbini, "Theodor Fritsch," 366-70.

²⁷ On the "extraordinary significance of Hammer in the *völkisch* press landscape," see Puschner, Die völkische Bewegung, 60-2.

²⁸ Robert Gellately, The Politics of Economic Despair: Shopkeepers and German Politics 1890-1914 (London: SAGE, 1974), 163.

suit.²⁹ The ground for the secession was the DMV's decision to join the Hansa League, an association of large trade businesses; against this backdrop, Fritsch's secession had the effect of pulling much of the *Mittelstand* movement in Germany "well to the right" of the DMV.³⁰

Thus by 1910, Fritsch had established himself firmly as a mainstay of the German radical right. In the years immediately preceding World War I, Fritsch was an important political entrepreneur in two additional projects of the radical right. In 1911, the *Reichsdeutscher Mittelstandsverband* (RDMV; Imperial-German *Mittelstand* League) was established at the initiative of Fritsch and his MVKS. This organization rapidly grew into the "largest *Mittelstand* organization of the period from 1890 to 1914."³¹ And in 1913, the *Kartell der schaffenden Stände* (Cartel of Productive Estates) was founded jointly by the RDMV, the Agrarian League, the Central Association of German Industry (representing the heavy industries) and the Christian Association of Farmers. This organization had a clear national-productivist agenda, declaring itself to be committed to the "protection of national work" and to combating both Social Democracy and "speculative," "mobile" capital.³² (In practice, the activity of the *Kartell* was directed primarily against the socialists with a view to maintaining "the existing social and economic order."³³) While the *Kartell* "may not have been politically strong enough to achieve all the legislative goals which its members had demanded," as Gellately explains, it nonetheless bolstered the political visibility of the organized *Mittelstand* and gave a boost to the membership numbers of the RDMV on the eve of the First World War.³⁴

The formative intellectual influences: Marr and Dühring

Wilhelm Marr

Although "instinctively" drawn to antisemitism since his Berlin student days, as Fritsch testifies, it was only after he had returned to Leipzig in the late 1870s that he began to devote all his political energies to the antisemitic cause. The trigger for his transformation into a "conscious antisemite" was Wilhelm Marr's essay, Der Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanenthum ("The Victory of Judaism over Germanism," 1879).³⁵ In this work—one of the founding texts of modern antisemitism—Marr rejects the Christian-religious framing of the "Jewish question," casting it instead as a "social-political question."³⁶ The "political" dimension of Marr's antisemitism consists, as I will presently show, in a national existentialism, and the "social" dimension in a national productivism.

Before we go on to explore these two elements, it is important to underline the non-Christian character of Marr's thinking. In the parallel chapter on Friedrich Naumann, it was

²⁹ Gellately, Politics of Economic Despair, 168f.

³⁰ Gellately, Politics of Economic Despair, 170.

³¹ Gellately, Politics of Economic Despair, 170f.

³² Gellately, Politics of Economic Despair, 191f.

³³ Gellately, Politics of Economic Despair, 192.

³⁴ Gellately, Politics of Economic Despair, 194f.

³⁵ Wilhelm Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanenthum, 2nd ed. (Bern: Rudolph Costenoble, 1879). For Fritsch's testimony, see Theodor Fritsch, "Wie agitirt man am wirksamsten?" Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten 7 (1886).

³⁶ Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 43; see also 23, 33, 50.

shown how the emergence of Naumann's national existentialism was the outcome of the influence of Max Weber and Rudolf Sohm, both of whom argued tenaciously for divorcing politics and social policy from Christian ethics. Similarly, Fritsch too owes his national existentialism to Marr's non-Christian intellectual provenance, as well as to Dühring's anti-Christian thought. Dühring will be discussed further below; as for Marr, the social and political ideas he expressed in his Victory of Judaism over Germanism of 1879 are in the final instance rooted in his nationalist, secular, democratic radicalism of the 1840s. Although after 1848 Marr became disillusioned with democratic ideals, his staunch secularism and fervent nationalism remained constantly present in his thinking, and the antisemitism he picked up in the 1860s was nationalistic and secular *ab initio*.³⁷

The political dimension of the "Jewish question" as it is formulated in Marr's Victory of Judaism consists of two layers, the world-historical and the national. First, on the "world-historical"³⁸ level, the Jews have become a "world power of the first rank"³⁹ and are (thus far successfully) pursuing the goal of "world domination."⁴⁰ Within this general world-historical framework, however, Marr is particularly concerned—indeed, mortified and in utter despair—about the fate of the German nation at the hands of the Jews. For the latter have lodged themselves in Germany as a "state within a state"⁴¹ that not only refuses to assimilate with the German as with any other nation,⁴² but is also bent on "exploiting" the German nation.⁴³ This is in Marr's view a predicament of dire existential proportions: the "struggle for existence" against the "Judaization of society"⁴⁴ has ended with "*Finis Germanie*."⁴⁵ "Life and the future belong to Judaism, death and the past to Germanism."⁴⁶

The social dimension of Marr's antisemitism consists, as noted earlier, in a national productivism. Marr's productivism appears at the very outset of his essay, when he claims that religion had never been the real motive underlying the "enmity against the Jews," but rather "first of all ... the Jews' avoidance of real labor."⁴⁷ The Jews, Marr explains, had as early as the middle ages "dominated large and small trade and outflanked the people [*Volk*] laboring by the

³⁷ On the lasting legacy of the 1840s for Wilhelm Marr's subsequent public career, see Moshe Zimmermann, "From Radicalism to Antisemitism," trans. Nathan H. Reisner, Antisemitism Through the Ages, ed. Shmuel Almog (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988). In the 1840s, Marr even edited a popularized version of Feuerbach's The Religion of the Future. This book, Zimmermann states, "shaped Marr's anti-Christian attitude both as a radical-democrat and as an anti-Semite." And he adds: "To understand Marr's career we should keep in mind that the years in which he embarked upon his activity were years in which various ideologies joined together in an attempt to break Christianity, the Christian society, and the conservative social order." Moshe Zimmermann, Wilhelm Marr: The Patriarch of Anti-Semitism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 17, and 18 for the constancy of German nationalism in Marr's thought from the 1840s onward.

³⁸ Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 4.

³⁹ Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 3.

⁴⁰ Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 27; see also 16, 30.

⁴¹ Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 10.

⁴² Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 14f.

⁴³ Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 13.

⁴⁴ Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 8, 40.

⁴⁵ Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 50. These are the concluding words of the essay.

⁴⁶ Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 39f.

⁴⁷ Marr, Der Sieg des Judenthums, 6. The second ground Marr cites here for anti-Judaism throughout history corresponds roughly to the world-historical political dimension discussed earlier: namely, "their lawfully prescribed enmity against all non-Jews."

sweat of its brow.”⁴⁸ Germany was particularly vulnerable to the machinations of the “abstract, money-manufacturing and haggling spirit of the Jews”⁴⁹ because “the sentiment of a German nationality, let alone of a German national pride, did not exist in the Germanic countries”⁵⁰ at a time when other “Western”⁵¹ nations were already in formation. In the present, when “Germanism” is almost entirely consumed by the “destructive mission of the Jews,”⁵² Marr sees only one last, desparate “popular expression” of anti-Jewish struggle: namely, the “agitation against usury” at a time when “the poor people [*Volk*] of all estates [*Stände*] remains a victim of the [Jewish] usurers and their ... Germanic helpers.”⁵³ Marr also mentions—in a classic statement of national-productivist antisemitism that would recur frequently in Fritsch’s writings—dubs Jewry the “golden international” which “knows as little of a fatherland as the black and the red.”⁵⁴

This, then, is the text that awoke Fritsch’s antisemitic consciousness. “I read the work,” Fritsch recounts with enthusiasm, “and my antisemitism flared up in bright flames.” More than anything else, Fritsch seems to have imbibed from Marr the sense of existential urgency that the latter associated with the “Jewish question.” Marr’s influence on this point is attested to, ironically, by Fritsch’s *criticism* of the paralyzing effect of Marr’s pessimism in the face of this existential predicament. Fritsch’s objection is not based on a belief that the situation is not as dire as Marr had portrayed, but rather that the very predicament pointed up by Marr does not allow one the luxury of Marr’s resigned pessimism. “It was [Marr’s] pessimism,” Fritsch explains, “that spurred me to the most vigorous resistance. The idea of viewing my nation [*Nation*] as duped and enslaved by the pitiable Jewish race was intolerable for me. It left me restless day and night.” In light of the urgency of “taking up the struggle” against this threat to the nation’s existence, Marr’s pessimism appeared to Fritsch as “a sign of incompetence and weakness—indeed, of lack of character.”⁵⁵

Marr’s national productivism—and more broadly his displacement of the religious frame of anti-Judaism in favor of a “social-political” interpretation of the “Jewish question”—must also have been appealing to Fritsch, for it quickly took center stage in his writings, and it easily converged with Fritsch’s *Mittelstand* social orientation. Thus in the early 1880s, writing in the *Kleines Mühlen-Journal* (the periodical edited by Fritsch which, let us recall, targeted small milling businesses as the “stepson[s] of the new social relations” of large-scale industrial capitalism), Fritsch argues that the “core of our economic misery is called—the Jewish question”; that the latter is not a “religious ... but above all an economic question”; and that the Jews are “the real source of the suffering of the people [*Volkselend*]” because they “drain the

⁴⁸ Marr, *Der Sieg des Judenthums*, 13. In another productivist trope elsewhere in the same text, Marr locates the Jews in the sphere of circulation: “in all branches of life the way to the goal leads through Jewish mediation” (28).

⁴⁹ Marr, *Der Sieg des Judenthums*, 14.

⁵⁰ Marr, *Der Sieg des Judenthums*, 12.

⁵¹ Marr, *Der Sieg des Judenthums*, 33f.

⁵² Marr, *Der Sieg des Judenthums*, 42.

⁵³ Marr, *Der Sieg des Judenthums*, 44.

⁵⁴ Marr, *Der Sieg des Judenthums*, 44f.

⁵⁵ Fritsch, “Wie agitirt man.”

blood of the national body [*Volkskörper*].”⁵⁶ Elsewhere Fritsch claims that the most important sphere in which the Jews exert their domination as “foreigners in the German ... nation [*fremdlinge im deutschen Volke*]” is the economic sphere—more important, in Fritsch’s view, than the spheres of the press and public opinion, parliament, law and administration, higher education, science and art.⁵⁷ Fritsch, furthermore, defines the Jews primarily in productivist terms as physically incapable of “bodily labor” and as exhibiting a proclivity to “unproductive” forms of “trade, haggling, and usury.” His productivism is in turn embedded in nationalism when it is tied by Fritsch to what he calls the “nomadic nature” of the Jews, that is, “their lack of a native country and a fatherland, their cosmopolitan inclination.”⁵⁸

At the same time, Fritsch’s productivist language also bears the imprint of Eugen Dühring’s influence, perhaps even more so than it does Marr’s. Indeed, I would argue that, whereas Marr was undoubtedly Fritsch’s main personal inspiration—even his “idol,” as Moshe Zimmerman put it⁵⁹—in his first years as a conscious antisemite, the main *intellectual* impact on Fritsch came from Dühring. Let us then turn to consider Dühring’s ideas and how they made their way into Fritsch’s worldview.

Eugen Dühring

Like Marr, Eugen Dühring derives at least part of his historical significance as an antisemitic thinker from his disavowal of religion, Christian or other, as the basis of antisemitism. But whereas Marr’s alternative definition of the “Jewish question” was cast in socio-political terms, Dühring foregrounded the “racial, ethical, and cultural” aspects, as suggested by the title of his single most influential antisemitic work: The Jewish Question as a Racial, Ethical, and Cultural Question (1881).⁶⁰ The Jews are according to Dühring above all racially, not religiously defined;⁶¹ they are, more precisely, a “nationality [*Nationalität*]” that constitutes “the most evil manifestation of the entire Semitic race.”⁶² Racial antagonisms—and in particular, racially based national antagonisms—go deeper, according to Dühring, than class conflicts; as he puts it, “the racial consciousness of the nations [*Völker*] is awakening from its

⁵⁶ All citations in this paragraph, taken from various articles published by Fritsch in the abovementioned periodical in the years 1880-82, are in Piefel, Antisemitismus, 55f.

⁵⁷ Dr. P. [Theodor Fritsch], “Zur Behandlung der Judenfrage,” Schmeitzner’s Internationale Monatsschrift 2.6 (1883): 368f., 371.

⁵⁸ [Fritsch], “Zur Behandlung,” 370; the word “unproductive” appears on 371.

⁵⁹ Zimmermann, “Two Generations,” 93.

⁶⁰ Eugen Dühring, Die Judenfrage als Racen-, Sitten- und Culturfrage, 2nd ed. (Karlsruhe and Leipzig: H. Reuther, 1881). Prior to this book, Dühring was known primarily as a non-Marxist, socialist political economist who in the mid-1870s gained a strong influence within the Social-Democratic movement, with followers such as Eduard Bernstein and Wilhelm Liebknecht. It took a concerted intellectual effort on the part of Friedrich Engels in the form of his famous 1877 treatise, Anti-Dühring, to bring about Dühring’s marginalization in the movement. See Richard Adamiak, “Marx, Engels, and Dühring,” Journal of the History of Ideas 35.1 (1974). In the 1880s, Dühring in his racist-antisemitic incarnation became the object of attack by another towering intellectual, Friedrich Nietzsche: see Massimo Ferrari Zumbini, Untergänge und Morgenröten: Nietzsche -- Spengler -- Antisemitismus (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999), 141f.

⁶¹ The Jewish question, Dühring insists, will continue to exist even if all the Jews renounce their religion. Dühring, Die Judenfrage, 3. Elsewhere Dühring subsumes religion (and morality) under race when he writes that the Jewish religion is a “race religion, just as Jewish morality is a racial morality.” Dühring, Die Judenfrage, 100.

⁶² Dühring, Die Judenfrage, 2f.

slumber and shows to the Jews and to the Judaized Social Democrats that there is another, greater antagonism than that between worker and bourgeois.”⁶³ The primacy of the racial and national over the social, moreover, is grounded in the former’s existential intensity:

For national societies [*Völkergesellschaften*] and their various strata, the general social question [i.e., that of the working class] has to do with the How of existence, but the Jewish question has to do with the If of this existence. The former [question] encroaches on the way of life, the latter reaches into the blood.⁶⁴

As we shall see in the next chapter, the definition of the “Jewish question” as a racial-national and, on that basis, an existential question trumping social-class antagonisms is precisely what rests at the foundation of Fritsch’s national socialism, and indicates Dühring’s strong influence on Fritsch. While Marr too, as discussed earlier, framed the “Jewish question” in existential terms; and while he, too, subscribed to a racial understanding of Jewish and German, race did not play as important and systematic a role in his thinking as in Dühring’s and subsequently Fritsch’s. A related contribution of Dühring to Fritsch’s worldview is his emphatically naturalist, biologicistic conceptualization of race. Dühring explicitly declares his intention of applying the natural sciences directly to the study of human existence, and on this basis states that he will use the term Jew “in its natural sense” of “lineage [*Abstammung*] and race.”⁶⁵ Dühring’s biologism is evident when he argues that “the question of flesh and blood” which is “related to the root of all life”⁶⁶ is decisive for “the fate of nations [*Völker*] and of individuals” even “more than iron and blood.”⁶⁷ Hence the significance for Dühring of replacing the religious framing of the family and its reproductive functions with a biological-racist framing. In (mixed) marriage, he intimates, “not religious mixing but racial mixing is ... the predominant disadvantage.”⁶⁸

Dühring intensifies the existential urgency of his biologicistic reading of the “Jewish question” by casting it as a Manichaeian, world-historical struggle between good and evil—another motif found in Fritsch’s writings as well. As Peggy Cosmann has recently shown, Dühring’s entire oeuvre is underpinned by a Manichaeian cosmology that views good and evil as ontological entities permeating the (naturalistically constructed) world and world-history. The existential struggle of the good and noble against the evil constitutes in this schema a self-corrective mechanism of nature, whereby the latter extirpates the evil perversions that had arisen spontaneously within it.⁶⁹ Dühring maps his antagonistic construction of the ontologized and essentialized categories “Germanic” and “Jew” onto this Manichaeian template: the “Germanic peoples” are the quintessential personification of the good in nature, whereas the Jews—including the Christian religion, which Dühring understands as a spiritual manifestation of

⁶³ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 83.

⁶⁴ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 83; cf. 153: “The Jewish question is itself a social question ... indeed, for the present it ranks higher the general social question; for it is not simply a vital issue for the upward striving workers, but rather an existential question [*Existenzfrage*] of modern nations [*Völker*].”

⁶⁵ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 5.

⁶⁶ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 142.

⁶⁷ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 144.

⁶⁸ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 142.

⁶⁹ Peggy Cosmann, *Physiodicee und Weltneimesis: Eugen Dührings physiomoralische Begründung des Moral- und Charakterantisemitismus* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 85f., 94ff., 131-5, 160. On the self-correction of nature, see 135, 157.

Jewish racial qualities—are the personification of evil.⁷⁰ Thus we come full circle to the idea mentioned earlier that the national-racial struggle of “German” against “Jew” is an existential one.⁷¹ But in contrast to Marr’s pessimism, Dühring’s understanding of this struggle as one of natural self-correction is decidedly optimistic; the good is bound to win, because that is how nature comports itself. This optimism must have contributed to Dühring’s attraction for Fritsch, given the latter’s revulsion with the resignation evinced by Marr.

The Jews, then, are for Dühring the world-historical embodiment of evil. They are “foreign to humanity in the deeper sense” and do not fit into “any harmonious shaping of a better humanity.”⁷² In fact, their “natural disharmony with the human race aggravates itself . . . to a historically bloated fiendishness.”⁷³ Given the world-historical magnitude of the “Jewish question,” the latter constitutes an “international question [*Völkerfrage*]”—an expression, however, which does not indicate a disavowal but rather a reaffirmation of the nation as the basic unit of collective human existence: the “Jewish question” does not, in Dühring’s formulation, transcend the national matrix, but is rather shared by multiple—by all—nations, with the latter’s existence being taken for granted as a historical fact. It is only on the basis of this tacit ontologization of the national that Dühring then posits an existential threat to all nations on the part of the Jews. “The Jews,” Dühring thunders as he closes his book, “are . . . an inner Carthage, the power of which the modern nations [*Völker*] have to break in order for them not to suffer at its hands the destruction of their ethical and material foundations”;⁷⁴ for the “Jewish international”⁷⁵ is aiming at “power over all other nations [*Völker*] of the earth.”⁷⁶ In fact, if it were only up to the Jews, all other nations would already have either disappeared, or become enslaved to the Jews, objects of exploitation of their labor.⁷⁷ In short, the “Judaization of the nations [*Völker*]” is “the fact; de-Judaization the task.”⁷⁸

A Dühringian, antisemitic Manichaeism is discernible from Fritsch’s earliest writings. Thus in 1883, an article by Fritsch titled “Towards an Understanding of the Jewish Character”⁷⁹

⁷⁰ Cosmann, *Physiodicee und Weltneimesis*, 143f., 157-9. On evil as a spontaneous outgrowth of nature and hence a part of nature itself, see Eugen Dühring, *Cursus der Philosophie als streng wissenschaftlicher Weltanschauung und Lebensgestaltung* (Leipzig: Koschny, 1875), 211.

⁷¹ As testimony to Dühring’s national-racial existentialism, we might note that starting in the third edition of *The Jewish Question* (1886), the existential motif found its way into the title of the work itself, and it remained there in the wake of two further changes to the title in subsequent editions. The third edition title was “The Jewish Question as a Question of Racial Perniciousness for the Existence, Customs, and Culture of Nations.” The fifth edition (1901): “The Jewish Question as a Question of Racial Character and its Perniciousness for National Existence [*Völkerexistenz*], Customs, and Culture.” And the sixth edition (1930, a decade after Dühring’s death): “The Jewish Question as a Question of Racial Character and its Perniciousness for the Existence and Culture of Nations.” Cf. Massimo Ferrari Zumbini, *Die Wurzeln des Bösen: Gründerjahre des Antisemitismus: von der Bismarckzeit zu Hitler* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2003), 176 n.78.

⁷² Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 47.

⁷³ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 112.

⁷⁴ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 157.

⁷⁵ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 101.

⁷⁶ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 31.

⁷⁷ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 117.

⁷⁸ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 117.

⁷⁹ Thomas Frey, “Zum Verständnis des Judencharakters,” *Schmeitzner’s Internationale Monatsschrift* 2.10 (1883). The term “Jewish character” itself probably indicates Dühring’s influence, given its centrality for the latter’s thought; see below for more details.

opens with a declaration that “the Jew is the summation of all vice, the child of evil, the root of all evil.”⁸⁰ Later on in the text he reiterates this position when he writes that “if the Jews say: ‘We are the children of God,’ it means in our language: ‘The Jews are the children of Satan.’” Since the Jews, Fritsch explains, embody all the “disintegrative and destructive forces” of nature, and since these are “the qualities and workings of Satan,” it follows that “we have in the Jews the legitimate heirs of Satan.”⁸¹ This “negative essence” of “the Jew” puts him in a “conflicting relationship ... to the human.”⁸² Fritsch ends his lengthy tirade by tying it up to his nationally inflected biological imagination when he offers a medical explanation for the “blindness” of “entire nations [*Nationen*],” their inability to recognize their “most dangerous oppressors”: “The polyp seems here to be conjoined with the flesh, and the body that is devoured by it regards it as its own flesh.” At this point in the text, Fritsch seems to get carried away by his biological imagery and proceeds to construct an elaborate and imaginative etiology:

Whoever hurts the polyp invokes the anger of he who heaves under its burden, and who has lost his blood and his marrow, his will and his energy under the draining voracity of the parasite. The polyp has become the main issue; the body on which it feeds is there only in order to protect and to shelter it.⁸³ [This goes on for several more sentences.]

And Fritsch concludes with the operative task: “to release the sick European nations [*Völker*] from the Jewish muck.”⁸⁴

This whole article, in sum, is permeated with the distinctly Dühringian fusion of Manichaeism, biologism, and antisemitism as the foundations of a national existentialism.⁸⁵ We will examine Fritsch’s national existentialism in detail below.

In addition to Dühring’s biological-racist national existentialism, we must also note his productivism which, although playing a secondary role in his thought, is nonetheless clearly present. The Jews, Dühring claims, need to exploit the labor of other nations because they themselves lack the creative faculty,⁸⁶ the capacity for “creative labor” in both the material and the intellectual domains.⁸⁷ When we keep in mind Dühring’s biologicistic and essentialist understanding of the Jewish “character,” it becomes clear that Dühring shifts productivism here from ethical to biological terrain: for in this conception it is not idleness—an ethical vice—that

⁸⁰ Frey, “Zum Verständnis,” 622.

⁸¹ Frey, “Zum Verständnis,” 624.

⁸² Frey, “Zum Verständnis,” 624.

⁸³ Frey, “Zum Verständnis,” 625.

⁸⁴ Frey, “Zum Verständnis,” 625.

⁸⁵ The only point on which Fritsch departs from Dühring here is his theologization of this whole ideational architecture, as evident in his repeated reference to God and Satan, in contrast to Dühring’s unequivocal atheism. This dimension of Fritsch’s early thinking will be examined further below. Cf. Fritsch’s letter to Marr written half a year later, on 8 May 1884, cited in Zimmermann, “Two Generations,” 95f.: “I accept to some extent the *theological Weltanschauung*: God created vermin as a challenge to man. Where dirt piles up vermin multiply, and to get rid of the tormenting vermin we have to remove the dirt and try to keep them away. In this way vermin become a motivation for purification and also the source of all cultural development and refinement. ... Here you have my entire *confession of faith*: it is the mission of the Jews to torment humanity, and it is the mission of humanity to trample on the Jews.” Emphases added. This passage also echoes Dühring’s idea about the struggle against evil as a self-corrective of nature leading to the victory of the “good” and the “noble.”

⁸⁶ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 47, 65.

⁸⁷ Dühring, *Die Judenfrage*, 77. With respect to the intellectual domain Dühring focuses in particular on science, literature, and art (ch. 3).

turns the Jews away from work, but a biologically hardwired absence of a certain human faculty, and hence a “defect” irreparable through education or religious conversion. So, when Fritsch writes that “it is not laziness when the Jew creates nothing, but incompetence,”⁸⁸ he is merely parroting Dühring and thereby reproducing his biologistic rendering of productivism.

According to Dühring, the exploitation of the creative powers of other nations by the Jews—their “parasitical economy on other peoples [*Völker*],”⁸⁹ as he puts it—takes primarily the form of usury. The Jews—“Gypsies from Palestine,” a “petty nation [*Völkchen*] of tradesmen” as opposed to the German “nation of thinkers”⁹⁰—strive to “make the members of all other peoples [*Völkern*] subject to interest.”⁹¹ With their “acquisitory instinct” they aim at sucking up the money of all humanity; “economic freedom” is for the Jews in this context “only a means to create an effective monopoly.”⁹² Similarly, the establishment of “freedom of interest-taking,” which in itself constitutes a “good legislation,” has been exploited by the Jews such that it has deteriorated to “freedom of usury.”⁹³ Like interest, capital more generally is not intrinsically malignant; it is only the “personal attributes” of the Jews—and these are essentialized attributes, for “the Jews have in their basic character remained identical for historical millenia”—which diverts capital from its “natural workings” and turns it into a tool of “exploitation.”⁹⁴ Thus capital, rather than a perpetrator of socioeconomic exploitation, becomes a passive, innocuous instrument at the hands of the real culprits, the Jews. Following the same logic, Dühring also elides the structural sources of class conflict in modern capitalist society, deflecting responsibility for this conflict onto the Jews. It is they who propagate the “seditious slogan of class consciousness, class interests, and class hatred,” a tendency discernible *inter alia* in “the Jew Ricardo’s” idea that the earnings of each class come at the expense of the other classes.⁹⁵

All of the productivist ideas articulated by Dühring—a broad conception of labor that displaces the Marxist focus on the industrial working-class; a concomitant elision of the workers’ structural exploitation by capital; a bifurcation of capital into healthy (“natural”) and pernicious, usurious (“Jewish”) forms, implicitly exonerating the former from responsibility for social injustice; a recasting of class conflict as a spurious phenomenon stirred up by the Jews without structural roots in the capitalist system—all these elements, along with the biological-racist construction of the Jew underpinning this productivism, will appear in Fritsch’s writings and will be examined in the next chapters. Many of these ideas, as shown earlier, were also enunciated by Wilhelm Marr, but in Dühring’s thought they were woven more rigorously into a broader philosophical narrative. This is true especially with respect to the biological-racist dimension, which hardly appears at all in Marr’s Victory of Judaism. On the other hand, in terms of the

⁸⁸ Frey, “Zum Verständnis,” 623.

⁸⁹ Dühring, Die Judenfrage, 126; cf. 46.

⁹⁰ Dühring, Die Judenfrage, 61.

⁹¹ Dühring, Die Judenfrage, 117.

⁹² Dühring, Die Judenfrage, 18.

⁹³ Dühring, Die Judenfrage, 16f.

⁹⁴ Dühring, Die Judenfrage, 111f. The concept of “character” plays a key role in Dühring’s ontology; it refers to essentialized clusters of attributes, primarily the “good” and “bad” characters into which every living being and species can be classified. Thus cats (!) are an incarnation of evil: Dühring, Cursus der Philosophie, 211. The importance of the concept of character as an underpinning of Dühring’s essentialist, Manichaeic ontology has been pointed out by Cosmann, Physiodicee und Weltneimesis, e.g. 95, 162.

⁹⁵ Dühring, Die Judenfrage, 62-4, 82.

centrality he accords to productivism in his overall worldview, Fritsch resembles Marr rather than Dühring, for whom productivism (as already noted) was not a defining element. Fritsch's *Mittelstand* consciousness no doubt played an important role in maintaining the centrality of productivism in his thinking despite Dühring's influence. In sum, Fritsch's productivism may be seen as a combined product of the formative influences of both Marr and Dühring.

From Christian ethics to national existentialism: a generational shift

The antisemitically inflected (national) productivism shared in one way or another by Marr, Dühring, and Fritsch was not something new or exclusive to these figures. We have seen in Chapter 1 that Adolf Stoecker, roughly the contemporary of Marr and Dühring,⁹⁶ gave voice to just such a productivism; and the intellectual genealogy can be traced back not only to the socialists Proudhon and Toussenel in the 1840s and to the liberal Gustav Freytag in the 1850s, but also—in the sphere of religious thought—as far back as Luther.⁹⁷ By contrast, the racially inflected existential urgency underlying the antisemitic productivism of both Marr and Dühring was something quite new, at least in its intensity. Furthermore, the fact that this sharper existential key was in the work of both Marr and Dühring bound up with a repudiation of the religious-ethical basis of antisemitism is noteworthy; for the combination of secularism and national existentialism pitted both Marr and Dühring, and later Fritsch as well, against Stoecker and his ethical conservatism, just as Friedrich Naumann's national existentialism precipitated his definitive break with Stoecker and with Christian socialism.

Whereas the opposition to Stoecker on the part of Marr and Dühring remained largely confined to their literary output,⁹⁸ Fritsch's political and journalistic entrepreneurship from the mid-1880s onward helped to turn the anti-Stoeckerian impulse into a crucial generational shift in the antisemitic movement and in the history of national socialism, just as Naumann's turn against

⁹⁶ Stoecker was born in 1835, Dühring in 1833, and Marr in 1819.

⁹⁷ Again, I use the term "genealogy" in the Foucauldian sense; the historical trajectory from Luther to Fritsch is by no means a straight, smooth, or homogeneous one. The more limited point I wish to make here is merely that the productivist ideas articulated by Fritsch and others in the late nineteenth century made their appearance on a well-trodden path.

On Proudhon and Toussenel, as well as Fourier before them, see Robert S. Wistrich, "Radical Antisemitism in France and Germany (1840-1880)," *Modern Judaism* 15 (1995): 114-19; and Sternhell, "National Socialism and Antisemitism: The Case of Maurice Barrès," 65. Marr himself read Proudhon in the 1840s and described the latter's *What is Property?* as "an interesting book" although "not ripe enough": Zimmermann, *Wilhelm Marr*, 16. On Gustav Freytag, see Ernest K. Bramsted, *Aristocracy and the Middle-Classes in Germany: Social Types in German Literature 1830-1900*, Revised ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), ch. 4; George L. Mosse, *Germans & Jews: The Right, the Left, and the Search for a "Third Force" in Pre-Nazi Germany* (New York: Fertig, 1970), ch. 3; and Lange, *Antisemitic Elements*, 42ff. On Luther and early-modern Protestantism more generally, see Schatz and Woeldike, *Freiheit und Wahn deutscher Arbeit*, 17-23.

⁹⁸ Marr's short-lived *Antisemitenliga* (Antisemitic League) hardly led more than a nominal existence; nor did Marr himself ever play a significant role in Imperial Germany's radical right-wing politics: see Zimmermann, *Wilhelm Marr*, 95; and Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism*, 49. Dühring, the blind, ostracized and embittered academic, never went beyond intellectual endeavors.

On Marr's opposition to Stoecker, see Wilhelm Marr, "Nothgedrungene Abwehr," *Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten* 8 (1886). As for Dühring, Ferrari Zumbini claims that Dühring's antisemitic writings from the early 1880s constitute "a direct reaction to Stoecker; he wishes to prevent the emerging [antisemitic] movement from running irreversibly in a conservative and clerical direction." Ferrari Zumbini, *Die Wurzeln des Bösen*, 177.

Stoecker signified the rise of a new generation of bourgeois reformism. The anti-Stoeckerian stance as a generational phenomenon led by Fritsch is visible from the very first significant project undertaken by Fritsch after the maturation of his antisemitism in the early-mid 1880s, namely the Antisemitische Correspondenz (henceforth AC), which Fritsch launched in 1885 and which served as a discursive dynamo for the reinvigoration of the antisemitic movement and for the rise of a new generation of antisemitic leadership. Even though Stoeckerian voices were not absent from its pages,⁹⁹ the predominant tone of the AC was clearly that of the younger cohort of racist-nationalist antisemites, led by Fritsch and other figures such as Bernhard Förster, Max Liebermann von Sonnenberg, and Willibald Hentschel.¹⁰⁰

Not only is the Stoeckerian voice sidelined in the AC, but Stoecker himself—as well as the Christian-social brand of antisemitism more broadly—is regularly the object of direct attacks over the AC’s pages. Thus in 1887 we find Bernhard Förster writing against Stoecker’s idea that with baptism a Jew ceases to be a Jew. Instead, Förster argues that the Jew can never be severed from the “character attributes of his race” and expresses his support for an “Aryan morality” and an “Aryan scientific research.”¹⁰¹ A few months earlier, the AC also published an onslaught on Stoecker by Marr, claiming that antisemitism had existed even before christianity and that the “Jewish question” is a “scientific,” not a religious question.¹⁰² And at the end of 1887, an unsigned front-page article which reads like a manual for the antisemitic activist instructs the AC’s readers to embrace an explicitly anti-Stoeckerian conception of antisemitism. Stoecker, the article argues, “does not conceive the Jewish question as a racial question, but rather admonishes the racial standpoint as materialistic. Therefore Stoecker and his Christian-Socials *are not antisemites*.”¹⁰³ Hence “Christian anti-Jewish pamphlets” are useless for purposes of antisemitic propaganda “on the simple grounds that they are not antisemitic.” Instead, “the antisemites of today declare...: ‘What we combat in the Jew is not the un-Christian, but the member of the despicable, moneygrubbing semitic race.’”¹⁰⁴

Fritsch’s alternative to Stoecker’s Christian antisemitism comprises not just biological racism, but also a Dühringian national existentialism. Fritsch’s move from a repudiation of the Christian approach to a national existentialism is evident, for example, when he writes: “the Jew, even if he has been baptized three times over, protects his Jewish national interest [*National-Interesse*],” and then issues an existential caution to his readers: “Be watchful everywhere and keep a zealous eye for any Jewish conquest. We owe this to the existence and honor of our nation [*Volk*].”¹⁰⁵ As already noted earlier, Fritsch’s existential concern is, like Marr’s and Dühring’s, of a world-historical magnitude. Thus in one article he writes, “It is the doomed fate

⁹⁹ Fritsch had indeed declared, in a letter to Marr dated 16 September 1885 (cited in Zimmermann, “Two Generations,” 97), his intention that this organ serve as a platform for both “antipodes” of the antisemitic movement, “Stoecker and Dühring.”

¹⁰⁰ Stoeckerian voices hardly if ever appear in the AC beyond small, minor pieces such as A-Br., “Hie Marr, Hie Stöcker!” Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten 9 (1887).

¹⁰¹ Bernhard Förster, “Unsere Arbeit, unsere Ziele!” Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten 9 (1887): 6. Förster, incidentally, was Nietzsche’s brother-in-law.

¹⁰² Wilhelm Marr, “Nothgedrungene Abwehr.”

¹⁰³ “Wie agitirt man am wirksamsten? II. Massen-Agitation,” Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten 20 (1887): 2. Original emphasis.

¹⁰⁴ “Wie agitirt man [1887.20],” 3.

¹⁰⁵ “Aufgaben für unsere Leser!” Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten 4 (1886): 6.

of world history that the wretched nation of the Jews [*Juden-Nation*] was allowed to exterminate all pre-Jewish cultures.”¹⁰⁶ Fritsch’s attribution to the Jews of an exterminatory power of world-historical proportions is perhaps a classical case of projection of one’s own fantasies of annihilation on the object of those same fantasies; it is moreover a projection that, even as it serves to repress the fantasy, at the same time prepares the ideological groundwork for its realization by implicitly providing an existential justification for perpetrating extermination *against* the Jews. At any rate, Fritsch’s repeated attribution of the term “nation” in the passages just cited to both Jews and Germans reminds us that, despite the world-historical framework, Fritsch is committed to a specifically *national* existentialism,¹⁰⁷ thereby echoing Marr’s two-tiered existentialism.

The national dimension of Fritsch’s existentialism is even more visible in another of his AC pieces, wherein he speaks of an ongoing “war” waged by the Jewish against the German nation to dispossess and subjugate the latter:

Even the noblest Jews does not give up his nationality, he always hangs on to his tribe,—protects its particular interests and thereby constitutes an enemy for us!—That is the main point: The Jewish nation [*Nation*] bears an irredeemable, conscious or unconscious enmity against the non-Jews, stands on a continuous war-footing against us and strives for our subjugation with its peculiar war-tactics. And ... with these hostile national [*nationalen*] aspirations of Judaism even the noblest Jew cooperates, just like the commonest one.¹⁰⁸

Fritsch compares the Jewish threat to that of being invaded by a foreign army; the existential overtone is patent:

If tomorrow a neighboring nation [*Volk*] declares war and pushes across the border, ... we say: they are our *enemies* and want to wrest away from us our national [*nationalen*] goods, cultural [*geistige*] and material—they threaten our national [*nationalen*] honor, and therefore we *must* strike them and throw them over the border!—*Basta!*¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Frey, “Noch ein Wort in Frieden!” *Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten* 8 (1886): 7.

¹⁰⁷ For the intertwining of nationalism with a world-historical perspective, see also Thomas Frey, “Wo sind unsere nächsten Ziele?” *Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten* 3 (1886): 2, where Fritsch describes “the Jew” in Dühringian fashion as “the most dangerous enemy of man,” and demands the “expulsion of the Jewish race from the life of the nations [*Völkerleben*]” as a way of achieving the “self-purification of the nation [Nation].” For Fritsch’s demand for “social and physical” exclusion of the Jews from German national life, see also Thomas Frey, “Unsere Ziele,” *Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten* 4 (1886): 2.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Frey, “Ausnahme-Juden,” *Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten* 10 (1887): 6. On the war motif, see also one of the AC’s front-page editorials (probably written by Fritsch), where it is stated that “The ‘government’ must in its heart be antisemitic—if its own existence is dear to it. ... Threatened all around by enemies, it must apply all forces to securing the Reich outwardly,—and declare today an open war against the Jewry in Germany.” “[Untitled],” *Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten* 10 (1887): 1.

¹⁰⁹ Frey, “Ausnahme-Juden,” 6. Original emphases. Cf. a front-page article signed h., “Feinde ringsum!” *Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten* 16 (1887), where war and struggle are hailed for their salutary effects on the “national body [*Volkskörper*],” forcing “the nation [Nation] to the most forceful unfolding of its energies and to a testing of its best virtues.” The article then goes on to call for watchfulness

Fritsch concludes the article with a statement that might as well have been uttered by Carl Schmitt:

The Jew is an outspoken enemy of our interests, and whether the enemy has good or bad traits, whether or not he possesses special competencies, he remains basically the same: he is an enemy and must be combated as such.¹¹⁰

Just like Friedrich Naumann and Max Weber—Fritsch in a typical national-existentialist move divorces the belligerent national friend-enemy relationship from any moral or ethical considerations, creating an ideological climate wherein any means might be justified in the name of a perceived goal of self-preservation. Fritsch insinuates as much when he asks rhetorically, “Do you want ... to handle the enemy with glacée gloves?”¹¹¹ Nor does the similarity to Naumann and Weber end here, for Fritsch also shares with them the conflation of the national and the political: he excoriates Nietzsche for his lack of “all and any understanding of *national existence* [*nationales Wesen*],”¹¹² and laments that “the essence of nationality and of national rivalry is unfortunately still today intangible and incomprehensible for many Germans. [This condition of] ‘nationlessness’ [*Nationslosigkeit*] was the worst in the [presumably pre-unification – AK] era of political immaturity, of political childishness.”¹¹³

Perhaps the first organizational manifestation of the secularized national existentialism of Fritsch and of the younger generation as a whole was the Kassel Congress of 1886, in which the General German Antisemitic Union (ADAV) was founded with Fritsch as a pivotal figure in the endeavor. In an unsigned AC article summarizing the proceedings of the Congress, the existential concern was noted and explained as follows:

With regard to Point no. 1 on the agenda: ‘What does antisemitism want?’—it was remarked by various speakers that ... international Jewry confronts with hostility all other nations [*Nationen*], and constitutes an irreconcilable opposition especially to the *German nation* [*Volk*] by dint of its racial peculiarity ... An unbridgeable chasm separates Germans and Jews and prevents any fusion of these fundamentally different national stocks [*Volks-Stämme*] ...

not only against the outer enemy, i.e. other European nations, but also against the “inner enemy,” i.e. “the Asian foreigner [*fremdling*].”

¹¹⁰ Frey, “Ausnahme-Juden,” 6. The term “exception” in the title, however, is not used in what retrospectively we might call the Schmittian sense of a situation in which the sovereign reveals itself through a decision on suspending the law. Quite the contrary, Fritsch in this article *denies* the possibility of an exception to the Jews’ malignancy, echoing Dühring’s Manichaeic mode of thinking: “the Jews are bad through and through—always bad!” (5) In this way, Fritsch blissfully leapfrogs the problem or challenge that for Schmitt constitutes the originary moment of politics, namely the challenge of *identifying* the enemy “correctly.” Fritsch’s identification of the enemy is posited apodictically with no need for elaborate argumentation or justification. On the question of the identification of the enemy in Schmitt, see Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 37: “The political does not reside in the battle itself ... but in the mode of behavior that is determined ... by *clearly evaluating* the concrete situation and thereby being able to *distinguish correctly* the real friend and the real enemy.” (Emphasis added) For a more extended discussion of this issue, see my unpublished paper: Asaf Kedar, “Carl Schmitt’s Concept of the Concept and its Relation to his Concept of the Political,” Political Science Graduate Student Conference, University of California, Berkeley, 2007.

¹¹¹ Frey, “Ausnahme-Juden,” 6.

¹¹² Thomas Frey, “Der Antisemitismus im Spiegel eines ‘Zukunfts-Philosophen’ (II),” *Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten* 20 (1887): 12. Original emphasis.

¹¹³ Frey, “Antisemitismus im Spiegel (II),” 13.

Accordingly, the Jewish question proves to be an *existential question* [*Existenz-Frage*] for the German nation [*Volk*]; *religious* viewpoints come in this context less into consideration and are in principle to be left out of the game, so as not to put antisemitism in the wrong light.¹¹⁴

Once again, the racial-national existential intensification of the “Jewish question” in this passage comes hand-in-hand with the marginalization of the religious dimension.

Theodor Fritsch himself, it should be noted, was not an all-out atheist like Marr and Dühring. While repudiating Christianity in its existing form and rejecting the idea that baptism can rid the nation of its Jews,¹¹⁵ he nevertheless objected to Dühring’s view of Christ as a Jew, preferring rather to reappropriate him as an “Aryan” and on this basis to move towards a “Germanic” or “Aryan Christianity” of the kind propagated by Paul de Lagarde.¹¹⁶ Fritsch in fact corresponded with Lagarde from 1886 to 1891,¹¹⁷ the two developed a mutually appreciative relationship, and Fritsch had an important role in the popularization of Lagarde’s ideas within the radical right.¹¹⁸

The religious streak in Fritsch’s thinking, however, should not be overestimated for its impact on his national existentialism. First, Lagarde’s influence on Fritsch seems to have been secondary to that of Dühring; as Ferrari Zumbini puts it, Fritsch merely attempted “to mitigate Dühring’s radical secularism with a dash of Lagardism.”¹¹⁹ Second, the Lagardian “Germanic religion” espoused by Fritsch was understood to be merely an epiphenomenon of Aryan biological-racial qualities and subordinated, accordingly, to the dictates of biology rather than constituting an independent ethical moment that imposes limits on the actions taken to counter the perceived existential threat to the nation.¹²⁰ In this sense, the relation of Fritsch’s religion to

¹¹⁴ “Der Casseler Congreß,” Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten 6 (1886): 2. Original emphases.

¹¹⁵ F. Roderich-Stolthheim, “Nochmals die Haupt-Streitpunkte,” Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten 10 (1887): 5.

¹¹⁶ Ferrari Zumbini, “Theodor Fritsch,” 336. Fritsch expressed his disagreement with Dühring on the question of Christ in a letter to Marr from 19 May 1885, cited in Zimmermann, “Two Generations,” 94. See also Frey, “Unsere Ziele,” 2, where the expression “Aryan Christianity” appears and where Fritsch makes a distinction between the “Aryan” spirit of the New Testament and the “Semitic” spirit of the old; and Frey, “Noch ein Wort,” 6f., where Fritsch claims that Christian principles are in fact “Aryan.” In this article, Fritsch also makes clear his subordination of religion to nation: the term “German,” he declares, is superior on his “conceptual scale” to “Christian.”

¹¹⁷ Ferrari Zumbini, “Theodor Fritsch,” 327 n.18.

¹¹⁸ Fritz Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 91; Ferrari Zumbini, “Theodor Fritsch,” 359.

¹¹⁹ Ferrari Zumbini, “Theodor Fritsch,” 336.

¹²⁰ Although the exact relationship between race and religion remains vague in Fritsch’s early writings, a number of articles after the turn of the twentieth century demonstrate his subordination of religion to race. “The tacit purpose of all religious doctrines,” he writes in 1902, “is primarily: the preservation and enhancement of the species.” Fritz Thor, “Aphorismen. Religions-Einheit?” Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn 1.3 (1902). Elsewhere he claims that the only viable kind of religion is a “race-religion [*Rassen-Religion*],” that is to say, a religion emanating from and expressing race: Theodor Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aufgaben,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 12.253 (1913): 6. The primacy of race over religion can also be inferred more generally from Fritsch’s assertion of the primacy of race over spiritual phenomena as a whole; for Fritsch often frames his discussion of religion, and of the need for a new national religion, as a spiritual problematic. Fritsch states the primacy of race over spirit quite bluntly: “Spiritual existence [*das Geisteswesen*] rests upon blood, and no pure and

his national existentialism was similar to that of Naumann's: the latter never gave up his Christian religiosity, but he nevertheless refrained from injecting it as an ethical force into his nationalist politics. Finally, Lagarde's influence seems, if anything, to have exacerbated rather than mitigated the exterminatory intensity of Fritsch's national existentialism. Or so we might infer, at any rate, from an excerpt of Lagarde's writing published on the front page of the AC in the fall of 1887. In this excerpt, Lagarde declares flatly that "with trichinae and bacilli one does not negotiate, nor are trichinae and bacilli subjected to education; they are exterminated as quickly and as thoroughly as possible." He continues with the biological imagery by referring to the Jew as "the cancer in our entire [collective] life"; claims that "the Jews thrive on the ruin of nations [*Nationen*]"; and muses that the "riches of the stock exchange awaken the desire ... to kill the Jews."¹²¹ In short, the Lagardian streak in Fritsch's thinking does not distance him in any significant way from the secularized racial-national existentialism articulated by Marr and Dühring.

Conclusion

From the mid-1880s onward, Fritsch continued to pick up other intellectual influences besides those already mentioned. Most prominent among them was Willibald Hentschel, with whom Fritsch came to form a close and longlasting friendship. Hentschel's best-known work, *Varuna* (1901),¹²² was a three-volume account of the world-historical roots and evolution of the "Aryan" and "Semitic" races, followed by an adumbration of a practical biological-racial, socioeconomic, and political agenda very similar to that advanced by Fritsch and examined in the next two chapters. This book was touted by Fritsch as "in a certain sense the manifesto of [the periodical] *Hammer*."¹²³ Fritsch also assimilated into his thinking Adolf Wahrmund's ideas on the "law of nomadism" governing the "Semitic" race,¹²⁴ and Ottomar Beta's ideas on land reform and "Germanic" law.¹²⁵ These influences will be noted in the next chapters whenever appropriate, but they were played merely a secondary role in Fritsch's ideational development

strong spirituality [*Geistesart*] can grow out of depraved and adulterated blood." Theodor Fritsch, "Ein Oster-Botschaft," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 13.284 (1914): 199.

¹²¹ Paul de Lagarde, "Über die Juden und den Antisemitismus," *Antisemitische Correspondenz und Sprechsaal für innere Partei-Angelegenheiten* 17-18 (1887): 2ff. The translation of the "trichinae and bacilli" passage is taken from Stern, *Politics of Cultural Despair*, 63. Stern writes with reference to this passage that "few men prophesied Hitler's work with accuracy—and approval," and notes that "in 1944, when [the National Socialists] were carrying out their policy of extermination, an anthology of Lagarde's work was distributed by the army and contained Lagarde's demand for murder."

¹²² Willibald Hentschel, *Varuna: Das Gesetz des aufsteigenden und sinkenden Lebens in der Völkergeschichte*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Matthes, 1918[1901]).

¹²³ Phelps, "Theodor Fritsch und der Antisemitismus," 444.

¹²⁴ Adolf Wahrmund, *Das Gesetz des Nomadentums und die heutige Judenherrschaft*, 2nd ed. (München: Deutscher Volks-Verlag, 1919[1886]).

¹²⁵ See e.g. Ottomar Beta, *Deutschlands Verjüngung: Zur Theorie und Geschichte der Reform des Boden- und Creditrechts* (Berlin: Nachfolger, 1901). Interesting is also Ottomar Beta, *Darwin, Deutschland und die Juden: Oder Der Juda-Jesuitismus*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Selbst-Verlag des Verfassers, 1876), a slim brochure wherein all of the main ideas propounded by Dühring half a decade later are already articulated in extremely condensed form, including the idea of a racial "struggle for existence"; a biological-racial and national-productivist construction of the German-Jew (or Aryan-Semitic) dichotomy; and a call for an "Indogermanic socialism." There is no evidence, however, that this piece was even read by Fritsch or had any significant impact on his thinking. Beta is cited by Fritsch mostly on issues of land and land-law reform.

compared to the formative impact exerted by Wilhelm Marr, Eugen Dühring, and to some extent Paul de Lagarde.

By the mid-1880s, then, the combined influence of Marr and Dühring had brought national productivism and national existentialism—the two elements constituting the foundations of Fritsch's national socialism—into the very core of his thinking. Let us now turn to examine how these foundations came together to form a *völkisch*-antisemitic brand of national socialism.

Chapter 6 | Theodor Fritsch's National Socialism: The Foundations

Introduction

In the previous chapter I traced the intellectual and cultural origins of Theodor Fritsch's thinking. This chapter and the next will present my substantive analysis of Fritsch. In the present chapter, I examine how Fritsch's national socialism is organized around national existentialism and national productivism, albeit of a different kind than Naumann's. Specifically, both figures exhibit a biologicistic mode of thinking but take in different directions. Whereas Naumann's biologism locates the existential threat to the nation in the international sphere with its social-Darwinist dynamics, Fritsch's biologism attributes the existential threat to racial contamination by Slavic and Jewish "foreigners" penetrating the German national body. And whereas Naumann's productivism focuses on preserving and enhancing the nation's productive energies in the service of the nation's power politics, Fritsch's productivism targets "parasitic" disruptions of the nation's organic socioeconomic order.

The section on antisemitism will be somewhat different from the two preceding it due to the peculiar role of this element in Fritsch's worldview. By and large, Fritsch's antisemitism encapsulates within itself all the other aspects of his thought in negative form: for the Jews are conceived as the absolute negation of the proper national and social order articulated by Fritsch's nationalism and productivism. Such an inverted conceptual mirror proffers a distinctive hermeneutic vantage point. If the examination of Fritsch's national existentialism and productivism involved breaking them down into their analytical components, the discussion of Fritsch's antisemitism can take the opposite course, reassembling these components and showing synthetically how they are all interwoven to form a single ideational fabric.

I. NATIONAL EXISTENTIALISM

National-existential framing of collective life

On the face of it, Theodor Fritsch offers little by way of an explicit, systematic theorization of the nation and its primacy over other collectivities. Yet from another standpoint, we could say that Fritsch's entire thought is an articulation of his nationalism. For the nation is ubiquitous in his writings: in almost every article, the discussion of social, cultural, and racial issues has the (German) nation as its point of reference, performatively asserting the decisive position of the nation in Fritsch's thinking.¹ Indeed, nationalism enjoys a political monopoly for Fritsch; he repudiates any trans- or supra-national political formation or political subjectivity. He castigates cosmopolitans lacking "national sentiment [*National-Gefühl*]" for seeking to enjoy the rights entailed by national belonging while at the same time evading the corresponding duties and responsibilities.² He also rejects the possibility of a "unitary religion [extending] over all

¹ Thus Fritsch constitutes yet another instance confirming Matthias Weipert's observation, already cited in the section on Naumann, concerning the unquestioned status of the nation in Wilhelmine public discourse. Matthias Weipert, *'Mehring der Volkskraft': Die Debatte über Bevölkerung, Modernisierung und Nation 1890-1933* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006), 70f.

² Fritz Thor, "Aphorismen. Kosmopolitismus," *Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn* 1.11 (1902): 319.

nations [*Völker*].”³ Fritsch furthermore laments the ascendancy of the three “internationals” – “black ... red and golden” (i.e., the Catholic church, the socialist International, and international capitalism, respectively): “International tendencies emerge all around the Throne ever more conspicuously,” to such an extent that one might ask if the government is still “nationally minded [*national Gesinnt*].”⁴

The external space surrounding the nation is a hostile one in which the latter must always be prepared to fight for its existence. Fritsch mocks those “weak-hearted lovers of humanity [*Menschenfreunde*]” who want to banish all hate from the world and to arrive at a “kingdom of eternal peace.”⁵ As we have seen in previous chapters, this last statement may just as well have been uttered by Weber or Naumann. But if the latter construed Germany’s conflicts as taking place in an inter-national sphere against other nation-states, Fritsch attributes the existential threat to contamination by Slavic and Jewish “foreigners” penetrating the German national body. Germany according to Fritsch is constantly penetrated by “foreign elements” that, so it seems, are already enemies by virtue of their very foreignness. “We see everywhere the enemies of the *Reich*,” exclaims an unsigned article opening one of *Hammer*’s first issues, “the enemies of German existence [*des deutschen Wesens*] push on loudly and brashly and fail to meet with proper resistance.”⁶ Among those enemies are numbered, not the French or Russian armies, but the Prussian Poles and the Jews:⁷ two of the main ethnic minorities of the German nation-state. And what should arouse one’s horror at the sight of these foreign “enemies”? Not the threat of physical annihilation or material dispossession usually associated with war, but the imminent prospect of the German himself becoming no more than a “tolerated foreigner” in the “land of his fathers.”⁸ In other words, the terror evinced here is not just of the “foreigners,” but of foreignness as such, of the loss of German collective existence. The entire German landscape, according to this logic, must be exirpated of all traces of collective non-identity.

The same theme recurs in another article written by Fritsch more than a decade later. “The proud nation [*Volk*] of the Germans,” it is argued here, “is retreating at its borders in the face of foreign nationality [*fremdes Volkstum*] and sees within its native culture the advent of cultural forces that are not in the least German.”⁹ The invasion of foreignness manifests itself in the arts and sciences, in education and in law, in architecture and religion.¹⁰ Contemporary education, for example, leads the youth “into the foreign [*in die Fremde*] and into ancient times, to Rome, Greece, and Judea, and estranges [*entfremdet*] it from its own nation [*Volk*].”¹¹ And in the field of law, the influence of Roman law has gained the upper hand against the “Germanic legal sensibility.”¹² More generally, Fritsch decries the German “weakness of admiring and imitating everything foreign [*Fremde*],” the German’s tendency “to dispose of his own essence,

³ Thor, “Aphorismen. Religions-Einheit?” 65.

⁴ “Des Reiches Stillstand,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.36 (1903): 570f.

⁵ Fritz Thor, “Aphorismen. Haß und Liebe,” *Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn* 1.8 (1902): 209.

⁶ “Politischer Optimismus,” *Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn* 1.7 (1902): 164.

⁷ “Politischer Optimismus,” 164.

⁸ “Politischer Optimismus,” 164.

⁹ Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aufgaben,” 1.

¹⁰ Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aufgaben,” 3f.

¹¹ Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aufgaben,” 4.

¹² Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aufgaben,” 4.

to become an other [*ein Anderer*], to de-Germanize [*entdeutschen*] himself.”¹³ This predicament is all the more dramatic to Fritsch in view of his assertion that the Germans have been in the past, and should be in the future, a *Herrenvolk* or “master nation”; whereas in the present, by stark contrast, it is oppressed by a tiny number of Jews and is “receding in its own land” in the face of “Poles, Czechs and other foreigners [*Fremdlinge*].”¹⁴

Race and national existentialism

Fritsch’s biological racism serves to intensify his nationalist existentialism; but before I establish this claim, we need first to see how Fritsch conceives of race and its relation to nationality in general. The conceptual imbrication of race and nation can be traced back to the origins of modern European racism in the late eighteenth century, and witnessed its most intense articulation in the period extending from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth.¹⁵ As Etienne Balibar has argued, this imbrication is often dialectical; racism can be engendered by nationalism, can operate as a particularly intense manifestation of the latter, but at the same time go beyond it, “end[ing] up dislocating the nation-state whose absolute superiority it proclaims.”¹⁶ At the turn of the twentieth century, however, race in Germany did not yet eclipse the nation’s primacy as a sociopolitical collectivity in radical right-wing thought. Instead, to use George Mosse’s words, race “gave new depth to the concept of the German Volk,”¹⁷ for Fritsch as for other antisemites at the time. If Fritsch could write about race that it is a matter that “must not be disregarded in all cultural and social inquiries,”¹⁸ he could never utter the same sentence with respect to the nation, and if he did it would be a meaningless tautology. For the nation is coextensive with Fritsch’s entire ideational horizon. “Cultural and social” issues are by definition national in Fritsch’s writings; the nation is not one of their elements but constitutes their very substance.

Let us now move on to consider the precise relationship between race and nation in Fritsch’s worldview. Fritsch seems to situate race in relation to the nation in two modalities: as environment and as attribute. In the first sense (race as a nation’s environment), a given nation is typically surrounded by various other nations, some of which belong to the same race as that nation, while others belong to other races.¹⁹ But the second sense (race as a nation’s attribute or set of attributes) is the real key for understanding the conceptual relationship between nation and race in Fritsch’s thinking. It explicates what it means for a nation to “belong” to a race in the first

¹³ Theodor Fritsch, Handbuch der Judenfrage: Eine Zusammenstellung des wichtigsten Materials zur Beurteilung des jüdischen Volkes, 26th ed. (Hamburg: Hanseatische Druck- und Verlags-Anstalt, 1907), 10.

¹⁴ Theodor Fritsch, “Zur Deutschen-Frage in Österreich,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 12.269 (1913): 451f. Despite the occasional ranting about the Poles and the Czechs, there is no doubt that the arch-foreigner, in Fritsch’s view, is the Jew. See my discussion of Fritsch’s antisemitism below.

¹⁵ Mosse, Toward the Final Solution.

¹⁶ Etienne Balibar, “Racism and Nationalism,” Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities, eds. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1988), 51.

¹⁷ George L. Mosse, Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism (New York: Harper Colophon, 1980), 97.

¹⁸ Theodor Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel: Boden-Wucher und Börse. Eine gemein-verständliche Darstellung der brennendsten Zeitfragen (Leipzig: Herm. Beyer, 1894), 79.

¹⁹ Related to this idea of race as environment is the tendency in racist thought to understand race as a family of nations. See e.g. Mosse, Toward the Final Solution, 41f.

place; as we shall see later, the idea of race as environment is merely derivative of this more fundamental question.

The notion of race as attribute, then, is the idea that for a nation, belonging to a race means possessing certain racial attributes that in turn define (at least in part) that nation's "essence."²⁰ Races, according to Fritsch, are biological "species" (*Art*) or "genera" (*Gattung*).²¹ They are objects of "natural-scientific knowledge"²² and their dynamics are governed by "eternal," "natural" laws.²³ As biological entities, every race comprises a set of "physical and mental characteristics"²⁴ or "exterior and interior elements"²⁵ possessed by individuals and, through the individuals, by nations. Thus nations belong to a particular race insofar as they (through their component individuals) possess the set of attributes characterizing that race. An "Aryan" nation will bear the attributes of the "Aryan" race, a "Semitic" nation the attributes of the "Semitic" race, and so on. These racial attributes are rooted in blood, they are hereditary.²⁶

Fritsch's racial conception of the nation is not only biological but also essentialist. The nation's "essence" resides – and is fixed for all time – in its racial attributes. "The eternal and immortal in us is the spirit of the genus [*Gattungs-Geist*], the genius of our particular species [*Art*]."²⁷ In contrast to most versions of nationalist and racist thought, Fritsch infers from this claim that language is not essential to national identity since it can be acquired by anyone regardless of their racial identity.²⁸ "Does a German cease to be German," asks Fritsch, "if he learns to speak French or English?"²⁹ One's linguistic proficiencies will never alter "his innermost essence, his peculiar character."³⁰ That is why, Fritsch claims, all efforts to contain and co-opt the Poles in the *Kaiserreich* and non-German minorities in Austria by teaching them the German language have utterly failed.³¹

On the basis of this conception of the nation-race relationship, we are now in a position to understand the role of race in Fritsch's national existentialism. If a nation's essence is coextensive with the attributes of one particular race, then it is hardly surprising that racial purity and racial mixing are to Fritsch matters of paramount national concern,³² and he conceives of

²⁰ On the idea of race as attribute in racist thought, cf. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, 45, 74f.

²¹ Fritz Thor, "Aphorismen. Unsterblichkeit," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.33 (1903): 514.

²² Theodor Fritsch, "Was ist es um die Rasse? II," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 9.203 (1910): 625. See also Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, 6.

²³ Thor, "Aphorismen. Unsterblichkeit," 514; F. Roderich-Stoltheim, "Zeitglossen. Abwandelungs-Fähigkeit der Rassen," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 10.209 (1911): 127.

²⁴ Theodor Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew's Success*, trans. Capel Pownall (Augusta, Ga.: Thunderbolt, 193-?), 222.

²⁵ Theodor Fritsch, "Was ist es um die Rasse?" *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 9.202 (1910): 591.

²⁶ On race as rooted in and inherited through blood, see Thor, "Aphorismen. Unsterblichkeit," 514; and Fritsch, "Was ist es um die Rasse?" 593.

²⁷ Thor, "Aphorismen. Unsterblichkeit," 514.

²⁸ "Zum Nationalitäten-Streit in Österreich," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.31 (1903): 450. On the understanding of language as a racial attribute in racist thought, see Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, 39-44.

²⁹ "Zum Nationalitäten-Streit in Österreich," 450.

³⁰ "Zum Nationalitäten-Streit in Österreich," 450.

³¹ On the Poles, see Theodor Fritsch, "Zur Lösung der Polen-Frage," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 9.196 (1910): 421. On Austria, see "Zum Nationalitäten-Streit in Österreich."

³² Fritsch, "Zukunfts-Aufgaben," 6. In his preoccupation with racial mixing, Fritsch is explicitly following in the footsteps of Gobineau. See e.g. Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, 7. Gobineau's introduction of the problematic

Germany's existential struggle largely in biological-racial terms. At the broadest level, racial purity is regarded by Fritsch as a condition for the possibility of harmonious coexistence across the entire gamut of social life, from the family to international relations. A race is for Fritsch constituted by blood ties, and the affinity of blood gives rise to an affinity of spirit which in turn allows for the possibility of a harmonious community. People from different races, insists Fritsch, are incapable of coexisting in enduring harmony. Racial mixing, accordingly, is the source of the chaotic and convulsive character of the "modern social body [*Gesellschaft-Körper*]." ³³ With respect to family life, Fritsch claims that racially mixed marriages are wrong not only because of the inferior kind of offspring they yield, but also in terms of the marriage itself, which is bound to be plagued by constant discord arising from the multitude of racial differences between husband and wife. ³⁴ At the international level, superior races are in danger of suffering moral degeneration even as a result of simply living alongside an inferior race. ³⁵ Elsewhere Fritsch makes a "softer" claim, acknowledging that different races can be mutually complementary, each offering distinctive advantages arising from its racial particularity. But still, such a complementarity is only possible if the races retain their respective purity. ³⁶ Hence Fritsch is favorable towards "racial hygiene" which he understands *inter alia* as a strategy for eliminating biologically lethal non-identity. Referring to the sufferings of isolated "island peoples [*Inselvölker*]" in the Pacific Ocean in the wake of their contact with Europeans who brought many diseases with them, Fritsch remarks:

Perhaps in ancient times it was a conscious exercise of racial hygiene, when highly civilized island peoples 'sacrificed to the gods' every foreigner [*Fremdling*] who wound up on the beach, so that he will not bring new diseases into the land. ³⁷

Beyond this concern for the pernicious impact of miscegenation upon social existence in general, however, much more important in the present context is Fritsch's intensive preoccupation with the catastrophic implications of racial mixing for *national* life, its capability of leading ultimately to the collapse of "nation [*Volk*] and culture." ³⁸ In one of his articles, for example, Fritsch claims that nations from different races can coexist in harmony as long as they retain their racial purity. But as soon as a racial "intermixture of blood" takes place, giving rise to a "raceless mush of nations [*rassenlosen Völkerbrei*]," the "cultural strength of the nation" experiences a precipitate decline. ³⁹ A similar outcome of "inner war within the nations [*Nationen*]," rapid cultural decay, and ultimately national ruin is indicated by Fritsch elsewhere as the product of intermixture between superior and inferior races. ⁴⁰ No wonder that Fritsch is

of racial mixing was an important milestone in the development of biological racism in the second half of the nineteenth century. See Mosse, Toward the Final Solution, ch. 4.

³³ Fritsch, "Was ist es um die Rasse?" 593.

³⁴ Theodor Fritsch, "Blonde und Dunkle. Ein Beitrag zur Sexual-Hygiene," Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 10.214 (1911): 260. For Fritsch's advocacy of racially pure marriage and mating, see also Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 85; Fritsch, "Was ist es um die Rasse? II," 625.

³⁵ Fritsch, "Blonde und Dunkle. Ein Beitrag zur Sexual-Hygiene," 260.

³⁶ Fritsch, "Was ist es um die Rasse? II," 623.

³⁷ Fritsch, Handbuch der Judenfrage, 8.

³⁸ Roderich-Stoltheim, "Zeitglossen. Abwandlungs-Fähigkeit der Rassen," 128; see also Fritsch, Handbuch der Judenfrage, 7-10.

³⁹ Theodor Fritsch, "Kelten und Hebräer. III," Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 10.208 (1911): 91.

⁴⁰ Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 81. On racial mixing and degeneration leading to the collapse of nations, see Fritsch, The Riddle of the Jew's Success, 285.

alarmed by the ongoing racial contamination of the German nation, being flooded as it is by “racially alien elements”⁴¹ and plagued by “Jewish-German intercourse.”⁴²

This concern about racial contamination of the nation from without demonstrates how, as noted earlier, the conception of race as a nation’s environment is logically derivative of the more fundamental conception of race as attribute. The nation’s racial environment is considered by Fritsch chiefly in terms of the dangers it poses to the nation’s racial constitution. Since the nation’s “essence” is by definition a racially pure set of attributes, a set exclusive to one’s own race, it follows that other races (with their own distinctive set of attributes) are never endogenous, but will always be exogenous to the nation, always part of and originating in the latter’s external environment. And since those attributes are reproduced through heredity rather than through social institutions, it follows that any contact with an alien race threatens the nation with racial contamination that would be difficult if not impossible to repair. In short, the secondary modality of race as environment is itself articulated in the vocabulary of the primary modality of race as attribute.

Let us, then, continue to explore Fritsch’s analytic of the nation’s racial attributes and its dynamics. According to Fritsch, Germany is not merely in *danger* of a dilution of its racial constitution; it is *already* a racially “mixed nation [*Mischvolk*]” and “the Germanic element is dwindling more and more.”⁴³ The crisis is of existential proportions: “Foreign, sly, despicable elements came and deprived [the Germanic (*der Germane*)] of the possibility of existence.”⁴⁴ One of the manifestations of Germany’s racial crisis is the “racial degeneration of our nation [*Volk*]” which is ultimately at the root of all social and political problems. Degeneration reveals itself in both outer (i.e. physical) and inner (i.e. mental, spiritual, moral) symptoms.⁴⁵ “At least a third of our fellow nationals [*Volksgenossen*],” laments Fritsch, “are of inferior quality in body and mind [*leiblich und geistig minderwertig*].” He enumerates those comprising the *minderwertige*: epileptics and alcoholics, the blind and the “deaf-mute,” the “crippled” and the mentally ill.⁴⁶ All of these as well as other “degenerates [*Entartete*]” are inwardly hollow: they have “no longer any soul.”⁴⁷ They are morally corrupt, lacking any moral standards and virtues.⁴⁸ Worst of all, this corruption flows in their blood and cannot be redressed through education or

⁴¹ “Des Reiches Stillstand,” 569. See also Theodor Fritsch, “Gedanken-Abrisse. II,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 13.288 (1914): 311.

⁴² Fritsch, The Riddle of the Jew’s Success, 19, 223, 250. Fritsch also foresees German workers suffering from the competition of workers from other, inferior races, the black and the yellow. Roderich-Stoltheim, “Zeitglossen. Abwandelungs-Fähigkeit der Rassen,” 128. Fritsch is echoing here Gobineau’s classification of humanity into three basic races: white, black, and yellow. See Mosse, Toward the Final Solution, 52.

⁴³ Theodor Fritsch, “Rassenfrage und Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 7.156 (1908): 748, 750. This condition is caused to a considerable extent, according to Fritsch, by inter-racial marriages that have proliferated throughout German society and constitute the lion’s share of the total number of marriages. Theodor Fritsch, “Die rechte Ehe,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 12.255 (1913): 59f.

⁴⁴ Fritsch, “Rassenfrage und Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” 749.

⁴⁵ Fritsch, “Die rechte Ehe,” 57-9; see also Fritsch, “Rassenfrage und Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” 750; Theodor Fritsch, “Merkmale der Degeneration,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 9.201 (1910). Degeneration was a key idea in racist thought from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Mosse, Toward the Final Solution, 82.

⁴⁶ Fritsch, “Merkmale der Degeneration,” 561.

⁴⁷ Fritsch, “Merkmale der Degeneration,” 561.

⁴⁸ Fritsch, “Merkmale der Degeneration,” 561-3; Fritsch, “Die rechte Ehe,” 57-9. In the latter text, Fritsch brings forth Social Democracy and the “womens’ movement” as examples of this moral corruption.

any other corrective apparatuses.⁴⁹ In fact, the nation's predicament is so dire, its very existence so endangered by this racial degeneration, that Fritsch goes as far as proposing to break away from the traditional institutions of marriage and family, and to establish breeding colonies to improve the nation's racial profile. "A state of emergency," argues Fritsch in defense of what he admits most contemporaries would regard as an outrageous proposition, "demands emergency laws and emergency morals. The nation wants to live and to secure its future, and whatever serves that purpose is good."⁵⁰ This last statement exemplifies how race in Fritsch's thinking, far from leading him beyond the national template, actually reinforces it and contributes to its existentialist edge, providing what Foucault would perhaps call a "whole field of new realities"⁵¹ with reference to which the nation asserts its absolute, existential primacy over all other social formations.⁵²

National-existential subordination of the social

The nationalist subordination of the social in Fritsch's work is achieved by way of a social organicism. "The nation" needs to be "integrated into a living organism";⁵³ for "only as an organic fabric can state and nation [*Volk*] prosper."⁵⁴ The biological language is to Fritsch by no means metaphorical: the national state, he argues, is subject to the "eternal laws of life of all organic things," laws which must be obeyed if the state's health and existence is to be secured.⁵⁵

The organic nation is conceived as composed in the first instance, not of individuals but of functionally differentiated socioeconomic entities, namely *Stände* or corporate estates.⁵⁶

All virtuous *Stände* in the state must develop a conscious sense of strong solidarity. They are limbs of a body, each of which has its own functions to fulfill, but which as parts of a whole [*in ihrer Gesamtheit*] can only prosper through a harmonious cooperation of all.

⁴⁹ Fritsch, "Merkmale der Degeneration," 563; Fritsch, "Die rechte Ehe," 60. More generally, all human beings bear racial, "hereditarily inborn forces" that "cannot be enduringly obliterated by any external influences." Fritsch, Handbuch der Judenfrage, 7.

⁵⁰ Fritsch, "Die rechte Ehe," 62.

⁵¹ Foucault uses this expression with reference to the rise of population as a field of governmental intervention: see Foucault, Security, Territory, Population, 75.

⁵² On the biologicistic construction of the nation as a living body in *völkisch*-antisemitic thought, along with the belief in an existential threat posed to it by the similarly biologized Jew, see Peter Berghoff, "'Der Jude' als Todesmetapher des 'politischen Körpers' und der Kampf gegen die Zersetzung des nationalen 'Über-Lebens'," Die Konstruktion der Nation gegen die Juden, eds. Peter Alter, et al. (München: Fink, 1999).

⁵³ Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 116. These words Ottomar Beta's, who will become a frequent contributor to Fritsch's Hammer and is here cited in a way that clearly endorses this statement.

⁵⁴ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung im Königreich Sachsen (Leipzig: Julius Mäser, 1906), 15.

⁵⁵ "Politischer Optimismus," 165. On the notion of (eternal) "laws of life" reappears in the following texts: "Grundzüge der künftige Religion. I," Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 2.25 (1903): 306; "Grundzüge der künftige Religion. II," Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 2.26 (1903): 331; Fritz Thor, "Aphorismen. Varuna-Ordnung," Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 2.32 (1903); Roderich-Stoltheim, "Zeitglossen. Abwandlungsfähigkeit der Rassen," 127; Theodor Fritsch, "Zeitglossen. In eigener Sache," Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 12.261 (1913): 243. Cf. Boaz Neumann, "The Phenomenology of the German People's Body (Volkskörper) and the Extermination of the Jewish Body," New German Critique 36.1 (2009), which advances a similar thesis regarding the non-metaphorical nature of the racial-antisemitic concept of the national body.

⁵⁶ I will discuss Fritsch's usage of the term *Stände* later on, in the section on Fritsch's productivism. The term encompasses all "productive" socioeconomic groups, from workers and farmers to factory owners and teachers.

No member of the common national body [*Volkskörper*] can obstruct the other without an adverse impact on its own free movement; they should all assist and support each other in the fulfillment of their duties. A short-sighted pursuit of selfish interests that leads to enmity between the individual groups of the nation [*Volksgruppen*] can ultimately only do damage to the whole.⁵⁷

This passage, taken from an essay co-authored by Fritsch, suggests several aspects of his organicism. First, the nation is conceived as a two-tiered, nested collectivist structure comprising the various corporate organs as well as the national whole itself. The nation requires functionally differentiated but harmoniously interlocked social groups, each of which is assigned a specific function in the service of the national organism.⁵⁸ At the same time, those corporate groups presumably must also be internally harmonized and disciplined so as to guarantee their proper and continuous operation. This two-tiered structure is also suggested elsewhere in the same above-cited essay in the advocacy of an “organic structuring [*Gliederung*] of righteous earning [i.e. of the various professions, in contrast to morally unsound usurious capital], and thereby the organic construction of society and of the state itself.”⁵⁹

In this two-tiered structure, the relationship between the nation and its component groups seems to be one of asymmetrical interdependence. It is asymmetrical, of course, because the corporate groups are not only functionally but also existentially subordinated to the national organism: “just as all prosper with the prosperity of the whole, so all will be damaged if the whole is damaged.” This latter argument serves Fritsch directly as a justification for disciplining the parts and subordinating them to the whole: “how foolish would the organs [*Glieder*] be if they renounced their service to the body or even launched a hostile [*feindlich*] assault against it! Wouldn’t all organs suffer with the harming of the body?”⁶⁰ But it is nevertheless a relation of interdependence insofar as the nation is also dependent upon the proper functioning of its organs. The nation cannot live without its “necessary and indispensable” parts just as the parts have no existence outside of the national whole.

A second aspect of Fritsch’s organicism suggested by the above-cited passage is the interdependence amongst the social groups themselves, deriving from their functional complementarity: “The various *Stände* ... complement each other ... like organs of a body,”⁶¹ as Fritsch puts it in another article; therefore they must work in “harmonious cooperation” and in mutual “assist[ance] and support.” The element of interdependence in this conception is articulated by Fritsch most clearly in the following passage:

⁵⁷ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 27.

⁵⁸ “[T]he righteous professions are necessary and indispensable limbs of the national body [*Volkskörper*] ... exactly like the limbs of the human body.” “Mittelständisches,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 6.121 (1907): 386.

⁵⁹ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 68.

⁶⁰ Theodor Fritsch, “Der organische Staats-Gedanke und der Mittelstand,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 10.224 (1911): 535. See also Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 97: “The nation [*Volk*] constitutes a great social body,” rendering it impossible “to heal only individual organs [*Glieder*] thereof without considering their connection to the whole.”

⁶¹ On the various corporate estates as “complementing” each other see “Zur Ausbildung der Beamten,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 6.127 (1907): 581.

Agriculture, craft [*Gewerbe*], and honest trade know that they can only prosper with the other and through the other. They have no reason to dispute each other's existence; they are dependent on each other and constitute the indispensable members of a great organism.⁶²

The flip-side of this organic interdependence is that mutual "enmity" and "obstruction" can only be to the detriment of both the individual groups and the national whole.⁶³ The various professions must "recognize that it would be senseless for these members [of the national body] to quarrel with each other and to seek to tear themselves away from the body."⁶⁴

In short, all social groups in the organic nation are functionally heteronomous and centripetally organized; their activity is wholly oriented towards the national body from which their "duties" are derived, and towards other groups with which they must cooperate in the service of that same national body. Once "the state" is refashioned as a "living organism," it will "encompass all its necessary organs," boasting a "social order in which all *Stände* fulfill their duties in cooperation and harmony."⁶⁵ This whole structure will be presided over by "ordering elements in the state," which will "supervise equitably the division of public labor"⁶⁶ and thereby moderate the "wild, desperate competition" characterizing the existing social order. Organic harmony will replace "planless mutual conflict." Everyone will be driven by a "will to harmony" rather than by "competitive envy and hate."⁶⁷

All social activity is thus geared to (re)producing and reinforcing the national order. Every social activity is, accordingly, dichotomized as either supporting the proper working of the social organism or constituting a "short-sighted pursuit of selfish interests"; and all socioeconomic reforms must have an "organic character" aimed at "shaping the life of the nation and the state into a unified organism," leading to a "renewal of national life" and combating "national disintegration."⁶⁸ This delegitimization of any activity deviating from the functional ordering of society acquires a more ominous and more intensely existential tone in another article, wherein those who "pit the various organs of society against each other" are branded as "enemies of the nation and enemies of the state."⁶⁹

In sum, Fritsch's concept of the social revolves around (1) a quest for the perpetuation of the life of the nation understood as a reified biological organism; (2) an existential significance attributed to the maintenance of the organic order of society as a precondition for the survival and invigoration of the national body; and (3) an absolute rejection of any force seen as having a disruptive effect on the organic order of society.

⁶² Theodor Fritsch, "Winkelzüge," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 8.174 (1909): 552.

⁶³ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 27.

⁶⁴ These organs of the national body can only thrive "in association with the whole and in organic cooperation ... For each of [the organs] has its particular duty to fulfill and can only fare well if it supports the others in the fulfillment of their duties." "Mittelständisches," 386.

⁶⁵ Fritsch, "Der organische Staats-Gedanke," 536.

⁶⁶ Similarly, Fritsch mentions elsewhere the need for an "organic structuring of labor [*Gliederung der Arbeit*]." Theodor Fritsch, "'Sabotage'," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 10.226 (1911): 592.

⁶⁷ Fritsch, "Der organische Staats-Gedanke," 535. It will be noted that Fritsch is evidently articulating his organicism here in opposition to (his view of) economic liberalism; I will defer my discuss of Fritsch's anti-liberalism, however, to the next chapter.

⁶⁸ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 70.

⁶⁹ "Mittelständisches," 386f.

II. NATIONAL PRODUCTIVISM

Labor

The key feature, the conceptual centerpiece of national productivism, as noted earlier in this dissertation, is the elevation of work to the status of a decisive organizing principle for society, based on an expansive conception of work as comprising any form of exertion seen to contribute to the wealth and prosperity of the national collective “whole.” This elevated and expansive conception of work, coupled with its imbrication in Fritsch’s biologicistic imaginary, is clearly and consistently visible in Fritsch’s thought. In an essay from the early 1890s on the “social question,” Fritsch starts off by accepting a conventional definition of the “social question” as the “struggle between capital and labor,”⁷⁰ only then to redefine in productivist fashion the basic conceptual components of this definition. The category of labor (or of “productive classes”) is stretched to encompass farmers, artisans, factory owners and landowners as well as industrial workers,⁷¹ and in other texts Fritsch also incorporates “intellectual labor” such as that conducted in the fields of science, art, technology, architecture and education.⁷²

In short, “labor” to Fritsch comprises all those “productive *Stände*” that together constitute the national biological organism discussed earlier. Not surprisingly, Fritsch condemns the Social Democrats’ exclusive focus on the manual wage laborers as if they are “the sole creators and bearers of culture.” All social groups and professions, Fritsch claims by contrast, are “limbs [*Glieder*] in the body of society”; they all “collaborate so faithfully in the creation of the nation’s culture [*am Kulturwerk der Nation*].”⁷³ They are the repository of the “labor-power of the nation.”⁷⁴ Labor, then, is the sum total of exertions of those various social groups just mentioned, exertions that ought to be functionally organized and channelled in accordance with the needs of the nation as a whole, producing and reproducing the organic national order. The following passage, recapitulating this conception of labor, is worth quoting at length:

We cherish creative work and abhor idleness. All work is to us a welcome opportunity for exercising and proving our energies [*Kräfte*] and capabilities; it thus affords to us a deep inner fulfillment. . . . We also know that without spirit- and body-toughening labor, no collectivity⁷⁵ [*Geschlecht*] can preserve its health in the long run. Indolence and inactivity have a flagging effect on body and soul and undermine one’s ethical footing. A work-shy

⁷⁰ Thomas Frey, *Das Abc der sozialen Frage* (Leipzig: Verlag von Theodor Fritsch, 1892), 1.

⁷¹ Frey, *Das Abc der sozialen Frage*, 6-8.

⁷² Theodor Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. I,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.32 (1903): 490; “Geldfragen – Machtfragen,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.132 (1907): 738f.

⁷³ Theodor Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Sozial-Demokratische Hetze gegen die Wahl-Reform,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.124 (1907): 502.

⁷⁴ Theodor Fritsch, “Über-Geschäfte,” *Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn* 1.9 (1902): 227.

⁷⁵ Although technically the word “race” would be more appropriate here, I wish to reserve this word as a translation for race in the biological sense, of which Fritsch’s German equivalent is “*Rasse*.” The word “*Geschlecht*,” by contrast, is deployed by Fritsch either in the sense of “generation” or (as in the present case) to denote race in the more diffuse sense of a collective entity. Hence I opt for “collectivity” as my translation for “*Geschlecht*” in this passage.

person is always a bad person who ultimately does not shrink away from lies and deception and crime. Work-shyness compels one to dishonesty and thievishness [*Unehrlichkeit*]. A collectivity [*Geschlecht*] that seeks to progress without labor becomes a bearer of falsehood and deceit. There are such collectivities [*Geschlechter*] that, blinded by bogus enjoyments of life, have lost their appreciation for the uplifting character of labor. ... [W]e find in working for our noble community, in meeting the boundless tasks posed to us by the idea of concerted, collective healing [*ein gemeinsamer Heilsgedanke*] a full satisfaction and an uplifting mission [*Lebenszweck*].⁷⁶

Although there is reference in this passage to the salutary effects of work not just on the collectivity but also on individuals themselves, the passage as a whole is tilted heavily towards articulating the *collective* value of work. Individual work resolves itself in the last sentence into collective work, i.e. into “working for our noble community” by partaking in a concerted process of “healing” the collective body.⁷⁷ The repeated association of labor with “health” and “healing” reinforces its biologicistic figuration as the metabolic activity of the collective organism, the life-process by which the latter sustains and reproduces itself.⁷⁸

Capital

The flipside of Fritsch’s expanded conception of labor is a contracted conception of capital. If at one point Fritsch includes only “small and medium” factory owners among the productive classes,⁷⁹ and generally evinces a great degree of suspicion towards large-scale enterprises (*Großbetriebe*),⁸⁰ this does not prevent him elsewhere from bringing non-Jewish, “hard-working” big industrialists such as Krupp and Stumm into the fold of the producers.⁸¹ Similarly, and in contrast to Naumann, Fritsch does not restrict productive landownership to small, independent farmers. Although Fritsch never refers to the Junkers or large landowners explicitly as “productive,” he nevertheless defends them against any attempt to brand them as

⁷⁶ “Grundzüge der künftige Religion. II,” 331f.

⁷⁷ On the communal orientation of work, see also the following passage: “Each [individual in the settlement Eden] feels that he works for himself and for a great society infused with a noble communal spirit.” Theodor Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Die Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 7.147 (1908): 465. Although the individual benefits of work seem to retain their position alongside the collective benefits, we should keep in mind Fritsch’s strong anti-individualism discussed in the previous section.

⁷⁸ Cf. Fritsch, “Merkmale der Degeneration,” 562f.: “Voluntary work, not coerced by need and not exercised for the sake of wages, real joy in work [*Arbeitsfreudigkeit*] is the most certain characteristic of collectivities [*Geschlechter*] full of life and optimism. For in the creative shaping, ordering, and beautifying of the surrounding world lies an unconscious expression of the care for the future of the collectivity [*Geschlecht*]. ... [He who finds joy in producing] sees to it, consciously or unconsciously, that this [collective] life remains well ordered and constitutes a friendly habitation for his progeny. He seeks to endow [social] relationships with a secure existence and durability; he does not short-sightedly enjoy the moment, he possesses the conscience of the future.” This biological activity is also endowed here with moral valence, revealed in Fritsch’s condemnation of idleness as disruptive of the moral order by dint of its inherent association with lies, deceit, and crime. The moral constitution, not only of individuals but of whole collectivities, becomes damaged and punctured as soon as they renounce labor.

⁷⁹ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 17.

⁸⁰ See e.g. Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 22f.; Theodor Fritsch, “An der Pforte des Zukunfts-Staates,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.28 (1903): 380; “Zeit-Glossen. Umsatz-Steuer für industrielle und kaufmännische Großbetriebe,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.28 (1903); “Wahl-Sorgen,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.110 (1907): 34.

⁸¹ Fritsch, “An der Pforte des Zukunfts-Staates,” 381.

oppressors and usurers, and even portrays the Junkers as themselves victims of usurious exploitation.⁸²

Under the category of capital, then, it might seem as if all that remains is what Fritsch calls interchangeably “mobile,” “speculative,” “usurious” or simply “big” capital, comprising big finance, the stock exchange, and anyone else living on interest without working.⁸³ But this narrower conception of capital only applies to those places where Fritsch uses the term polemically. On other occasions, he holds a broader overarching concept of capital which is then bifurcated into “good and bad capital,”⁸⁴ where “good” capital is any form of capital not possessed by the above-mentioned social agents and hence “productive” and “national.” It is only “bad” capital which constitutes the chief target of Fritsch’s social critique.

The first and most fundamental characteristic attributed by Fritsch to bad capital is its un- and anti-productivity. Bad capital is income accrued through interest and without work.⁸⁵ More precisely, such income is bad only insofar as it is accumulated in very large quantities, i.e. in the scale of millions and billions of Marks.⁸⁶ This large-scale income accrued through interest is unproductive due to the absence of work on the part of its holders, and due to the fact that it “in no way increases the goods of the nation [*Nation*]⁸⁷ or enhances the nation’s welfare.⁸⁸ Interest amounts to a kind of “unconscious taxation” levied by “international capitalism”;⁸⁹ but it is qualitatively different from state taxes in that, contrary to the latter, “these enormous sums [of money] do not return ... to the economic life, but serve the formation of new capital.”⁹⁰ Such a burden of interest on the nation is bound to lead to its economic ruin.⁹¹ In short, we can see here how wealth is judged by Fritsch, in classical national-productivist fashion, according to whether or not it contributes to national life and its reproduction.

This kind of capital is not only un- but also anti-productive since the interest is paid by the “productive *Stände*,”⁹² therefore involving the “subjugation of all production.”⁹³ “Interest-

⁸² Theodor Fritsch, “Getreide-Zölle und Volksnot,” Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn 1.5 (1902): 120; “Zeit-Glossen. Brotwucher!” Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn 1.5 (1902): 127; Fritsch, “Zur Lösung der Polen-Frage,” 422f.; Theodor Fritsch, “Je mehr Kapital, desto mehr Schulden,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 10.211 (1911): 171. In Zwei Grundübel, Fritsch devotes a whole chapter to Henry George, castigating him for attacking landownership as the source of all social ills (130-53).

⁸³ Frey, Das Abc der sozialen Frage, 7f.

⁸⁴ Theodor Fritsch, “Gutes und schlimmes Kapital,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 13.280 (1914); Theodor Fritsch, “Gutes und schlimmes Kapital. II,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 13.281 (1914).

⁸⁵ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 16f.; Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 163; Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Sozial-Demokratische Hetze gegen die Wahl-Reform,” 502.

⁸⁶ Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 153f., 162; Fritsch, “Gutes und schlimmes Kapital. II,” 120. Fritsch apparently wishes in this way to defend the *Mittelstand* or petty bourgeoisie with its moderate interest-carrying savings, as well as land rent, from being accused of being un- or anti-productive. See e.g. Fritsch, “Gutes und schlimmes Kapital,” 87f.; Fritsch, “Gutes und schlimmes Kapital. II,” 118. I will discuss the *Mittelstand*, a key category in Fritsch’s thinking and politics, in the next chapter.

⁸⁷ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 17. See also Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 158, 161.

⁸⁸ “Die Trusts,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 2.27 (1903): 356.

⁸⁹ Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 9.

⁹⁰ Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 11; see also Fritsch, “Je mehr Kapital, desto mehr Schulden,” 171.

⁹¹ Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 13.

⁹² “Geldfragen - Machtfragen,” 738f.; see also Theodor Fritsch, “Vom Mittelstands-Tage,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 7.152 (1908): 610.

⁹³ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 17.

extracting mammoth capital acts on the laboring nation [*Nation*] like an immense suction pump,”⁹⁴ writes Fritsch. It “sucks in the profits of the nation [*Nation*],”⁹⁵ profits that are the product of the latter’s “indefatigable labor-power.”⁹⁶ It thereby impoverishes the “productive population”⁹⁷ and depletes the “labor-power of the nation” to such an extent that within a few decades Germany might no longer be inhabited by a “competent, industrious generation [*Geschlecht*]” capable of paying its interest.⁹⁸ This predicament, where “all creative, constructive, and inventive forces” are “outflanked by speculation without work,” constitutes a grave danger for “our entire national life [*Volksleben*].” What is at stake, in fact, is not just the “independence of the honestly productive,” but culture and morality as such.⁹⁹

Bad capital is depicted by Fritsch as devastatingly disruptive of the functionally ordered productive exertions charged with reproducing the national organism, and hence destructive of national order and existence as such. The branding of bad capital as a negation of the national order is also expressed in the simple labeling of this kind of capital as “international” or “without a fatherland.” As we have seen, Fritsch’s xenophobic nationalism renders him extremely suspicious of any social or political formation that does not map perfectly onto the national template. Any such formation is by definition non-identical with the nation, *ergo* a dangerous phenomenon. The synonymy established by Fritsch between bad capital and internationality constitutes another example of this logic. Thus “mobile capital” is named a “golden international” and placed alongside the “black” and “red” internationals (i.e. the Catholic Church and the Socialist International, respectively).¹⁰⁰ The international mobility of bad, “speculative” capital consists in that it is

utterly impossible to control where [company] stocks will find themselves. They can also be bought up by foreigners [*Ausländern*], and an enterprise rooted in the national interest and protected by national legislation can in this way be made to serve foreign [*ausländischen*] interests.¹⁰¹

Indeed, the end result of the stock exchange is in Fritsch’s view the inevitable concentration of all wealth “in the cashboxes of the stock exchange matadors [*Börsen-Matadore*], that is, of the great golden international.”¹⁰² In this way, “international big finance” or the “un-national [*vaterlandslosen*] big capitalism” holds “our governments [*Regierungen*]” and with them “the most serious and most important matters of the life of nations [*des Völker-Lebens*]” at their mercy.¹⁰³ It may be noted that Fritsch opposes “international capital” here, not

⁹⁴ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 156.

⁹⁵ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 166.

⁹⁶ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 209.

⁹⁷ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 156.

⁹⁸ Fritsch, “Über-Geschäfte,” 227. The expression “labor-power of the nation” shows how easily Fritsch’s concept of labor slides from a particularized inflection, referring to the exertions of certain particular social groups, to a generalized inflection denoting the (re)productive exertions of the nation as a single body, bracketing out the latter’s inner composition. We have observed a similar labor holism in Naumann’s thought as well.

⁹⁹ Theodor Fritsch, “Gemeinschafts-Arbeit der Erwerbs-Stände,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 12.270 (1913): 478.

¹⁰⁰ Frey, *Das Abc der sozialen Frage*, 4f.

¹⁰¹ “Zur Reform des Aktien-Wesens,” *Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn* 1.5 (1902): 105.

¹⁰² Fritz Thor, “Aphorismen. Diebstahl aus der Ferne,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.25 (1903).

¹⁰³ “Die Trusts,” 356.

to the German nation alone, but to “nations” in the plural form. The international nature of bad capital thus renders it inimical to the very idea of nationality, to the system of nations, to the ordering of human existence along national lines. The “handful of big speculators” are the “modern oppressors of nations [*Völker-Bedrücker*],” contributing nothing to the “well-being of the nations [*Völker*]” and “making nations [*Nationen*] liable to interest.”¹⁰⁴

The passages just cited also indicate the political dimension of the internationalism attributed to bad capital. The latter’s economic ascendancy translates itself into political power over the nation, disrupting its political self-identity. The masses, “blinded by the success” of big capital, willingly accept the “international powers of capital [*internationalen Kapital-Gewaltigen*] as their real rulers.” Even “our traditional rulers themselves” seem to “bow to this international great power of scoundrels [*Gauner-Großmacht*],” misled by the illusion “that their interest is identical with that of international usury-finance.”¹⁰⁵ The dichotomous choice facing the German nation in this state of affairs is clear to Fritsch: “do we want to toil for big foreign scoundrels [*ausländische Großgauner*] or to serve the fatherland?”¹⁰⁶

Just as there is good and bad capital, there is also good and bad commerce. The ideal vision of commerce is that of a “naïve and natural attempt simply to satisfy the demand and to draw as much as possible a good profit.”¹⁰⁷ The “real” merchant limits himself merely to distributing goods from producers to consumers, and has no influence on prices.¹⁰⁸ In that sense, trade is an indispensable complementation to production, and by virtue of this fact can itself be regarded as “productive.”¹⁰⁹ But commerce, due to its structural position, can very easily succumb to the temptation of controlling the entire economy by reducing both producers and consumers to dependency upon itself.¹¹⁰ This is especially true, claims Fritsch, for tradesmen possessing large amounts of money, which enable them to manipulate prices artificially by buying excessive amount of goods and withholding them from the market, or conversely by flooding the market. “Here is the point where trade plays its way [*hinüberspielt*] into usury; here begins the dishonest speculation that is hurtful to the people [*volks-schädigende*].”¹¹¹ In the manipulation of prices, the speculative trader becomes qualitatively different both from the producer (who merely wants an honest return on his work) and from the “real merchant” (who has no influence on prices but is merely a transparent distributor of goods).¹¹²

International trade is another arena where speculative trade develops and reduces producers and consumers to dependency. When all goods are produced domestically, the distances between producers and consumers are relatively small, and so there is less need for the mediation of trade. To be sure, there is nothing wrong *a priori* with international trade “as long

¹⁰⁴ “Die Trusts,” 356.

¹⁰⁵ “Die Trusts,” 356.

¹⁰⁶ “Die Trusts,” 358. On one occasion, Fritsch also points up a cultural aspect of the international negation performed by bad capital. “Mobile capital,” claims Fritsch, imports masses of foreign workers in order to obtain “cheap labor-power.” This has already turned Westphalia into a “Polish province.” Theodor Fritsch, “Politische Wandlungen,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 8.169 (1909): 393.

¹⁰⁷ “Die Trusts,” 354.

¹⁰⁸ Fritsch, “Winkelzüge,” 547.

¹⁰⁹ Fritsch, “Winkelzüge,” 546.

¹¹⁰ Fritsch, “Winkelzüge,” 546.

¹¹¹ Fritsch, “Winkelzüge,” 547.

¹¹² Fritsch, “Winkelzüge,” 547.

as it arises by itself as a need and is in the interest of the exchanging nations [*Völker*].” But the international trader is bound at some point to try “to boost this exchange artificially [*künstlich*]” at the expense of domestic production, thus taking advantage of his structural position to gain “power over state and nation [*Volk*].”¹¹³ Fritsch no doubt makes this foray into international trade in view of the confluence of inter-/anti-nationality and anti-productivity that it offers.

III. SYNOPSIS: ANTISEMITISM

For Theodor Fritsch, the Jews embody all that negates the national-social order he yearns for. They are negativity in the flesh: “The mission of the Jews is a purely negative one; they play the role of the deterrent example: the Jew is man as he should *not* be!”¹¹⁴ Throughout Fritsch’s entire oeuvre, the Jews are branded as absolutely disruptive of national homogeneity and racial purity, of organic order and national productivity. Hence, Fritsch’s antisemitism can be presented as a synopsis of the two main ideational pillars of his national socialism, national existentialism and national productivism.

National existentialism and the Jews

Fritsch insists on the absolute unassimilability of the Jews into the German or any other nation by dint of three mutually reinforcing modes of particularity: religious, national, and racial. “Through these three properties,” writes Fritsch, the Jews “are in opposition to all the nations [*Völkern*] of the world,”¹¹⁵ a condition traced by Fritsch back to biblical times.¹¹⁶ The Jews are similar to all other nations in that they never change their “national character [*Volks-Charakter*]”; but they are also radically different in that they live in the midst of other nations, retaining their distinct identity even when they adopt the language and mores of their hosts. “They do not for a single moment lose the inner connection with their dispersed nation [*Nation*].”¹¹⁷ This “exceptional position [*Sonderstellung*]”¹¹⁸ of the Jews in relation to other nations, however, is not an innocuous but a hostile one. “They consider it justified to dominate other nations [*Völker*], to appropriate their property, to enslave them and render them subservient.”¹¹⁹ The Jews have in fact brought cultural depredation upon all great nations of the

¹¹³ Fritsch, “Winkelzüge,” 547.

¹¹⁴ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 93.

¹¹⁵ Frey, *Das Abc der sozialen Frage*, 9. On the Jewish alignment of religion, nationality, and race, see also Fritsch, “Gedanken-Abrisse. II,” 310. In Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, 434, the author adds also “judicial system, economic interest, and spiritual education” to the integrative forces of the Jews.

In view of the alignment of religion, nationality, and race, Fritsch argues that it is not the Germans who exclude the Jews, but the Jews who exclude themselves. See Fritsch, “Kelten und Hebräer. III,” 91; Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 178. This, of course, is patently a projection upon the Jews of Fritsch’s own exclusionary worldview. On projection as a characteristic of antisemitism, see Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1982), 187ff.

¹¹⁶ F. Roderich-Stoltheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums. III,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 8.157 (1909): 15, 18.

¹¹⁷ “Zum Nationalitäten-Streit in Österreich,” 451.

¹¹⁸ Frey, *Das Abc der sozialen Frage*, 9.

¹¹⁹ Frey, *Das Abc der sozialen Frage*, 9f.; cf. “Gibt es eine Judenfrage?” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.115 (1907): 198f.

past.¹²⁰ Thus Fritsch pits the Jews not just against this or that nation at some specific point in history, but against all nations at all times, an eternal enemy of humanity itself as a system of nations.¹²¹

Germany, of course, has not been spared the malignant incursion of the Jew into all levels of its national existence.¹²² “Not only does the national political economy enter upon a dangerous road,” Fritsch bemoans, “but the national mode of living and the national morals follow.”¹²³ The Jewish mode of conduct is, in particular, destructive of the nation’s organic constitution. It “wrecks the organic foundations of national life”¹²⁴ and “checks [its] natural growth.”¹²⁵ The Jew is “hostile to all organic social creations: the guilds, the trade associations, the nobility, the army. ... He would like to disrupt and atomise them, and to isolate the members.”¹²⁶

In order to achieve their goal of subjugating all nations, the Jews resort to practices of dissimulation. They adopt externally the features of the nations which they inhabit: their languages, their clothes, their customs, “even foreign religions”; they put on an act of being fanatically patriotic Frenchmen or Englishmen, Russians or Italians; but inwardly they forever remain Jews, and they obey only one injunction: “the interest of Judah over all other nations [*Völker*]!” This “self-concealment” is for the Jews a “cunning ruse” which it needs “in order to deceive and outsmart the nations [*Völker*].”¹²⁷ Yet the deception goes even deeper. While the Jews are careful to preserve their own racial purity, they at the same time argue against race theory so as to keep the secret of racial purity to themselves and weaken the constitution of all other nations by advocating racial mixing.¹²⁸

Fritsch’s biological imagery with respect to the Jews is not limited to noting their racial character. On one occasion, Judaism is referred to in a medicalized social-Darwinist language as a “disease”¹²⁹ functioning, like all diseases, as a “sharp means of selection [*Auslese-Mittel*] that sieves humanity,” and against which “the healthy” need to be warned.¹³⁰ Elsewhere Fritsch

¹²⁰ Theodor Fritsch, “Kelten und Hebräer. II,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 10.207 (1911): 70.

¹²¹ On the Jews as a bane to humanity, see F. Roderich-Stoltheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 7.149 (1908): 513-6; Theodor Fritsch, “Kelten und Hebräer,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 10.206 (1911): 33-5.

¹²² See e.g. Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, 429, where he dubs the Jews “our [i.e. the Germans’] most dangerous rival.”

¹²³ Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 106.

¹²⁴ Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 156.

¹²⁵ Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 212.

¹²⁶ Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 211.

¹²⁷ Theodor Fritsch, “Prager Zustände – Deutsche Zustände,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 8.159 (1909): 70f.; cf. Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 171, 174, 176f., 180, 190, 195.

A variant of the accusation that Jews disguise themselves in the outer forms of other nations is the imputation of unoriginality and inauthenticity to the Jews. The Jewish “doctrine of law,” for example, is no more than “a weak abstract with many distortions and mutilations” of the “moral laws” or other cultures (Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 86). Moses himself committed “plagiarism of Egyptian priests” (Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 107), and monotheism as a whole is not a Jewish invention either (Roderich-Stoltheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums,” 515).

¹²⁸ Roderich-Stoltheim, “Zeitglossen. Abwandlungs-Fähigkeit der Rassen,” 128.

¹²⁹ The call for “healing the Jewish disease” is also to be found in Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, 438.

¹³⁰ Fritsch, “Kelten und Hebräer. II,” 70. In a similarly social-Darwinist metaphor, the Jew is depicted as following humanity like a wolf behind a herd of sheep: “Whatever becomes languid and lame and remains behind, falls prey [to the wolf/Jew]. That is its mission: to pull the degenerate down into the abyss of perdition.” Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, 437.

derides those who want to “clean” the nation but without doing any harm to the “Jewish louse,”¹³¹ or evinces his disgust about the “uncanny worm within, the guest from the orient.”¹³² And as early as 1884, Fritsch writes to Wilhelm Marr about the Jewish “vermin” that needs to be “trampled” upon.¹³³ In all of these cases, the biological imagery sets the Jews up as the object of elimination, of methodic extirpation. A discourse of life, of national existence, thus forms the basis for the advocacy of death and adumbrates its contours.

National productivism and the Jews

Among the biological images deployed by Fritsch one also finds, of course, reference to the Jews as parasites, which brings us to the productivist domain. Herder’s biologistic likening of the Jews to “a parasitical plant on the trunks of other nations [*Nationen*],”¹³⁴ is warmly embraced by Fritsch as accurately capturing the unproductive essence of the Hebrews, in dichotomous contrast to the productive Germans. This idea is given paradigmatic expression in the following passage:

The capabilities of the German lie in a completely different domain from those of the Jews. The German works with indefatigable diligence in the field and in the workshop, in the mine and at sea; he struggles with the forces of nature and listens to its voices. This requires capabilities other than swindling in the market. . . . His mind is turned predominantly towards productive activities; he is an artist and an engineer, a builder and an inventor. In all these areas the Hebrew is utterly unfruitful. The Jewish cleverness is of a totally one-sided kind; it is marked by sharp criticism and an artful despoiling of advantage opportunities. It is essentially negative and therefore has everywhere a corrosive effect. Nowhere does the Jew create new values, and the great assets that he snatches up are built upon the annihilation of many small ones.¹³⁵

This “deep opposition between Germanic and Hebrew essence” pits them against each other in Manichaean fashion as “great antithetical human species [*Menschenarten*]”: “the farmer and the usurer, the Edomite and the Jacobite, the honorable and he who has lost all honor.”¹³⁶ The figures of Esau and Jacob alluded to here are brought up several times by Fritsch as the “eternal archetype[s] of the honestly working man and the cunning nobbler.”¹³⁷ They are polar

¹³¹ Theodor Fritsch, “Zeitglossen. Zu den Wahl-Vorbereitungen,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 10.228 (1911): 657.

¹³² “Politischer Optimismus,” 164.

¹³³ Letter to Wilhelm Marr, May 8, 1884; cited in Zimmermann, “Two Generations,” 95. On the Jew as worm or vermin (*Gewürm*), see also Fritsch, Handbuch der Judenfrage, 429.

¹³⁴ “Gibt es eine Judenfrage?” 198.

¹³⁵ “Gibt es eine Judenfrage?” 197; see also Theodor Fritsch, “Parlamente und Parteien,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 9.193 (1910): 337, where the Jews are portrayed as “a nation [*Volk*] that has for thousands of years been in the business of trade [*händlerisch tätig*] and seeks its advancement without productive work in the cunning exploitation of other nations [*Völker*].”

¹³⁶ F. Roderich-Stoltheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums. II,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 7.154 (1908): 684.

¹³⁷ Theodor Fritsch, “Die heimlichen Triebfedern der Politik,” Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 10.207 (1911): 61; see also Fritsch, “Parlamente und Parteien,” 338. On Jacob as the biblical archetype of the Jew, see Fritsch, Zwei Grundübel, 65; Roderich-Stoltheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums. II,” and Roderich-Stoltheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums. III.”

archetypes of “two principles” braced in perpetual struggle “in the economic life of nations [*Völker*],” “the productive” and “the lucrative” principles:

The productive economic principle, which has as its goal the production of food and goods of all kinds, is based on human labor-power and on the productivity of the land. ... The lucrative principle is predominantly concerned with the gainful exploitation of the economic situation [...]¹³⁸

In economic terms, the deceitful unproductivity of the Jews is embodied in an accumulation of money by way of usury, speculation, and the manipulation of currency flows. The Jew “refuses to recognise any principle except the acquisition of money”; he regards “money-making ... as the first principle of life.”¹³⁹ Hence he has from time immemorial engaged in usury; he is the “lender and usurer of all millenia.” The medieval restriction of lending with interest to the Jews was, to Fritsch, merely a logical consequence of this basic historical fact.¹⁴⁰ Abraham himself was already a usurer;¹⁴¹ and was it not his descendant Joseph who committed “the most grandiose piece of usury that world history has to offer,” maliciously taking advantage of Egypt’s severe food shortage?¹⁴² In Fritsch’s own time, too, the Hebrews become “millionaires” not by “virtuous labor,” but “through stock-exchange maneuvers, fraudulent bankruptcies, disguised usury and unfair dealings of all kinds.”¹⁴³

The Jews are also responsible for the “hypothecation of land and its subjection to usury.”¹⁴⁴ Even the Jews’ relation to their own “promised land” was from the beginning that of exploitation rather than normal national ownership.¹⁴⁵ This usurious relation to land, to any land, is symptomatic to Fritsch of the Jews’ nomadic, mobile character. As “nomad[s],” the “Semitic tribes” made their living “as looters and plunderers of the[ir] neighbors.”¹⁴⁶ True “communal consciousness, social consciousness” can only develop in a society of “sedentary farmer[s]” who reap “the fruits of [their] productive industriousness,” as is characteristic of the “Aryan”

¹³⁸ Fritsch, “Die heimlichen Triebfedern der Politik,” 57. For the reference to Esau and Jacob in this connection, see p. 61. In similar fashion, Fritsch draws a sharp contrast between the “virtuous German merchant” and the “Hebrew” who is a “born hustler and humbug.” Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 236. The Manichaeian contrast set up by Fritsch pits the unproductive Jew not just against the Germans, but against all nations. Whereas “other nations [*Völker*] labor in productive activities,” the Jew is solely preoccupied with “how he can perforate the existing orders and laws, and how he can set snares to the unsuspectingly productive and avail himself of the product of their labor.” Fritsch, “Kelten und Hebräer,” 31. Cf. Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 93, where the Jewish people is accused of having “the cheating and plundering of all other nations [*Völker*] as its highest law.” See also Fritsch, “Politische Wandlungen,” 390; Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 185.

¹³⁹ Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 103, 155 (respectively); cf. Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, 429f.

¹⁴⁰ Fritsch, “Über-Geschäfte,” 229.

¹⁴¹ Roderich-Stoltheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums,” 517.

¹⁴² F. Roderich-Stoltheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums. IV,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 8.162 (1909): 165; cf. Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 66f.

¹⁴³ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 88.

¹⁴⁴ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 64.

¹⁴⁵ Roderich-Stoltheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums,” 519.

¹⁴⁶ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 192.

“conception of life.”¹⁴⁷ The Jewish people, conversely, “to this day ... does not know any dwelling place, any state of its own.”¹⁴⁸

As part of the Jews’ usurious exploitation of land, they encourage an “artificial increase of land prices” so as to be able to extract higher interest on mortgages.¹⁴⁹ This point leads us, in turn, to another way in which Jews are claimed to achieve their exuberant accumulation of money: the manipulation of prices. Whereas in the “naïve Aryan conception,” money serves simply as a neutral, “unvarying yardstick for [determining] economic values,” the Jews view money as “nothing other than a commodity, of which the price and value can at any time be altered.”¹⁵⁰ More broadly, the Jews are accused of dominating and distortively manipulating the sphere of economic circulation (money, trade). Just as money has been transformed from a neutral mediator to an artificially manipulated value, so too trade has been designed “to direct the circulating money as quickly as possible again into the hands of the trader. It was not the transfer of goods, which was so important, but the fact that the transfer of goods gave the opportunity for getting hold of money.”¹⁵¹ From within the sphere of trade, the Jews can control both production and consumption for their purposes, and funnel as much money as possible into their own hands from the totality of money in circulation.¹⁵² The “Jewish department stores,” for example, aim to “develop themselves into a central point for all circulation of money and commodities.”¹⁵³

Conclusion

In this chapter I have surveyed the fundamental moments of Theodor Fritsch’s national socialism, primarily his national existentialism and productivism. On the basis of a biologicistic understanding of the nation as a reified living organism with eternal racial attributes and a collective metabolism in the form of labor processes, Fritsch calls for a systematic organization and harmonization of the social in accordance with principles of functional differentiation and racial homogeneity. Fritsch’s productivist reading of society signals his tacit acceptance of the capitalist socioeconomic order whose class-based exploitative mechanisms disappear from view, while the ills of modern life are all imputed to social forces deemed disruptive of the nation’s existence as a racially pure, absolutely self-identical living organism. The next chapter will examine the ways in which Fritsch sought to realize this vision through social and political praxis.

¹⁴⁷ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 193.

¹⁴⁸ Roderich-Stoltheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums,” 519.

¹⁴⁹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 265.

¹⁵⁰ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 263f.

¹⁵¹ Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 12.

¹⁵² Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 14, 51.

¹⁵³ “Zeit-Glossen. Das Warenhaus als Konkurrent der Bank-Geschäfte,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.114 (1907): 179f.

Chapter 7 | Theodor Fritsch's National Socialism: The Politics

As in the parallel chapter on Naumann, this chapter will examine the ways in which the foundations of Fritsch's national socialism—biological-racist, antisemitic forms of national existentialism and national productivism—manifested themselves in his writing on practical political and socioeconomic questions. In the first section of the chapter I show how Fritsch's conception of national politics is dominated by, on the one hand, his contempt for parliamentarism, mass suffrage, and party-politics; and, on the other hand, his call for a personalistic dictatorship, corporatist representation, and non-party mass politics focusing on the *Mittelstand* or lower middle class. The second section discusses Fritsch's thinking on the areas of social and economic policy that drew most of his attention: land reform (including land-law reform, land settlement, inner colonization and urban planning), reform of the sphere of economic circulation (including financial, fiscal, and monetary policy), and corporatist economic organization.

Fritsch's proposals in all these domains coalesce to form the agenda of a nationalistic, rigidly hierarchical reconfiguration and harmonization of the social by way of quashing dissent, combating egalitarian tendencies, mobilizing the masses in support of an unbridled dictatorship, engaging in racial and ethnic cleansing, regimenting urban space and stifling class struggle. What this national-socialist agenda does *not* include is any significant restructuring of industrial capitalism, alteration of relations of production, or diminishment of socioeconomic inequalities.

I. CONCEPTION OF NATIONAL POLITICS

Repudiation of parliamentarism, suffrage, and party politics

Fritsch adduces both nationalist and productivist arguments against parliamentarism and party politics. The nationalist dimension appears mostly in the form of a concern with the pernicious—centrifugal and disintegrative—effects of the “mishmash-parliament” and the “disgusting party quarrels”¹ on the nation's political order and social cohesion. Fritsch writes, for example, that “the Reichstag of today works as an instrument of national decomposition” due to its “impotence in carrying through radical reforms” as well as the stage it provides for “malicious criticism from the Left” bent on “shattering all state authority.”² Domestic conflicts and “centrifugal” tendencies are exacerbated by “parliamentarism” wherein “party interests” are placed higher than the “common good,”³ and parties are concerned more “about personal glamor and party-profit than about the flourishing of the nation [*des Volkes*].”⁴ There is no trace in Fritsch's writings of party politics as a possible channel for an authentic expression of popular voices. Instead, parties only bring in their train a “blossoming of lies and treachery,” and “fissure the entire nation [*Nation*] irremediably.”⁵ They nourish “ignoble traits” and turn “*Stände* and

¹ “Zeit-Glossen. Zur Änderung des Wahlrechts,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.31 (1903): 465.

² Theodor Fritsch, “Reichstags-Dämmerung,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 9.184 (1910): 86f.

³ “Politische und sociale Probleme,” *Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn* 1.3 (1902): 49.

⁴ “Politische und sociale Probleme,” 51.

⁵ “Zeit-Glossen. Zur Änderung des Wahlrechts,” 466.

classes” into mutual enemies, making a “harmonious cooperation of the various *Stände*” impossible.⁶ The “party system has a splitting and disintegrating effect on our national [*nationalen*] life,” and in particular, it “develops class enmity that suffocates the communal spirit of the nation [*den nationalen Gemeinsinn*].”⁷ Parliamentarism, in short, is nothing more than “a burden on national life [*nationalen Leben*],”⁸ a “misfortune for the nation.”⁹

The productivist aspect of Fritsch’s anti-parliamentarism reveals itself in his attack on the principle embodied in the etymology of the term “parliament”: its deliberative character. Fritsch contrasts deliberation with production via the association of the former with the Jews. As “a people [*Volk*] that for millenia has been engaging in trade and seeking to maintain itself without productive labor through the cunning exploitation of other peoples [*Völker*],” the Jews according to Fritsch had to cultivate their skills of persuasion, dissimulation, and deception. Hence their deftness with speech and words, in contrast to agricultural, hunting, or seafaring peoples—such as the Germans—who are clumsy with words and ideas (though their thinking and sensibility goes deeper). Indeed, “chatter and loquacity are something un-German.” The cunning Jew has been able to take advantage of this situation to “befuddle our naïve people [*Volk*] with gushes of rhetoric.” The Jews, led by the liberal leaders Lasker and Bamberger, have seized control of the Reichstag and opened the legislative door for “capitalist speculation and methodical plundering of the masses.”¹⁰ Not surprisingly, Fritsch informs his readers, Jews are disproportionately represented, not only in the German but also in other parliaments such as the Italian or the Russian.¹¹

The same blend of nationalism and productivism informs Fritsch’s attack on the party politics of the Social Democrats. Fritsch’s critical engagement with the Social Democrats and his attempts to discredit their socialist pretensions is not only far more intensive than his discussion of any other political party or movement. It is also one of the most frequently recurring motifs in his entire oeuvre, which attests to the importance he saw in contesting the political space occupied by Social Democracy in German collective life. It is therefore worth exploring this aspect of Fritsch’s writings in relative detail.

The Social Democratic Party, first of all, is to Fritsch deeply disruptive of the national social order. Fritsch deploys in this connection the terminological couplet “positive” and “negative” to denote, respectively, construction (or enhancement) and disruption of national order.¹² The Social Democrats, Fritsch writes, are “subversion-maniacs [*Umsturz-Wüterisch*] that are not willing or able to perform any positive work [*positiven Arbeit*].”¹³ They are “purely negative”; they “spurn and deride the existing order [*das Bestehende*] and [are] not concerned

⁶ Theodor Fritsch, “Zum Streite zwischen Unternehmer und Arbeiter,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.117 (1907): 268.

⁷ “Zur Wahlrechts-Reform,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.123 (1907): 452.

⁸ Fritsch, “Reichstags-Dämmerung,” 87.

⁹ Theodor Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Wahl-Betrachtungen. II,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.28 (1903): 397.

¹⁰ Fritsch, “Parlamente und Parteien,” 337f.

¹¹ Fritsch, “Parlamente und Parteien,” 340f.

¹² In this sense, Fritsch brings his national socialism in direct continuity with nineteenth-century positive thought as presented by Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960). I discuss this point at greater length in Chapter 8.

¹³ Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. I,” 488.

about creating a positive new one.”¹⁴ In fact, no “positive ideas” have ever “sprung up from their heads.” Even the idea of a “communist social order with communal production” is not an originally Social-Democratic idea; it had already existed as a social reality in medieval times, in the form of guilds.¹⁵ Hence, Fritsch concludes, Social Democracy offers no solution to the “social, national, and ethical questions of our time [*sozialen, nationalen und sittlichen Zeitfragen*] ... Its entire strength is founded on critique.” As a party with considerable “outer achievements” (apparently referring to its electoral success), the Social Democratic Party should “come forth with positive proposals and begin in earnest with the construction of a new social order.”¹⁶ It needs to show “positive work” because “people who only subvert and destroy without building are called criminals.”¹⁷

Social Democracy is also disruptive of the national order by way of corrupting the workers’ subjectivity. It works to “alienate the lower strata of our people [*Volk*] from national [*nationalen*] consciousness” and to “eradicate every German essence in them.”¹⁸ It gathers “all the bad traits in the people [*Volk*] in its desire to bring down the bourgeois order. It seeks to turn the entire people [*Volk*] into rabble.”¹⁹ Social Democracy, in short, threatens “to irrevocably tear our national [*nationalen*] life apart.”²⁰ The Social Democrats are not, however, authentic representatives of the “righteous workers’ estate [*Arbeiter-Stand*],” but rather an “instrument in foreign hands” aiming at the destruction of the monarchical state in the interest of the “golden international.”²¹ These “foreign hands” are, of course, the Jews who, in addition to being capitalist exploiters, have also taken over the leadership of the proletariat so as to distract it from the real exploiters: namely, the “stock-exchange matadors, trusts magnates and other big-finance swindlers.”²² Despite having no immediate, hands-on familiarity with “respectable work” by dint of their “oriental semitic constitution,” the Jewish heads of the Social Democratic Party nevertheless “play leaders of the honest workers,”²³ a leadership that is actually an “intolerable,

¹⁴ “Ist die Sozial-Demokratie ein Kultur-Faktor?” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.128 (1907): 614. On the Social Democrats’ combination of derision of the existing order with incapability or unwillingness to construct a new one, see also Theodor Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aussichten,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 9.204 (1910): 646f.; Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aufgaben,” 2; “Wahl-Sorgen,” 35.

¹⁵ “Wahl-Betrachtungen,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.112 (1907): 98.

¹⁶ “Zeit-Glossen. Wahl-Betrachtungen. I,” *Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.26 (1903): 349. Cf. Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Wahl-Betrachtungen. II,” 395; Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. I,” 488f.; Theodor Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. II,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.33 (1903): 516, 518.

¹⁷ Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. II,” 518.

¹⁸ “Wahl-Betrachtungen,” 98; cf. Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aussichten,” 646, where he laments the “de-nationalization [*Entnationalisierung*] of the masses” at the hands of the Social Democrats.

¹⁹ Theodor Fritsch, “Verlorene Worte,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 10.218 (1911): 367; cf. “Ist die Sozial-Demokratie ein Kultur-Faktor?” where it is argued that Social Democracy appeals to the lowest instincts of the masses, fostering hate against every aspect of the existing order: the bourgeoisie, the monarchy, the state, the military, the officialdom, the police, the church, and also against “honorable work.”

²⁰ “Standes-Vorurteile,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.34 (1903): 521f.; cf. Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. II,” 519; “Notizen. Sozial-Aristokratie,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.29 (1903): 424.

²¹ “Wahl-Betrachtungen,” 97.

²² Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. I,” 491; cf. Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aufgaben,” 2.

²³ Fritsch, “An der Pforte des Zukunfts-Staates,” 381.

brutal tyranny.”²⁴ And it is they, the Jewish leaders, who have introduced the “fanatic, un-German, and untruthful spirit into the workers’ movement.”²⁵

In addition to contesting the Social Democrats’ claim to authentic expression of the workers’ voice, Fritsch also contests, from a national-productivist standpoint, the social imaginary underlying their activity. He rejects their exclusive focus on the proletariat, as if the latter is the sole origin of all culture and of everything of value; as if “the independent artisan and farmer” are “totally superfluous limbs in the body of society.”²⁶ Similarly, he opposes the Social Democrats’ “underestimation of intellectual forces” and sweeping conception of the whole bourgeoisie as “parasites.” On the contrary, Fritsch retorts, these “intellectual forces” (which include such luminaries as Goethe and Schiller, Beethoven and Fichte, Herder and Schopenhauer, as well as the antisemites “Rich[ard] Wagner, [Paul de] Lagarde”) “constitute the pride of the nation [*Nation*].” The “mental work [*Kopfarbeit*],” furthermore, “that many educated people must perform is often much more difficult . . . than manual work.” Even more dramatically, it is often only the “inventive mind” of factory managers and technicians that saves a business from closing in the face of an ongoing decline in “the performance of many workers” due to the “influence of Social Democracy” and an “astounding lack of appreciation for work” amongst the “younger generation.”²⁷ As for the abovementioned “parasitical” elements, these constitute “only a small percentage” of the bourgeoisie.²⁸ This statement brings us to what Fritsch calls his “main accusation”—a national-productivist one—against the Social Democrats’ social mapping: namely, that they

lump together everything that lies outside their party. What does the man, who with respectable work has saved several thousand Marks and built a small house and a small garden, have in common with the big-capitalist usurer of millions? But the incited masses hate and revile him in the same way they do the big swindler of the stock exchange who with laborless refinement plunders the nations [*Völker*] through market rigging.²⁹

In sum, as Fritsch intimates in a pithy recapitulation of his national-productivist denunciation of the Social Democratic Party, if the latter had been a “popular movement [*Volks-Bewegung*]” representing “creative labor” and “all productive *Stände*” it would have been welcome; but in reality it serves the interests of speculative capital.³⁰ But as we have seen, Fritsch’s delegitimation of proletarian class politics is not limited to calls for a more inclusive

²⁴ Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. I,” 487.

²⁵ Fritsch, “An der Pforte des Zukunfts-Staates,” 381. Cf. Fritsch, “Parlamente und Parteien,” 339f., where he claims that the “two Hebrews, Marx and Lassalle” are after all “the real founders of German Social Democracy.” In this way, “the Hebrew, who is a born-and-bred money-man [*Geldmensch*] and usurer,” has come to “play the leader of the honest workers.” And they use the “organized and goaded masses” as a “battering ram” in order to bring down “the walls of the monarchy and of all ancient authorities.” They incite the “German body of workers [*Arbeiterschaft*]” to revolution, and when the movement appears to move in a reformist direction, they immediately begin “to organize new revolutionary parties: the Anarchists and the Anarcho-Socialists.” On the subservience of Social Democracy to Jewish-capitalist interests, see also Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 33, 40f., 177n, 282; Roderich-Stolthheim, “Das Wesen des Judentums,” 515; Fritsch, *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, 11.

²⁶ Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Sozial-Demokratische Hetze gegen die Wahl-Reform,” 502; cf. Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. I,” 490.

²⁷ “Ist die Sozial-Demokratie ein Kultur-Faktor?” 612.

²⁸ Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. I,” 490.

²⁹ Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. I,” 491.

³⁰ Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aufgaben,” 2.

understanding of labor. Nor is it limited to portraying the workers as passive, essentially “national” victims of “Jewish” and “speculative” capital in the disguise of a workers’ party. Fritsch also posits a clear hierarchy within the productivist camp: the bourgeoisie emerges as emphatically superior to the manual workers, not only in the cultural sphere by virtue of its “intellectual forces,” but also within the sphere of production, where managers and technicians are figured as active and resourceful (one is tempted to say “manly”) vis-à-vis a passive (“effeminate”) body of workers—passive both in its flagging work ethic and in its succumbing to the machinations of the Social Democrats.

Fritsch’s elitism and contempt for the working masses as, on the one hand, incapable of self-determinative political subjectivity and agency and, on the other hand, a dangerous elemental force if seized by the wrong hands, surfaces most forcefully in his treatment of the suffrage question.³¹ While some of his work on the topic of suffrage displays an unabashed, generalized elitism without specific connection to the working class,³² on many occasions Fritsch does refer explicitly to the proletariat—and not surprisingly, since the Social Democrats were the single most powerful mass party that would benefit from any extension of suffrage. Thus Fritsch warns his readers that, with universal suffrage, “the working class [*Arbeitertum*] can threaten reason and order.”³³ Universal suffrage will bring about the “reign of the masses of manual workers over the small number of intellectual workers [*Geistes-Arbeiter*], the reign of barbarous force and illiteracy over intelligence and higher culture.” In the face of this threat, and as a counterforce to Social Democracy, the middle classes (*Bürgerstand*) must “combine” to form a “social aristocracy [*Sozial-Aristokratie*].”³⁴ The industrial workers are also disqualified in Fritsch’s view from electoral participation because those subjected to the modern division of labor inevitably become overly one-sided and short-sighted “technical nincompoops [*Fach-Simpler*].”³⁵ This last passage shows how Fritsch, even as he identifies a structural dehumanization in the modern industrial order, not only is not moved by his diagnosis to seek the liberation of the victims, but takes their dehumanized condition itself as grounds for justifying their continued oppression and political exclusion.

³¹ In the *Kaiserreich*, universal manhood suffrage existed at the federal level, but not in most of the states comprising the federation. The elections to the Prussian *Landtag*, for example, were conducted on the basis of a three-class electoral system.

³² See e.g. Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Wahl-Betrachtungen. II,” 396: “Who is willing to defend the idea that the ignorant masses who are incapable of political judgment may be allowed to stifle the voices of those capable of thought and of those who are superior in social status?”

Another social group other than the workers which is explicitly excluded by Fritsch from the right to electoral or any other form of political participation are women. The latter should be granted, not “rights” but rather “privileges”: the privilege of men’s “protection and knightly support against all the perils of life.” Women should not “interfere in men’s fields of authority that do not befit them.” They should enjoy the “privilege” of being “relieved” of the “struggles and worries” of “juridical and political” (i.e. public) life, and should keep to their “unrestricted rule in the home” where they are the “focal point of the family.” “Frauen-Stimmrecht?” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.111 (1907): 67f.

³³ Fritsch, “An der Pforte des Zukunfts-Staates,” 377. Cf. Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aufgaben,” 3; and Theodor Fritsch, “Landsiedelung und entgegenstehende Bedenken,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 13.287 (1914): 282, where he rants against the “lunatic suffrage” which places the fate of the nation (*Nation*) at the hands of the “insensate” masses.

³⁴ “Notizen. Sozial-Aristokratie,” 424.

³⁵ “Standes-Vorurteile,” 522.

Nonetheless, Fritsch does not lose hope for the “creation of a German workers’ party on national foundations [*deutschen Arbeiter-Partei auf nationaler Grundlage*],” for “the honest worker is still national inside.”³⁶ Fritsch’s own periodical, *Hammer*, has also set itself the goal of “winning back the honest workers [*Arbeiterschaft*] for German spiritual life.”³⁷ Fritsch numbers himself and his Mittelstand movement among those “sensible folk outside the Social-Democratic Party who recognize the real needs of our people [*unseres Volkes*] and earnestly wish to help the little man.”³⁸ Hence, on a “conciliatory” note, he calls on the “national [*nationaler*]” camp to “build golden bridges for the prodigal son who strives to return to his father’s home.”³⁹ In the same feigned, paternalistic spirit of reconciliation, Fritsch welcomes certain proclamations of national loyalty by Social-Democratic figures as possible harbingers of a split within the Party: “and so one may hope that out of the better parts of the ‘subversives’ a sensible, national [*nationale*] reform group will yet branch off.”⁴⁰

Dictatorship and corporatist representation

What kind of political architecture, then, does the nation need according to Fritsch? As an alternative to parliamentarism and party politics, Fritsch proposes a non-institutionalized but hierarchical political model whereby an unbending framework of “order” and “authority”⁴¹ is sustained by two forces: a personified dictatorship hovering above a corporatist structure of societal mediation and representation.

Once again, much of the argumentation is formulated in nationalist terms with a noticeable existential hue. A “dictatorship” is needed in order to “save the nation [*Nation*].”⁴² For “the nation [*Nation*] must be handled today as a nation [*Volk*] of ill people”—ill in body and soul. And just as an ill person “is rarely in a position to recognize the seat of his suffering,” so too “the nation [*Nation*] needs a strong leader who, with fatherly clemency and fatherly stringency, will force it onto the right path.”⁴³ This fatherly figure needs to be unfettered by any constitutional limitations, for the constitution binds the hands of the government, rendering it impotent in the face of the problems plaguing Germany. The only thing that “may save us” is a “fresh, vivacious dictatorship.”⁴⁴ Similarly, Fritsch warns of the “danger” inherent in “any fixing of legal norms in letters,” rather than adhering to “healthy truths that have been transmitted to the nation [*Volk*] in flesh and blood.”⁴⁵ Nor is the dictatorship to be hemmed in by the bureaucratic apparatus. The bureaucrat, Fritsch notes with scorn, is the epitome of the “*Bildungs*-culture”: “he knows only letters, numbers, and paragraphs.” Hence bureaucrats are not qualified to govern, that is, to “lead national life [*Volksleben*] according to certain goals.” What the nation needs,

³⁶ “Wahl-Betrachtungen,” 99.

³⁷ “Wahl-Betrachtungen,” 102.

³⁸ “Wahl-Betrachtungen,” 103.

³⁹ “Wahl-Betrachtungen,” 105.

⁴⁰ “Zeitglossen. Nationale Social-Demokraten?” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 10.226 (1911): 611.

⁴¹ Theodor Fritsch, “Zabern und Verwandtes,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 13.277 (1914): 3.

⁴² “Politische und sociale Probleme,” 51. On the people’s longing for a dictatorship with a “strong hand,” see also Theodor Fritsch, “Ungenügende Rüstungen,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 12.262 (1913): 255. On the “iron will” that needs to characterize the “dictator,” see Fritsch, “An der Pforte des Zukunfts-Staates,” 383.

⁴³ “Zur Ausbildung der Beamten,” 580.

⁴⁴ “Politische und sociale Probleme,” 51.

⁴⁵ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 109. The similarity to certain Schmittian formulations is striking.

instead, are “sensible and farsighted spirits, men of instinct” beyond any small-minded intellectualism.⁴⁶ In Weberian terms, Fritsch presages here the overshadowing of rational-legal by charismatic domination in the Third Reich.

The replacement of constitutionalism and parliamentarism by a charismatic dictatorship needs to be complemented in Fritsch’s vision by the instauration of a corporatist mode of social organization and representation that would make the party system redundant. Fritsch’s corporatism translates his national organicism and productivism into institutional design. Fritsch takes his cue from what he calls the medieval “social state” with, among other things, not only a “social monarchy” and a “prohibition of interest-taking,” but also “corporately organized guilds.”⁴⁷ Such “organized vocational bodies [*Berufs-Körperschaften*]” would in a future German state make it possible to “elect national representatives [*Volks-Vertretung*] from the *Stände*,” thereby forming a representative body reflecting “natural circles of interest.”⁴⁸ In this way, “a representation of organized vocational estates” would have “a better understanding of the interests of the whole [*Gesammt-Interessen*] than the party faddists emerging out of the dirt-grubbing of elections.”⁴⁹ More specifically, Fritsch advocates a “reorganization of the trade and business chambers, in the sense that not only employers will be represented, but [white-collar] employees and [manual] workers will also maintain representational groups in these chambers.”⁵⁰ In this way, corporatism will restore the social “harmony” disrupted by “party strife.”⁵¹ Corporatist representation is superior to elections, according to Fritsch, regardless of whether the latter are conducted on the basis of property-based suffrage or universal suffrage. Limited suffrage only strengthens “the usurer, the stock-jobber, the land-speculant and the brothel-keeper.”⁵² And universal suffrage “undermines every authority,”⁵³ giving the same weight to the vote of a cowherd as to that of the highest state official.⁵⁴

This process of replacing the “old parties” with “new economic groups and vocational-estate [*berufsständische*] organizations” has in fact already begun, Fritsch declares. Social Democracy is “the first large corporate organization [*Standes-Organisation*]”; and it has been followed by the Agrarian League (*Bund der Landwirte*); the Hansa League (*Hansabund*) representing the large-scale merchants; and Fritsch’s own Mittelstand Association in the Kingdom of Saxony.⁵⁵ The latter, Fritsch reports, is also organized internally in corporatist

⁴⁶ Fritsch, “Zabern und Verwandtes,” 2.

⁴⁷ Fritsch, “An der Pforte des Zukunfts-Staates,” 380.

⁴⁸ “Zeit-Glossen. Zur Änderung des Wahlrechts,” 465.

⁴⁹ “Politische und sociale Probleme,” 51.

⁵⁰ Fritsch, “Zum Streite zwischen Unternehmer und Arbeiter,” 271.

⁵¹ Fritsch, “Zum Streite zwischen Unternehmer und Arbeiter,” 268.

⁵² “Zeit-Glossen. Zur Änderung des Wahlrechts,” 464f.

⁵³ “Zeit-Glossen. Zur Änderung des Wahlrechts,” 464f.

⁵⁴ “Zur Wahlrechts-Reform,” 450. Universal suffrage, according to Fritsch, also encourages the abovementioned party squabbles and class hatreds that suffocate all “national consciousness” (452).

⁵⁵ Fritsch, “Politische Wandlungen,” 385. The Hansa League, Fritsch notes here, claims to represent all merchants but in fact represents just the large-scale businesses, whereas the small, independent “middle-class salesman” is represented by Fritsch’s own Mittelstand movement. This seems to be a deliberate elision of the fact that, a few years earlier, the German Mittelstand Association joined the Hansa League. Fritsch vehemently objected to this move, in response to which he seceded from the Association and established his own regional “Mittelstand Association in the Kingdom of Saxony” as an independent movement.

fashion,⁵⁶ comprising (in 1906, a year or less after the movement's founding) four "work-sections [*Arbeits-Sektionen*]": trade, artisanship and industry, land- and home-ownership, and innkeeping and transportation.⁵⁷

Fritsch's quest to replace the party system with corporate representation is not merely a move against democratic impulses in the political sphere. It is also designed to stifle the political expression of the antagonistic class relations of capitalist society by eliminating a major institutional mechanism through which class conflict had been politically articulated in nineteenth-century Germany. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the German parliamentary scene was dominated by liberal parties that took advantage of their ascendancy to push through a comprehensive agenda of economic liberalization and capitalist industrialization. In the Wilhelmine era, following the repeal of Bismarck's anti-socialist legislation, the Social Democratic party and its proletarian class agenda gained ground with a meteoric rise in its electoral and parliamentary power. Against this historical backdrop, corporatist modes of organization and representation would, on the one hand, leave the socioeconomic structure of industrial capitalism fundamentally intact; class stratification, surplus extraction, and wage relations would continue to exist undisturbed. (The economic aspect of Fritsch's corporatism is discussed in detail below.) At the same time, however, these class relations and their antagonistic dimension would be deprived of an important arena for political expression and for the development of a class-based (or any other non-corporatist) political subjectivity.

Mass politics

How does Fritsch plan to bring to fruition his vision of a national politics founded on the principles of dictatorship and corporatism? Fritsch's practical political strategy is that of an extra-parliamentary, extra-party-political form of mass politics, making an explicit break with the political praxis of traditional conservatism. Fritsch scoffs at the "old party routine" of the conservatives: "a couple of phrases about protecting throne and altar have no effect on the masses. The slogan of German world-power status and economic world conquest doesn't do it anymore either."⁵⁸ Fritsch is unwilling to put up with this conservative failure because reaching the masses is of national-existential significance in his view:

If our national [*nationalen*] circles are still serious at all about rescuing the nation [*Nation*], this requires extraordinary means and efforts. Whatever a healthy German disposition [*gute deutsche Gesinnung*] has to say to the people [*dem Volke*], it must eventually seek its way to the masses.⁵⁹

For a similar mapping of existing social movements onto a corporatist template, see "Politisierung der Gesellschaft," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 6.116 (1907): 225, 227. Another variation of Fritsch's view regarding the transition from party politics to corporatism is available in "Zur Wahlrechts-Reform," 452, where he writes that the development of corporate representation could involve the organization of parties according to professions. On the abstention of the Mittelstand movement from party politics, see also Theodor Fritsch, "Zeitglossen. Die Mittelstands-Bewegung und die Parteien," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 13.281 (1914): 129-31; and *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 5.

⁵⁶ Fritsch, "Zukunfts-Aussichten," 649.

⁵⁷ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 69.

⁵⁸ Fritsch, "Zeit-Glossen. Wahl-Betrachtungen. II," 397.

⁵⁹ Theodor Fritsch, "Politische Volks-Erziehung," *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 8.175 (1909): 578.

Fritsch's mass-political strategy is complementary in his mind to the idea of dictatorship: "The people [*Volk*] needs leadership, longs for leadership," he writes a few lines after the passage just cited.⁶⁰ For the masses themselves Fritsch has only utter contempt: "the great mistake of our dear antisemitic publicists," Fritsch intimates in one of his letters to Wilhelm Marr, is that "they have been writing for years only for antisemites, i.e. for a bunch of dedicated souls. ... [W]hat matters is how to get hold of the great stupid masses!"⁶¹ The masses, Fritsch elaborates elsewhere, are ruled by a "herd-instinct"; they "fall victim everywhere to suggestion"; hence they deserve only the "deepest suspicion," and it is a "temerity" to think that they are capable of knowing what is in their own good and of determining their own destiny. The "whole democratic idea" thus comes under a "dubious light."⁶² Mass politics, in short, is for Fritsch merely the other side of the dictatorial coin.

The Mittelstand

The "masses" towards which Fritsch directed his political activity were largely limited to the *Mittelstand* or lower middle class. In part, the focus on the Mittelstand was a matter of political expediency. Targeting the (Protestant) Mittelstand as the social basis for an antisemitic movement was, as Werner Jochmann has pointed out, a rational choice for Fritsch to make, since other social groups were relatively less susceptible to antisemitism as an ideational platform for political mobilization. The Social Democrats blocked most inroads into the working class; the Zentrum Party had the same effect with respect to the Catholic population; and the educated and propertied bourgeoisie was generally more inclined to affiliate itself with the various liberal parties and/or with non-party bourgeois-reformist movements.⁶³

But there is also a distinctly ideological dimension to Fritsch's concentration on the Mittelstand which should not be collapsed simplistically into political strategy, and which foregrounds Fritsch's national socialism rather than antisemitism. The Mittelstand figures in Fritsch's writings as standing in a metonymical relation to the nation. It carries all the (productivist) virtues that Fritsch would like to see embodied in the nation as a whole, it suffers from all the (existential) predicaments that the nation suffers from, and its interests are identical to the interests of the national whole. In contrast to the "international" character of "big industry and big trade," as well as the "disavowal of any national [*vaterländische*] sensibility" by the proletariat and its "struggle against its own national [*nationalen*] state," the Mittelstand is "rooted with all its fibres in the soil of the homeland ... its entire feeling and thinking is directed towards the fatherland. In good and bad times alike it upholds the idea of the state and stands up for throne and altar."⁶⁴ The "man of the Mittelstand ... unites in himself the traits that make him into a beneficial and loyal citizen,"⁶⁵ and therefore, "whoever protects the Mittelstand protects

⁶⁰ Fritsch, "Politische Volks-Erziehung," 578.

⁶¹ Theodor Fritsch, letter to Wilhelm Marr, 12 November 1885, cited in Zimmermann, "Two Generations," 98.

⁶² F. Roderich-Stoltheim, "Zeitglossen. Fragwürdige seelische Vorgänge. – I. Massen-Hypnose," Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn 13.284 (1914): 212.

⁶³ On the connection between antisemitism and the Mittelstand as its social base in the context of the Wilhelmine party-political constellation, see Jochmann, "Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich," 65ff., esp. 68, 77, 92.

⁶⁴ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 4; see also 15, 23f.

⁶⁵ Fritsch, "Zukunfts-Aussichten," 650.

the state, protects morality and culture.”⁶⁶ Thus the Mittelstand alone, we might say, has in Fritsch’s view fully internalized its subjection by the nation-state; the latter occupies the entire horizon of its subjectivity, predisposing it not only to obedience, but to proactive contribution to and defense of the nation’s political, cultural, and ethical order.

The Mittelstand is valued by Fritsch, not only by virtue of its national loyalty, but also because it is essential for securing “the economic and social conditions of existence of nation and state.”⁶⁷ These “economic and social conditions” are national-productivist ones, as is evident from the two major practical demands of Fritsch’s Mittelstand movement: the abolishment of usury and the “organic structuring [*Gliederung*] of righteous [i.e., ‘productive’] earning, and thereby the organic construction of society and of state themselves.”⁶⁸ The Mittelstand is considered by Fritsch to be essential for achieving these goals because, he is convinced, it is itself the quintessential social embodiment of the national-productivist idea. The “men” of the Mittelstand are not only “all men of national consciousness [*nationalen Sinnes*],” but also “all representatives of respectable work.”⁶⁹ German artisanship, in fact, is the cornerstone of Germany entire industrial growth. “The glorious development of our German industry,” Fritsch writes, “was possible only with the German educated worker . . . the artisanal apprenticeship in Germany is considered abroad to be the real cause of the industrial upsurge of our German fatherland.”⁷⁰ Furthermore, in contrast to the insatiable pursuit of material gain by both the “proletarian masses” and the “big capitalists”⁷¹—a type of behavior which is both a cause and a symptom of “the degeneration of a nation [*Volk*] and its culture”—the Mittelstand virtuously combines “moderate property” with “independent employment [*Arbeits-Tätigkeit*].”⁷² It thereby fuses the best of both worlds, the world of property and the world of labor: “the man of the Mittelstand is the possessor of his equipment and at the same time his own foremost worker.”⁷³

To this idealized portrayal of the Mittelstand as the epitome of national productivism, Fritsch juxtaposes a picture of the Mittelstand as the ultimate victim of the exploitation of big capital, a predicament of existential proportions. Artisans and small, independent business owners are, Fritsch claims, among the “vocational *Stände*” suffering the most from the “recent economic development”⁷⁴ towards “artificially bred”⁷⁵ big capital, big enterprise, and mass production.⁷⁶ The artisans’ struggle to adapt to this new environment is a struggle for their very

⁶⁶ Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aussichten,” 651.

⁶⁷ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 3.

⁶⁸ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 68.

⁶⁹ “Mittelständisches,” 386.

⁷⁰ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 37.

⁷¹ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 23.

⁷² Fritsch, “Zukunfts-Aussichten,” 647. On the moderation attributed by Fritsch to the Mittelstand, see also Fritsch, *The Riddle of the Jew’s Success*, 137: “A particularly valuable social quality of the middle-class is moderation in all its needs and requirements, even in its aspirations after honours and riches; for, only in this case, can there be a fairly good distribution of prosperity, and a cheerful state of well-being be made possible for the community.”

⁷³ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 24.

⁷⁴ Theodor Fritsch, “Handwerks-Sorgen,” *Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn* 1.4 (1902): 98.

⁷⁵ “Zeit-Glossen. Umsatz-Steuer,” 398. Cf. Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 19f., where artisanship, along with agriculture, is contrasted with “artificial” industry.

⁷⁶ On mass production, see “Die Trusts,” 353.

“existence.”⁷⁷ In the fierce competitive climate governed by the capitalist “law of the jungle [*Faustrecht*],” virtuous independent business owners are bound to lose out to big, speculative capital; for the latter can afford to sell at below-cost prices in order to bring down its smaller rivals.⁷⁸ Under these conditions, artisanship is in danger of sinking to the status of a “journeymen school for the large enterprises.” The artisans will continue to carry the expenses involved in this training, whereas the large enterprises will reap the profits.⁷⁹ Another possible scenario, no better than the first, is that of impoverished artisans becoming “wage-slaves” for the owners of department stores.⁸⁰

For Fritsch, in short, the most national, productive, virtuous *Stand* is also the most victimized in the world of big capital. Hence the need for legislation to protect the artisan from “capitalistic speculators” and “usurers,”⁸¹ such as tighter governmental supervision of joint-stock companies and banks.⁸² Hence also the series of “wishes and proposals”⁸³ raised by Fritsch’s Mittelstand movement, which have the aim of enhancing the economic security and political clout of the Mittelstand, but also of securing its national subjection. These proposals—articulated in one of the founding documents of the movement—include, first, the establishment of a Mittelstand “advisory board” to the government, wherein the most important groups of the Mittelstand would be represented.⁸⁴ Second, intervention by the government against Social Democratic advances into the ranks of the Mittelstand, such as taking steps against the Social Democrats’ consumers’ cooperatives.⁸⁵ And third, “provision for the Mittelstand by the authorities” in the form of encouraging small businesses and preventing centralization, for

⁷⁷ Fritsch, “Handwerks-Sorgen,” 93. On the struggle for survival of independent businesses, see “Vom wirtschaftlichen Kampfe,” *Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn* 1.8 (1902): 193.

⁷⁸ “Vom wirtschaftlichen Kampfe,” 194f.

⁷⁹ Fritsch, “Handwerks-Sorgen,” 92.

⁸⁰ Fritsch, “Handwerks-Sorgen,” 93.

⁸¹ Fritsch, “Handwerks-Sorgen,” 91.

⁸² “Zur Reform des Aktien-Wesens,” 110. This point inevitably resonates with similar issues pushed to the forefront of economic policy by the recent global financial meltdown. While such regulation is of course often necessary, it appears in Fritsch’s writings as part of a wholesale shift of social policy from the working class to the Mittelstand on the basis of a total ideological denial of any emancipatory agenda.

⁸³ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 8.

⁸⁴ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 8f.

⁸⁵ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 9f. Fritsch claims here that not only has the government not done enough to fight the Social Democrats, but that it has actually been pushing the Mittelstand into the arms of Social Democracy by being unresponsive to its demands. As an example, Fritsch mentions the government’s refusal to enact a sales tax, which he argues is “an indispensable protection against economic anarchy.” Fritsch is apparently referring here to the idea, circulating in antisemitic circles at the time, that a sales tax would discourage multiple points of merchants’ mediation between producers and consumers. For an exemplar of the antisemitic discursive context on this issue, see e.g. “Öl als Sturmerreger. IV,” *Deutsch-Soziale Blätter* 11.385 (1896): 6. The big, “Jewish” department stores (*Warenhäuser*) in particular were the main target of this antisemitic policy proposal: see “Eine scharfe Umsatzsteuer,” *Deutsch-Soziale Blätter (Beilage)* 14.571 (1899): 89; Daniela Kasischke-Wurm, *Antisemitismus im Spiegel der Hamburger Presse während des Kaiserreichs (1884-1914)* (Hamburg: Lit, 1997), 313. On the general discursive context of Fritsch’s writings on the *Warenhäuser*, see Ferrari Zumbini, “Theodor Fritsch,” 394-403. But Zumbini’s discussion of what Fritsch himself had to say about the *Warenhäuser* is very limited. As in many other aspects of Zumbini’s account, situating Fritsch in his historical and discursive context seems to come in lieu of a sustained ideational analysis of Fritsch himself.

example by ordering from small, independent, local businesses rather than from large-scale and/or foreign enterprises.⁸⁶

But the Mittelstand's role (as conceived by Fritsch) as the mainstay of the national and productivist order means that its political agenda must transcend its own particular interests, for otherwise it would only perpetuate the "egoistic class struggle."⁸⁷ Instead, the Mittelstand's aforementioned position in-between the "extremes" of big capital and revolutionary proletariat puts it, according to Fritsch, in a position to bring together various social "groups and *Stände*"⁸⁸ and thereby help soften the polarization of society.⁸⁹ The Mittelstand's mission is a far-reaching one of national harmonization, of realizing "the organic conception of state and society"⁹⁰ and restoring the "sense of social and national [*sozialen und nationalen*] togetherness."⁹¹ The Mittelstand Association, accordingly, seeks to unite all the different groups of the Mittelstand, not for its own sake, but in order to "engage the great economic, social and moral tasks of our time" and to make itself "serviceable to the common welfare [*Gemeinwohl*]" and to the "well-being of the state."⁹² The Association will extricate the "vital matters of the nation" from the "foul party struggle"⁹³ and "lend the nation [*dem Volke*] an inner harmony."⁹⁴ Similarly, a "wise social policy" would also shift its emphasis towards the Mittelstand, not because the latter should be privileged over other social groups, but because the existing social legislation has only placed at the hands of the proletarian masses ever more means to pursue their subversive goals,⁹⁵ while damaging the Mittelstand much more than the large enterprises that can absorb the costs of this legislation much more easily.⁹⁶

To conclude, the ideological function of the Mittelstand in Fritsch's national socialism is complementary to that of speculative capital. Both categories allow Fritsch to flee the inconvenient problematic (from a nationalist and productivist standpoint) of labor-capital relations. Both categories enable Fritsch to anchor his national socialism in a concrete socioeconomic space where the constitutive antagonisms and contradictions of capitalist production can be passed over in silence. At the same time, the two categories—Mittelstand and speculative capital—form together an alternative axis of socioeconomic antagonism, one with which Fritsch can roll out a productivist explanation for the ills of modern society.⁹⁷ Finally, the productivist axis of antagonism is nationalized by way of identifying the Mittelstand with the national, which in turn complements the identification of speculative capital with the foreign

⁸⁶ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 8-12.

⁸⁷ Fritsch, "Der organische Staats-Gedanke," 533.

⁸⁸ Fritsch, "Vom Mittelstands-Tage," 614.

⁸⁹ Fritsch, "Zukunfts-Aussichten," 646f.

⁹⁰ Fritsch, "Der organische Staats-Gedanke," 533.

⁹¹ Fritsch, "Der organische Staats-Gedanke," 534.

⁹² *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 6f.

⁹³ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 69. On the abstention of the Mittelstand movement from party politics, see also Fritsch, "Zeitglossen. Die Mittelstands-Bewegung und die Parteien," 129-31.

⁹⁴ *Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung*, 15.

⁹⁵ Fritsch, "Zukunfts-Aussichten," 651.

⁹⁶ Fritsch, "Handwerks-Sorgen," 89.

⁹⁷ I do not argue that Fritsch does not discuss the antagonism between capital and labor at all. But this antagonism, in Fritsch's view, can be resolved and replaced with a productivist cross-class cooperation. A conciliatory solution for the conflict between the Mittelstand and speculative capital, on the other hand, is impossible. It is therefore the structurally more fundamental conflict in Fritsch's thinking.

(especially the Jew). In this way, the task of social reform can be redefined, from achieving social justice and emancipation to constructing national order and homogeneity.

II. CONCEPTION OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Land and Urban reform

Given the importance that nationalism usually ascribes to the nation's relationship with "its" land, it is hardly surprising that Fritsch seeks to realize many of his goals through the reconfiguration of the nation's economy of space. This policy domain as it appears in Fritsch's work comprises questions such as the juridical framing of land-use and -ownership; the dispersion of the nation's population over the national territory; and the urban and rural ordering of that population. After laying out Fritsch's conception of land and the "land question" in general, I examine four particular aspects of this domain in which Fritsch sees the need for reform: land law, land settlement, inner colonization and urban planning.

Land and the "land question"

Fritsch considers the "land question" to be "the 'fundamental question' of social existence."⁹⁸ Why is the "land question" elevated by Fritsch to such cardinal status? Part of the answer lies in the anthropological (albeit nationally and racially modulated) import that Fritsch attributes to land. "Living space [*Raum zum Leben*]," Fritsch declares, is an indispensable "foundation of existence [*Existenz-Grundlage*] for "our stock [*Geschlecht*]," necessary as it is for meeting the basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing.⁹⁹ This "living space" is for Fritsch essentially a rural space, and the kind of human activity appropriate to the existential tasks associated with this space is agriculture. Country life and agriculture are thus the "actual source of national [*nationalen*] strength and health."¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Fritsch repeatedly asserts the primacy of

⁹⁸ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 26.

⁹⁹ "Grundzüge der künftige Religion. II," 330; Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 19. The concept of "living space" or *Lebensraum* was taken up by *völkisch*-nationalist circles in Wilhelmine Germany and later became a linchpin of Nazi, and in particular Hitler's *Weltanschauung*. In Fritsch's writing, however, we do not find the geopolitical extrapolation of this concept in the form of imperial expansionism which we find both in his Wilhelmine-era contemporaries and in Hitler. Fritsch's discussion of space remains largely limited to the domestic territory of the *Kaiserreich* (cf. Ferrari Zumbini, "Theodor Fritsch," 355). At any rate, the origins of the term in the scientific discipline of biology and its biologicistic extension into geopolitics by the geographer Friedrich Ratzel fits snugly into the biologicistic character of Fritsch's own worldview. On Hitler's concept of *Lebensraum* and its geopolitical implications, see Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power*, trans. Herbert Arnold (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 37ff., 92ff. On the concept in Wilhelmine *völkisch* nationalism, see Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung*, 151-5; and Karl Lange, "Der Terminus 'Lebensraum' in Hitlers *Mein Kampf*," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 13 (1965), whose reference to the Pan-Germans as the originators of the term is cited by Dan Diner, *Beyond the Conceivable: Essays on Germany, Nazism, and the Holocaust* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 240 nn. 81, 83. On Friedrich Ratzel and his biologicistic application of the concept of *Lebensraum* to human social life, see Woodruff D. Smith, "Friedrich Ratzel and the Origins of *Lebensraum*," *German Studies Review* 3.1 (1980); and Neitzel, *Weltmacht oder Niedergang*, 85.

¹⁰⁰ Theodor Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft (Gartenstadt)*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Hammer-Verlag, 1912), 6.

agriculture over industry as well as any other “more or less dispensable occupations.”¹⁰¹ “There is only *one* work-activity that can at any time increase the goods and therewith the welfare of the nation [*Nation*]; this is the originary production [*Ur-Produktion*] which produces the raw material for nourishment and clothing: farming and cattle-breeding.”¹⁰² Hence “the land,” Fritsch concludes, “demands of us in the interest of the nation [*Nation*] that we cultivate it.”¹⁰³ Thus the seemingly universal task of meeting basic human needs is inserted by Fritsch into a nationalist matrix.

The same nationalization, but this time with a racial twist, occurs when Fritsch presents agriculture as a condition for the very possibility, not just of life as such, but also of *social* life in particular. It is only in sedentary, agricultural settings and the “continuity” they provide, Fritsch claims, that “communal consciousness [*Gemein-Sinn*]” can unfold, that a “community [*Gemeinde*]” can emerge;¹⁰⁴ and it is only in “sedentary, agricultural peoples [*Völker*]” that “ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*] in the higher sense can develop.”¹⁰⁵ In sum, a “systematically agricultural economy is the precondition of all genuine culture.”¹⁰⁶ Nomads, by contrast, are never “men of culture” and morality.¹⁰⁷ These seemingly abstract social-anthropological statements are immediately collapsed by Fritsch into an essentialized racial distinction between “Aryan” and “Semitic” (respectively). Agriculture, with all the abovementioned anthropological weight that it carries, forms an integral part of the “essence of the Aryan race,”¹⁰⁸ to which the German nation of course belongs. The “Semitic race,” conversely, is associated in Fritsch’s mind with a particularly pernicious kind of nomadic existence. Whereas some nomads make their living as “cattle-herds and hunters,” the “Semitic tribes” have always lived as “robbers and plunderers of their neighbors.”¹⁰⁹ And to the present day, Jews go about “exploiting and oppressing the non-Jewish nations [*Völker*].”¹¹⁰

The primordial exploitation of sedentary, productive “Aryan” nations by mobile, parasitical “Semites” replays itself in modern times. In its modern incarnation, the “land problem” applies to urban as well as rural settings and is defined by Fritsch as follows:

The land and soil of the nation [*Nation*] has been robbed of its solidity [*Festigkeit*], and it has—economically—been increasingly pulled out from under our feet. It has become ‘mobilized,’ mortgaged, burdened with debts and has gone on its travels in the form of value-notes [*Wert-Scheinen*], partly carried off out of the country.¹¹¹

¹⁰¹ “Grundzüge der künftige Religion. II,” 331; Fritsch, “Winkelzüge,” 546; Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 19f.

¹⁰² Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 18. Original emphasis.

¹⁰³ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 193.

¹⁰⁵ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 194.

¹⁰⁶ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 192.

¹⁰⁷ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 192, 194.

¹⁰⁸ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 192.

¹⁰⁹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 192.

¹¹⁰ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 194; cf. “Industrielle Verirrungen,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 2.29 (1903): 403. On the overlapping distinctions Aryan/Jewish and sedentary/mobile, see also Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 64-8.

¹¹¹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 26f.; cf. 185f.: “Our nation [*Volk*] has lost the ground under its feet, it floats in the air ... Our state, our law, our labor, our ethical life—all has become *groundless*.” Original emphasis.

The “land problem,” then, is a national-productivist one. It consists according to Fritsch, (1) in the “mobilization” of the nation’s land through the conversion of the value arising out of the work carried out on the land into a “mobile” value in the form of stock shares, mortgages, debts, rent and interest; and, on the basis of this mobilization, (2) in the existentially perilous exploitation of German national production by international, Jewish, speculative capital. As will be shown in detail below, the rent-collecting landowners fall on the side of exploited national production, along with all the other members of the productive sphere. In both rural and urban settings, the “victimhood” of landownership is the victimhood of the nation as a whole. With respect to the rural economy, the productivist formulation of the “land problem” blithely ignores all the inner complexities, contradictions, social stratifications and exploitative relations characterizing the rural sphere of production with its variegated social landscape of wage laborers (temporary and permanent, Polish and German), independent farmers, tenant farmers and large landowners. When applied to urban life, Fritsch’s conception of the “land question” diverts one’s attention from the problematic role of landownership in industrial-capitalist production, casting it instead in the role of pure victim within a predatory sphere of circulation.

The goal of land reform as formulated by Fritsch is in direct continuity with his national-productivist understanding of the land question. “The goal” of any sensible land reform, he submits, “has to be the liberation of land—and with it, of any human labor that needs space and land—from the coils of the usury-plant ‘capital’ [*Wucher-Pflanze ‘Kapital’*].”¹¹² Land, understood as a “common property of the nation [*Gemeingut der Nation*],” should be “unsaleable and unencumbered with debt.”¹¹³

Land-law reform

In order to achieve the goal just mentioned, Fritsch believes that the juridical framework pertaining to land must be changed. Fritsch’s suggested juridical reform, following in the footsteps of the nationalist antisemite Ottomar Beta, consists in the replacement of “Roman law” by “German law.” The two are constructed in the form of a Manichean dichotomy overlapping with the previously noted dichotomies of Aryan/Semitic, national/foreign, sedentary/mobile and productive/speculative. The dichotomy of German and Roman law is presented by Fritsch in an essentialist historical narrative of a primeval Aryan purity and harmony disrupted by a lethal foreign contamination. In the “ancient Aryan civilized nations [*Kultur-Völkern*],” land was regarded as a “property of the entire collectivity [*Volkschaft*] or as a property of the ruler (the Crown) and entrusted to the individual only for beneficial use.”¹¹⁴ Farmers would lease the land from the elites that possessed it: “the king, the priests or the warriors,” and would “devote themselves fully to the cultivation of the soil.”¹¹⁵ According to this “German legal custom,” landownership existed but was treated as “a custodianship,” and the use of land accordingly

¹¹² Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 149.

¹¹³ “Grundzüge der künftige Religion. II,” 331; cf. Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 59. The expression *Gemeingut der Nation* also appears in Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 69.

¹¹⁴ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 63.

¹¹⁵ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 198.

bounded by some conception of the good of the community.¹¹⁶ At the same time, “mortgaging of the land was barred—if such an idea could even have been at all conceived.”¹¹⁷

It is the Jews—“the nation [*Volk*] of money and usury *par excellence*”—who first introduced the “mischief of mortgage, of mobilization and capitalization of values” into Aryan lands.¹¹⁸ One of the ways in which they did so was by introducing the “Semitic poison”¹¹⁹ of Roman law: a “foreign law that debases the land of the fatherland ... to a purchasable commodity” by establishing the “saleability and mortgageability of land.”¹²⁰ Roman law is not just a foreign law, but also a law used by foreigners to rob the nation of its land: “By making land into a purchaseable commodity, it becomes so to speak ‘transportable,’ for it can then be carried in one’s briefcase as a Pfandbrief or a mortgage paper, carried off abroad—over the ocean—wherever one wishes.”¹²¹ Out of this condition of commodified and mobilized land “grows the exorbitant indebtedness of landownership, the ruin of many farmers and larger husbandmen, the increase in the price of food supplies produced on the land; for almost all landholding is burdened with massive interest dues.”¹²² The commodification of land, in short, is bound to lead to the “endeftedness and enslavement of the nation [*Nation*].”¹²³

The passages just cited reveal, not just the national/foreign distinction underlying Fritsch’s account, but also the sedentary/mobile and productive/speculative dichotomies. These same distinctions are at play when Fritsch laments that Roman law, with its “doctrine of the saleability and lendability of land,”¹²⁴ is “exclusively a law of capital; its main interest is not in the human being but in the proprietor, in the assets. ... The human being is regarded only ... as representative of its capital.”¹²⁵ But “the artisan has no ‘capital’ ..., only his ‘labor’ ...; and the fact that labor also has rights is not stated in the *Corpus juris*.”¹²⁶ Despite the superficial linguistic resemblance to Marxist terminology, this statement is a productivist one. Capital here is merely *speculative* capital; and labor is represented in classical antisemitic-productivist fashion by the artisan.

The same productivist alchemy also turns landowners from exploiters to victims. Landownership enjoys full legitimacy in Fritsch’s thinking insofar as it lies “in the hands of the descendants of those who had first occupied the land and made it arable.” Unbothered by any distinction between proprietors and workers, Fritsch insists that such landowners are rightfully enjoying the “fruits of a thousand years’ work of acculturation [*Kultur-Arbeit*]” of the land.¹²⁷

¹¹⁶ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 110.

¹¹⁷ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 199.

¹¹⁸ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 199.

¹¹⁹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 195; cf. 30f.

¹²⁰ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 53; cf. 196. Against all odds, vestiges of the ancient Germanic community of land were initially still to be found in modern Germany, but these too have gradually fallen at the hands of “Roman-Semitic law” and its commodification of land (206f.).

¹²¹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 185.

¹²² Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 54.

¹²³ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 104.

¹²⁴ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 196.

¹²⁵ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 184.

¹²⁶ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 185. Although Roman law is the principal culprit, capital is not exempt either, “for it is very skilled at taking advantage of these laws and sees to it that Roman law may continue to exist for quite a long time yet and for all eternity!” (185).

¹²⁷ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 70.

Fritsch's inclusion of the landowners in the "productive" camp is also evident in his claim that even high taxation of landholding (let alone its abolishment) is wrong because it is tantamount to "a high taxation of production, for any labor needs the land and its products."¹²⁸ Hence "it is not the private landownership that harms us," but the "interest-sucking" speculative capital that "makes this land tributary to itself."¹²⁹ The vicious dynamic of indebtedness is caused, according to Fritsch, by the fact that heirs to the land, in order to disburse the appropriate payments to all the co-heirs, usually need to take a loan. But with "today's customary interest rates," the "productive capabilities of our agricultural land" are seldom sufficient for paying off the debt with the money yielded by the produce of the land. Instead, "the mortgage books show that land debts are inexorably growing—in many hundreds of millions [of Marks] every year."¹³⁰ In this way, "almost all landholding"¹³¹ falls victim to the phenomenon of "debt slavery."¹³² Landowners both large and small, Fritsch concludes, are thus part of the entire victimized "collectivity [*Gesamtheit*]" that feeds the "enrichment of a few (bondholders of land and speculants)."¹³³

The juridical framework underpinning this deplorable state of affairs is "Roman law," which "must be given the axe! As long as this does not happen, all social reform will be like throwing a small pebble on the surface of the water."¹³⁴ It is "only a return to the principles of German law [that] can save us."¹³⁵ What this juridical sea change would actually consist in remains largely nebulous, but it is clear that it would not involve any significant changes to property law. Despite his call for embracing the distinctly "Germanic" legacy of "communal landownership"¹³⁶ and for a "reacquisition of the land for the community (or the nation [*Nation*]),"¹³⁷ Fritsch explicitly rejects the idea of "actual seizure and distribution of the entire land."¹³⁸ No "land-ownership reform" is needed, he argues, but rather "land-law reform ... which would concentrate essentially on the proposition: 'land is not lendable and mortgageable.'"¹³⁹

How is this principle to be realized? At the municipal level, surplus income deriving from the rapid rise in real estate value in some locations due to the "development of trade and transportation [*des Verkehrs*]" would be appropriated by the authorities; the landowners themselves would be allowed to retain only the "original purchase price."¹⁴⁰ At the same time, any "further sales of urban plots" should be "discontinued," these plots should be treated as "municipal property [*Gemeinde-Eigenthum*]," and building lots should only be handed over to

¹²⁸ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 150.

¹²⁹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 151.

¹³⁰ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 16.

¹³¹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 54.

¹³² Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 16; cf. 38, 42, 54, 56, 69, 150.

¹³³ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 54.

¹³⁴ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 185.

¹³⁵ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 105. Interestingly, the Manichean juxtaposition of Roman and Germanic law was not exclusively the lot of *völkisch* antisemites; it has also been propagated, for example, by Wilhelm Roscher: see Schinzinger, "Roscher und die Entstehungsgeschichte," 91.

¹³⁶ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 63f.

¹³⁷ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 61.

¹³⁸ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 41.

¹³⁹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 59. For example, credit would be attached, not to "real property," but "to the person."

¹⁴⁰ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 61.

developers in the form of long-term leases of 50 to 150 years.¹⁴¹ New “urban communities” unencumbered by pre-existing private landownership might adopt the lease mechanism for the entire land under their jurisdiction, thereby “enjoying extraordinary advantages compared to existing big cities.”¹⁴² At the state level, Fritsch proposes “taking over all mortgages and land debts” by the state, to be accompanied by the establishment of a “unitary interest rate,” amortization of part of the debts and imposing a mortgage tax.¹⁴³ Other possible measures suggested by Fritsch for the “gradual removal of the existing debt-burdens” include lowering interest rates, creating progressive interest rates, and a provision for the gradual erasure of debt to be built into every form of interest.¹⁴⁴ As a result of such policies, within a hundred years’ time in Fritsch’s estimate all debts and mortgages, and thereby “all usurious land speculations” will have been eliminated and “the nation [*Nation*] will thrive better in every respect on these secured land-relations.”¹⁴⁵

In sum, Fritsch aims at a national-productivist land-law reform that would limit private income from real estate and would prevent further privatization of public land, but would at bottom exempt landownership from culpability—an exemption that includes, sometimes tacitly and sometimes overtly, land rent and the whole web of exploitative relations between landowners, farmers or tenants, and workers—while shifting the attention to speculative capital.

Land settlement: the Heimland colony

If Fritsch’s land-law reform agenda is informed by his national productivism, his vision of land settlement is an outgrowth of his biological-racist national existentialism. It is also a vision which actually materialized in the form of the Heimland colony founded by Fritsch and his followers in 1908/09 not far from Berlin; it was the only pre-1914 “enduring *völkisch* communal settlement.”¹⁴⁶

Fritsch’s discussion of Heimland, heavily influenced by the ideas of the racist antisemite Willibald Hentschel, is replete with biologicistic allusions to the “life” and “health” of the nation. Fritsch prefaces his presentation of the Heimland project to his readers by explaining that a “state, a social structure [*Gebilde*] capable of living and growing, should be an organism, a structure [*Gefüge*] emerging and constructing itself according to organic laws of life.” The existing state, by stark contrast, is nothing but an “amassment of individuals with no inner law of life to bind them to each other.”¹⁴⁷ It is in fact doubtful if German society “with its hundred illnesses will continue to exist for much longer,”¹⁴⁸ for “foreign, cunning, despicable elements

¹⁴¹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 60f. This position is reiterated in Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 15.

¹⁴² Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 60. Cf. Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Die Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” 463, where he holds up the example of the land-reformist settlement Eden, which he describes as combining “individualist and communist enterprise.” Every worker can choose to withdraw from the “common enterprise [*Gemeinbetrieb*]” by way of leasing a tract of land and establishing on this basis a “private enterprise [*Eigenbetrieb*]”; and vice versa: if the private enterprise becomes too burdensome or difficult, the worker can end the lease and affiliate himself once again with the “common enterprise.”

¹⁴³ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 61f.

¹⁴⁴ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 45-7.

¹⁴⁵ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 62.

¹⁴⁶ Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung*, 196. Fritsch himself, however, never actually lived in the colony.

¹⁴⁷ Fritsch, “Zeitglossen. In eigener Sache,” 243.

¹⁴⁸ Fritsch, “Zeitglossen. In eigener Sache,” 244.

have come and deprived it of the possibility of existence.”¹⁴⁹ In the face of this existential predicament, Heimland was launched with the hope that perhaps a “healthy organism capable of living can gradually grow out of this tiny seed.” Heimland, in other words, is a project of “social, cultural, and racial renewal”¹⁵⁰ designed to serve as an “example” for the “reordering of society” as a whole, for “the healing of the entire nation [*Volk*]” and for the “future shaping of our national [*nationalen*] life.”¹⁵¹

While the German nation is the living body that Heimland sets out to rescue, racial contamination is the mortal illness, and Heimland is an incubator of the antidote of racial purity. The German nation is a racially “mixed nation [*Mischvolk*],”¹⁵² but all is not lost because the “inner essence”¹⁵³ of the “Germanic race” is still intact, and in the appropriate “external circumstances” this essence can flourish again. The main task of settlements or “renewal communities” like Heimland is to furnish this proper environment.¹⁵⁴ Without severing themselves completely from the life of the “national community [*nationalen Gemeinschaft*],” the new settlements will nevertheless cordon off a space unpoisoned by the “whiff of rabble mentality” and the “coarse hands and feet of the masses.”¹⁵⁵ They will offer a space where “weaklings and cowards” are kept at a safe distance, where only “select men [*auserlesene Menschen*]” who are “innerly still authentic” and “German” are allowed. With the help of “new principles in schooling and education and multifarious other reforms,” the “entire conduct of life” of this select group will be “shaped in a way that wrestles itself loose from the prevailing immorality of decadence and decay.”¹⁵⁶ The new settlements, in short, will “pursue selection according to stringent standards” and thereby move closer to the goal of creating “a free nation [*Volk*] on free land.”¹⁵⁷

Inner colonization

In addition to serving as laboratories of racial breeding, Fritsch also sees the “renewal communities” as part of a broader project of inner colonization, which comes close to Friedrich Naumann’s program of establishing “farmstead upon farmstead all the way to the Russian border.” The inner colonization of Germany’s sparsely populated rural areas is designed to thwart what in Fritsch’s mind are two existential threats to the German nation: the rise of the *Großstadt* or big city, and foreign migration from the East. The *Großstadt* is marked, according to Fritsch, by “increasing infertility”; in Berlin, for example, “27 percent of the married couples

¹⁴⁹ Fritsch, “Rassenfrage und Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” 749.

¹⁵⁰ Fritsch, “Landsiedelung und entgegenstehende Bedenken,” 287.

¹⁵¹ Fritsch, “Zeitglossen. In eigener Sache,” 244f.

¹⁵² Fritsch, “Rassenfrage und Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” 750.

¹⁵³ Fritsch, “Rassenfrage und Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” 750.

¹⁵⁴ Fritsch, “Rassenfrage und Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” 749.

¹⁵⁵ Fritsch, “Landsiedelung und entgegenstehende Bedenken,” 285.

¹⁵⁶ Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Die Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” 464.

¹⁵⁷ Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Die Erneuerungs-Gemeinde,” 465. On the discursive circulation of ideas of racial selection and breeding in specially designated settlements, see Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung*, 187-201. Puschner also notes here the central importance of Willibald Hentschel—a close friend of Fritsch—for the conception of the latter’s Heimland project.

are childless,” causing “the nation [*Nation*]” to “recede in numbers.”¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, the *Großstadt*’s “one-sided, degenerate monger-industrialism threatens us with the downfall of the nation [*Nation*],” just as the

ancient civilized nations [*Kulturvölker*] have found such a sudden end. They died from ‘national exhaustion [*Volks-Erschöpfung*],’ after the fresh, ebullient wellspring of rural life was contaminated, after the farmers’ *Stand* withered, the proletarian masses amassed themselves in the capital cities and found their ruin there.¹⁵⁹

No less of an existential threat than the *Großstadt* is foreign migration. “The nation,” Fritsch warns, is about to be flooded by “foreigners [*Ausländertum*], especially from the East [who] will soon occupy German homes. Germany will then cease to be a *German* country.”¹⁶⁰

The only way to “heal” the nation in the face of this multifold existential predicament is to “convert the insane ‘migration to the city’ to a sensible ‘migration to the countryside.’”¹⁶¹ Settling the “land of the fatherland” with unemployed or “surplus labor-power of the nation [*Volk*]” from the cities will “Germanize the east of the Reich and push back the waves of Slavic peoples [*Völker*],” while at the same time diminishing the urban population, “decreasing the migration to the new world,” and countering the Social-Democratic dreams of “large, centralized factory workshops.” There is also a national-productivist angle to Fritsch’s settlement program. inner colonization will “create work for idle hands” and will use the landlease mechanism to establish a new stratum of small independent farmers who will not be subservient to speculative capital. Thus, Fritsch concludes, “small agricultural enterprises” would mean “a positive gain for the nation [*Nation*]” and “a boost to national well-being.”¹⁶²

Urban planning

Another policy area in which Fritsch seeks to combat the existential threat presented by the *Großstadt* is urban planning.¹⁶³ If Fritsch’s “renewal community” offers racial purity as an

¹⁵⁸ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 30f. In fact the opposite was true for Germany at the time, which experienced dramatic population growth, as Friedrich Naumann for example pointed out. But then factual accuracy was never Fritsch’s strongest side.

¹⁵⁹ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 31. The energy-related imagery in this passage makes for an interesting parallel with Naumann.

¹⁶⁰ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 31. Original emphasis. On the east as object of colonization in Wilhelmine *völkisch*-nationalist circles, see Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung*, 153.

¹⁶¹ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*.

¹⁶² Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 22-4.

¹⁶³ The following account is based on Fritsch’s booklet, *Die Stadt der Zukunft* (“The City of the Future”), published originally in 1896 while Fritsch was serving on the Leipzig city council, and issued in a second edition in 1912 with the subtitle “Garden City.” With this subtitle, Fritsch—whose treatise was all but ignored until the Third Reich—was trying to draw attention to the similarity between his own vision of urban planning and that of the garden city movement pioneered in Britain by Ebenezer Howard at the turn of the twentieth century. The latter’s 1898 work—Ebenezer Howard, *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (London: Swann Sonnenschein, 1898), published in a second edition in 1902 under the title *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*—enjoyed immediate and enormous success, much to Fritsch’s frustration. Fritsch subsequently claimed that Howard had plagiarized his work. The historical evidence, however, militates against this accusation: see Schubert, ed., *Die Gartenstadtidee*, 88. Moreover, despite a handful of superficial similarities (such as the idea of a concentric urban structure), Howard’s work is incomparably more thoughtful, sophisticated, and benign in its underlying values than that of Fritsch. For a comparative discussion of Fritsch and Howard, see Schubert, ed., *Die Gartenstadtidee*, 78-88. For a nearly identical

antidote to the nation's mortal illness, and inner colonization the antidotes of ethnic homogeneity, agricultural productivity, and population stability, his approach to urban planning insists on the importance of a static, reified social order as a precondition for national health. For "many health and ethical evils" of the *Großstadt* are rooted in the latter's "planless, irrational design," in its "irrational shabbiness and density of cohabitation ... Air and light are lacking; smoke, dust, and noise often increase here to the point of intolerability."¹⁶⁴ Another manifestation of disorder in big cities is the "absence of planning in the distribution of buildings," with "noisy factories..., tenement houses, villas, churches and public buildings" all heaped together in an "irrational disorder."¹⁶⁵ In this "wildness" and "chaos" of the *Großstadt*, the "wildest and most barbarous instincts" are aroused, whereas conversely "the spirit of order, the power of harmony has a taming effect even on the coarsest mind."¹⁶⁶

The social order Fritsch has in mind is an organic one. "A city," argues Fritsch, "must be something more than a conglomeration of buildings and people; it ought to be an organic entity with a sound disposition [*Gliederung*] and endowed with the capability of expanding itself in accretive fashion without losing its basic essence."¹⁶⁷ By giving the city, in accordance with this principle, the shape of a semicircle or a similar such outwardly spiralling shape, "the city will resemble a living organism that ... consumes its decayed, dying limbs [*Glieder*], replaces them with new ones, and so eternally rejuvenates itself."¹⁶⁸ In the course of the city's development, this "whole construction progresses organically ... in a single direction."¹⁶⁹ Even when this kind of city develops in such a way that it "breaks up into a series of small towns," the latter nevertheless "form an organic whole" by virtue of the common central point around which they are constructed.¹⁷⁰

Fritsch's organicist vision of social order also reaffirms spatially the existing socio-political hierarchy. The concentric semicircles making up the "city of the future" would be ordered in such a way that the innermost ring—"Zone I"—would inhabit all the "monumental public buildings," followed by:

"Zone II: Villas of monumental character;

"Zone III: Better apartment buildings;

"Zone IV: Residential and commercial buildings;

"Zone V: Workers' housing and small workshops;

English-language version of this discussion, see Schubert, "Fritsch and the Garden City," 24-8. On the imprint made by Fritsch's ideas on Nazi urban planning, see Schubert, ed., *Die Gartenstadtidee*, 90-2. On garden-city ideas in *völkisch*-nationalist circles beyond Fritsch, see (in addition to Schubert's book) Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung*, 155-65.

¹⁶⁴ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 6. These problems plaguing late nineteenth-century cities were of course to a great extent real; but the nationalist, racist, and antisemitic standpoint from which Fritsch engages these issues precludes any emancipatory strategies for their resolution.

¹⁶⁵ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 6f.

¹⁶⁶ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 7.

¹⁶⁷ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 5.

¹⁶⁸ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 13.

¹⁶⁹ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 17.

¹⁷⁰ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 21-3.

“Zone VI: Factories, timber yards, stockyards etc.;

“Zone VII: Nurseries, rented gardens etc.”¹⁷¹

Fritsch’s vision of the future city has to do merely with a partial socio-spatial segment of the nation, but it nonetheless affords a glimpse of some of the structural features characterizing Fritsch’s organicist mode of thinking which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, he applies to national life as a whole. Those include *unity of essence* (the city growing outward, multiplying and replacing its component parts without “losing its basic essence”); *unity of movement* (the city developing “in a single direction”); *centripetal structure* (the city developing around a common central point that can hold even a “series of small towns” together as an “organic whole”); and finally, *social hierarchy* (embodied in Fritsch’s zoning). All of these features indicate a quest for a rigid and temporally continuous regimentation of urban space that not only stifles any form of difference, spontaneity, excess or haphazardness, but also reaffirms and locks into place (literally speaking) the existing socio-political stratification of industrial capitalism.

The sphere of circulation: financial, fiscal, and monetary policy

The area of economic policy dealing with the sphere of circulation is, along with land reform, a major policy area in which Fritsch’s national productivism comes into play; and even Fritsch’s land reformism in many respects resolves itself into financial regulation. The centrality of financial, fiscal, and monetary policy for Fritsch is hardly surprising given the weight he imputes to the sphere of circulation—and the concomitant downplaying of the sphere of production—as the ultimate source of the many evils of modern society. His policy proposals often sound relatively innocuous and entirely reasonable, until one recalls their ideological context: namely, the sweeping legitimation of any form of capital that is not purely financial; the elision of the exploitative dynamics characterizing the sphere of production; and the discrediting of the industrial workers’ class struggle.

With respect to joint-stock companies, Fritsch calls for “a reform of shareholding legislation” that would include “removing stocks as much as possible from trade in the stock exchange”; making the names of stockholders public at least once a year; fixing the price of stocks; and forbidding the involvement of public officials and their close families in joint-stock companies.¹⁷² In addition, and in the name of the “public interest,” a “government commissar” should be seated in “every large joint-stock company as in every bank,” with “insight into all important affairs” of the company.¹⁷³

With respect to trusts and large enterprises, Fritsch makes a classic productivist move that would later become standard practice in Nazi Germany and as well as other interwar fascist regimes. He concedes that “it is not to be ruled out that a trust will follow solid principles and will be able to serve a sensible, unified regulation of production and sales [*Absatz*].”¹⁷⁴ Similarly, large enterprises can be regulated “in the interest of a prosperous general development” of society; all that is needed is the “curbing of industrial over-speculation” by way of a “business-

¹⁷¹ Fritsch, *Die Stadt der Zukunft*, 11.

¹⁷² Theodor Fritsch, “Notizen. Präsident Roosevelt über die Gefahren der großkapitalistischen Wirtschaft,” *Hammer: Monatsblätter für deutschen Sinn* 1.10 (1902): 288.

¹⁷³ “Zur Reform des Aktien-Wesens,” 110.

¹⁷⁴ “Die Trusts.”

and sales-tax for all large industrial and commercial enterprises.”¹⁷⁵ Capitalist enterprises large and small, in other words, will remain practically untouched as long as they comply with some general national-economic goals and guidelines.

Fritsch’s taxation proposals are not part of a redistributive policy, but—like virtually every other aspect of his economic policy—is viewed merely as yet another way of checking “speculative” activity. “We need,” Fritsch writes, “a graduated sales-tax that would block an excessive and megalomaniac expansion of private enterprises directed at the ruin of other [economic] entities.”¹⁷⁶ This taxation, Fritsch reassures his readers, will not strangle the large enterprises; it would just curb the “excessive speculations and monopoly-seeking.” For if a large enterprise “is really justified and economically profitable, it will be able to carry the higher taxes very well.”¹⁷⁷ In addition to large enterprises, other objects of higher taxes would be large-scale inheritance, large-scale earnings from interest, luxury items, stock-exchange transactions, mortgages and other mobile assets.¹⁷⁸ What all these economic phenomena have in common is excess, a concept presupposing a normal mode of capitalist activity that need not be tampered with. This view elides the structural injustices that are endemic to precisely the “normal” modality of industrial capitalism.

In the field of monetary policy, Fritsch directs his proposals against the manipulation of money, i.e. the “mobilization” and “displacement of values” by “Juda.” Here Fritsch reverts to the Manichean dichotomies of Aryan/Jewish and sedentary/mobile that we have seen at play in his ideas on land reform; and these dichotomies play the same selective role in the monetary domain that the concept of excess plays in Fritsch’s fiscal proposals. The “naïve Aryan” conceives of money simply as “an unvarying basic yardstick of economic values,” because “all productive activity ... presupposes firm foundations” and “is based on the concept of order.” The Jews, by contrast, who know how to make a profit out of every “turnabout and disorder,” see money as “nothing else but a commodity, the price and value of which can be changed at any time”; and the “constant displacement” of the “fundamental value” of money brings more profit than trade in regular commodities.¹⁷⁹ A transition from gold- to labor- or corn-based currency, Fritsch argues, would make these “displacements of values” much more difficult. A currency based on the “labor-power of the nation [*Arbeitskraft der Nation*]”¹⁸⁰ or on corn would have a solid foundation in the “real world” rather than in the “mendacious and bogus world” of gold, and the “Jewish spell” would thereby be broken as if with a “magic wand.”¹⁸¹ Only then would it be possible to guarantee an “orderly production on firm economic foundations” and to “prevent theft and usury, as it is currently perpetrated with impunity by the stock exchange against the productive *Stände*.”¹⁸² The “magic wand” metaphor betrays like no other utterance Fritsch’s fantasy of a single, easily identifiable, and exogenous culprit responsible for all the problems

¹⁷⁵ “Zeit-Glossen. Umsatz-Steuer,” 398.

¹⁷⁶ Fritsch, “Notizen. Präsident Roosevelt,” 288.

¹⁷⁷ “Industrielle Verirrungen,” 405.

¹⁷⁸ Theodor Fritsch, “Zur Klärung der Steuer-Fragen,” *Hammer: Blätter für deutschen Sinn* 8.168 (1909): 353-59; “Zeit-Glossen. Wahl-Betrachtungen. I,” 351.

¹⁷⁹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 263f.

¹⁸⁰ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 271.

¹⁸¹ Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 269.

¹⁸² Fritsch, *Zwei Grundübel*, 268.

plaguings capitalist modernity: all one needs to do is brush aside a few parasites clinging stubbornly to the national body, and perfect social order and harmony will quickly follow.

It is important to note, as we have done in the previous chapter, that Fritsch's productivism does not entail blaming the entire sphere of circulation for the ills of society. Instead, Fritsch distinguishes between beneficent forms of circulation, such as a usage of money that provides a "firm foundation" for productive activity, and malignant manifestations of circulation, such as the "Jewish" manipulation of money that exploits not only production, but also money itself, the basically good money that is part of any healthy productive order. Thus Fritsch's productivism is not limited to lumping together and legitimating the industrial-capitalist sphere of production. It also spills over into other spheres of the economy; it displays some degree of awareness—however distorted, inadvertent, and unsophisticated—of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all sectors of the industrial-capitalist economy and the need to preserve this complex architecture if one wishes to ensure the continuity of the existing productive order.

Corporatist reorganization of the economy

We have already discussed Fritsch's plans for installing corporatist forms of political representation. Let us now examine the other, economic aspect of his corporatism. The basic motivation underlying Fritsch's economic corporatism is a national-productivist one: he sees it as a "healthy reorganization of German artisanship and industry" in a way that would enable them to combat Social Democracy on the one hand,¹⁸³ and would protect them from "mobile" capital on the other.¹⁸⁴ For organizational purposes, Fritsch rejects the dichotomy between industrial and artisanal enterprises based on "external" criteria like the number of workers. Instead, he prefers a productivist realignment of economic entities according to the distinction between production and circulation: "all businesses that produce something for commercial purposes" should be "assigned to the chambers of artisanship and industry," whereas to the "chambers of trade" only "purely trade businesses" would belong.¹⁸⁵ In addition to organization in corporate chambers, "guilds [*Innungen*]" would be established as a framework for professional training and for the maintenance of professional standards. The "duties and burdens" involved in complying with the rules of the guild would be balanced out by "corresponding rights"¹⁸⁶ or privileges such as the right to fix minimum prices, preference to guild members in the assignment of public works,¹⁸⁷ and securing stable state funding for education and training.¹⁸⁸ Prison labor should also be brought under the control of the guilds so as to protect professions from "fatal competition."¹⁸⁹

Although this corporatist rearrangement of economic activity does involve some degree of intervention in the capitalist market mechanism (albeit in a way that is conducive to a monopoly capitalism), it does more to bolster than to undermine the capitalist system as a whole. It does so by avoiding any significant restructuring of capitalist production, while at the same

¹⁸³ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 37.

¹⁸⁴ Frey, Das A-b-c der sozialen Frage, 9.

¹⁸⁵ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 39.

¹⁸⁶ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 39.

¹⁸⁷ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 41.

¹⁸⁸ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 42.

¹⁸⁹ Denkschrift der Mittelstands-Vereinigung, 43.

time preempting the possibility of an autonomous, class-based voice for the workers in matters of economic policy. Fritsch is well aware of, and consciously works towards, the preservation of capitalism and its relations of production. “It would be best,” he submits, “to preserve the private economy, but to construct it in a more just fashion.” The “justice” that Fritsch has in mind, however, is not the elimination of exploitation, but merely the stifling of any overt expression of class antagonism.

In achieving this superficial “harmony,” both entrepreneurs and workers need to contribute their share. The entrepreneurs, on the one hand, in their pursuit of “external material advantages” through fierce competition, have sidelined the “workers’ interests,” pushing wages down so as to attain the cheapest production possible.¹⁹⁰ What concerns Fritsch about this situation, however, is not the deprived conditions of the workers, but rather the disruption of harmony between the *Stände*. And for this problem the entrepreneurs are only partly to blame. “On the side of the workers, too, the creation of a harmonious relationship has been made difficult in many ways.” They are “sowing enmity” by “den[ying] the entrepreneurship any right of existence” and by “ma[king] claims over its property and position.” They present the entrepreneur distortingly as an “idle exploiter—a conception that in the great majority of cases, however, is wholly unfair.” Such an attitude, Fritsch admonishes the workers, is not in the interest of “a profitable cooperation” between the two social groups.¹⁹¹ Harmonious cross-class cooperation and a proper “balance between the different functions”¹⁹² of entrepreneurs and workers can only be achieved by way of “a new structuring [*Gliederung*] of the *Stände* and classes” in the form of corporatism. Corporations would make it possible not to take every “trivial matter” of dispute between the classes to the public sphere. “In this way state and society could be considerably disencumbered, and public life would be freed of the burdensome interest-struggles” between social classes.¹⁹³ In the same vein, Fritsch also advocates the establishment of “workers’ chambers [*Arbeiter-Kammern*]” that would be affiliated to the existing “professional chambers,” thereby turning the latter into cross-class institutions.¹⁹⁴

Fritsch’s understanding of corporatism in terms of a balance of social “functions” corresponds to what Antonio Gramsci wrote of fascist “corporativism”: namely, that this concept appears in the fascist context “not in the *ancien régime* sense, but in the modern sense of the word ... Today it is corporativism of ‘social function’...”¹⁹⁵ Fritsch’s corporatism, too, looks forward not backward. It is a corporatism that consciously aims at harmonizing the modern “social functions” of workers and entrepreneurs (among others), not at rolling social relations back to a pre-modern, feudal template.¹⁹⁶ When Fritsch explains that corporatism is needed

¹⁹⁰ Fritsch, “Zum Streite zwischen Unternehmer und Arbeiter,” 269.

¹⁹¹ Fritsch, “Zum Streite zwischen Unternehmer und Arbeiter,” 270.

¹⁹² Fritsch, “Zum Streite zwischen Unternehmer und Arbeiter,” 269.

¹⁹³ Fritsch, “Zum Streite zwischen Unternehmer und Arbeiter,” 269.

¹⁹⁴ Fritsch, “Zum Streite zwischen Unternehmer und Arbeiter,” 271.

¹⁹⁵ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 255f.

¹⁹⁶ This interpretation takes issue with Charles Maier’s assertion, representative of a broader interpretive tendency, that “corporatists of the right ... sought to re-create earlier hierarchies.” Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 13. For a recent (mis-)interpretation of Fritsch’s corporatism along similar lines as harkening back to a pre-industrial social order, see Bönisch, “Die ‘Hammer’-Bewegung,” 349. At the same time, Maier’s analysis of corporatist arrangements in fascist Italy, presented in his classic work mentioned above, does

because “the concept of the state, after all, presupposes order and structure,”¹⁹⁷ he is tacitly referring not just to order *in abstracto*, but to a specifically modern, industrial-capitalist economic order with corporatism as its organizational mechanism of social integration, a mechanism that suppresses the class antagonisms intrinsic to capitalist production without resolving their root causes, thereby perpetuating capitalist domination.

confirm Gramsci’s diagnosis that “the corporative trend has operated to shore up crumbling positions of the middle classes and not to eliminate them, and is becoming ... more and more a machinery to preserve the existing order just as it is.” Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, 294; and cp. Maier, Recasting Bourgeois Europe, 545-78, esp. 547, 562.

¹⁹⁷ Fritsch, “Zum Streite zwischen Unternehmer und Arbeiter,” 271.

Chapter 8 | National Socialism Before Nazism: Conclusion

In concluding the dissertation I will address a number of issues. I will begin with a synthetic recapitulation of the national socialisms of Friedrich Naumann and Theodor Fritsch, with emphasis on their zones of overlap so as to bring into relief the generational and historical significance of national socialism as a distinctive ideational formation. On this basis I move on to consider the place of national socialism in the history of socialist thought as a whole, locating it within a broader current of what, using Marcusean terminology, I call positive socialism. The following two sections adumbrate the life of national socialism in Germany from the outbreak of the First World War to the rise of Nazism. With respect to the War, I show that one prominent form of wartime national socialism, propagated widely by bourgeois reformists as well as by members of the right wing of the Social Democratic movement, was in many ways directly continuous with Friedrich Naumann's existential national socialism. With respect to Nazism, I argue that taking into account the full spectrum of prewar, wartime, and Weimar-era national socialisms is indispensable for a richer understanding of the ideational conditions under which Hitler's movement was able to garner widespread social support.

Friedrich Naumann, Theodor Fritsch, and national socialism: a synthetic recapitulation

In this dissertation I have reconstructed the respective national socialisms of bourgeois reformist Friedrich Naumann and *völkisch* antisemite Theodor Fritsch. Their differences notwithstanding, I have shown that both of our protagonists exhibit a twofold commitment to national existentialism and national productivism, which together make up their national socialism. Furthermore, Naumann and Fritsch share a biologicistic foundation for their national socialism, be it in the form of the Darwinist category of population as in Naumann's case, in the form of a biological racism as in Fritsch's case, or in the form of an organicist figuration of the national body shared by both Naumann and Fritsch.

Against the backdrop of the historical origins outlined in Chapter 1, and given that Naumann and Fritsch were pivotal figures in their respective social, cultural, and political milieux—Naumann in the reformist bourgeoisie, Fritsch in the radical right—their articulation of a national-existential claim on the social should be understood as indicative of a much broader generational phenomenon. It points to a profound generational shift in the ideational climate of the *Kaiserreich*, one that transcends traditional conceptual boundaries between Left and Right, bourgeois and anti-bourgeois; one, indeed, which points to the limitations of these categories as frameworks for making sense of the historical dynamics flowing through Germany at the turn of the twentieth century. This generational shift did not consist in the appearance of national socialism itself; the latter, we have seen, had already been well theorized by the end of the 1870s and had even made its way into Germany's fledgling mass politics through the activity of Adolf Stoecker and his Christian-social movement. Nor did it consist in the productivist aspect of national socialism; it, too, had already made its appearance in the 1870s, and was very deeply rooted in German thought and Protestant theology. The shift, rather, consisted in the shedding of the ethical-conservative sensibility of the first generation of national socialism in favor of a sense of existential urgency grounded in a biologicistic imagination, which reconfigured the way in which the relation between the national and the social was conceived.

For the generation of the 1870s, the purpose of national socialism was to harmonize the social using the bonding agent of a nationalist (and Protestant) ethic, so as to preempt any

challenge arising from the social to the authority of the newly founded nation-state. This conservative-ethical national socialism was governed by the logical axis of centripetalism vs. centrifugalism; the goal was to enhance the (ethical) attachment of all “parts” of the nation to the national “whole” and to hold in check any weakening of these attachments. The new, existential national socialism of Naumann and Fritsch was also concerned about consolidating the nation-state order and enhancing its power. But it formulated the problem in much starker and less nuanced terms, entailing in turn a striving for much more aggressive and ambitious interventions in the social. For at stake now was not just national cohesion, but sheer national survival. Underpinning the claim to existential urgency was a biologicistic figuration of the nation as a really living entity, with the social as the living body of this entity. Although Naumann and Fritsch differed on the exact nature of this biological body—the former saw the social as a physico-energetic mass of population, the latter saw it as a racial entity—their biologism played a similar function in their respective national socialisms: it enabled them to envision and articulate new, grander schemes for ordering, integrating, harmonizing, purifying and mobilizing the social.

National socialism as positive socialism

Before moving on with the historical trajectory into the First World War and the rise of Nazism, it is worth considering the place of national socialism within history of socialist thought. This issue, I maintain, is not just a futile exercise in taxonomy undertaken for its own sake, but rather helps to bring into relief broader tendencies in, and to address meta-theoretical questions about, the conceptual history of socialism.

We must begin this discussion by addressing the objection (which I have often encountered while working on this project) that the very idea of taking national socialism seriously as a form of socialism is misguided. For what kind of socialism is it—so the objection goes—which places world-power struggles above social justice? Which reifies the category of “foreigners” and then strives to keep (or push) them out rather than to lift them up? Which, in a dramatically industrializing society, strongly downplays the conflict between industrial labor and capital and instead focuses almost all of its critical energies on the landed aristocracy or on the sphere of circulation rather than production? Is national socialism indeed deserving of the title of “socialist” that it has arrogated to itself?

While many of us would like to answer this last question in the negative, we must remember that “socialism” is what W. B. Gallie has called an “essentially contested concept,”¹ a concept that has accrued multiple and often contradictory and mutually antagonistic meanings in the course of its history. Since the only “essence” that can be attributed to such a concept is its non-essence, i.e. its permanently contested character, it follows that the only relationship between the myriad meanings of the term is what Wittgenstein has named “family resemblance,” or constantly shifting patterns of similarities and differences across the multiple instantiations of the concept, with no possibility of pinning down a fixed core of attributes.²

¹ W. B. Gallie, “Essentially Contested Concepts,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56 (1955): 18f.

² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), §§65-88.

Socialism emerged historically as a response to perceived distortions or corruptions of human social existence under capitalism and industrialization in their existing forms.³ But one searches in vain in the conceptual history of socialism for a single, decisive answer to the question of how exactly these distortions and corruptions, as well as the proper counter-measures and the desired face of the future socialist society, are to be conceived. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the concept of socialism became increasingly identified with a critique of the exploitation of labor by capital, a critique of the gross material inequalities endemic to the capitalist order, a critique of individualism and private property as organizing principles of society, and a demand for the socialization of the means of production, to name just some of the most familiar ideas. But other—and not always benign—forms of socialism have always continued to exist alongside this hegemonic conception.⁴

Perhaps most prominent among those alternative forms of socialism is the Saint-Simonian tradition. What Saint-Simon was after was not an egalitarian society of emancipated labor, but a harmoniously hierarchical, systematically organized, productivist-industrial order.⁵ At the end of the nineteenth century, a towering intellectual like Emile Durkheim could name Saint-Simon “the founder of socialism,” a socialism which for Durkheim (as for Saint-Simon) did not necessarily include either egalitarianism or the working-class as core, defining elements in its morphology.⁶ Nor has socialism always involved a program of completely overturning the bourgeois-capitalist political-economic order. Reformist forms of socialism are abundant in the latter’s history; one need only mention in this regard the reformist wing of German Social Democracy led by Eduard Bernstein who, like his contemporary Friedrich Naumann (though perhaps not with the same degree of enthusiasm), accepted the Imperial regime, its national character and even its colonial ventures, and demanded a voice for the workers *within* the nation-state and on the basis of their national belonging.⁷

The productivist imagination characterizing most varieties of national socialism does not throw the latter out of the conceptual history of socialism either. Productivism may be found in the early French socialists, especially in thought of Saint-Simon and his followers and of Proudhon.⁸ Late nineteenth-century Fabianism, too, was productivist through and through.⁹

³ Cf. George Lichtheim, A Short History of Socialism (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 18.

⁴ Cf. Wolfgang Schieder, “Sozialismus,” Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, eds. Otto Brunner, et al., vol. 5 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), 923. By contrast, see the following attempts to identify a single and benign core for the concept of socialism, usually referring in some way or another to the principle of equality: Subrata Mukherjee and Sushila Ramaswamy, A History of Socialist Thought: From the Precursors to the Present (New Delhi: Sage, 2000), 9; Michael Newman, Socialism: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2f., where, immediately after abjuring an “essentialist approach” to the concept of socialism, nevertheless proceeds to enumerate three “minimal” features of socialism, one of which is a “commitment to the creation of an egalitarian society” (2); and Michael Freedon, Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), who claims that “all socialisms assert the equality of human beings” (430).

⁵ See e.g. Henri Comte de Saint-Simon, “On Social Organization (1825),” Selected Writings, ed. F. M. H. Markham (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952).

⁶ Emile Durkheim, Socialism, trans. C. Sattler (New York: Collier Books, 1962), cit. 50.

⁷ Eduard Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism: A Criticism and Affirmation (New York: Schocken, 1961), esp. 172, 178f.

⁸ On productivism in Saint-Simon, see Saint-Simon, “On Social Organization (1825)”; and in Proudhon, see Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, What is Property? trans. D. R. Kelley and B. G. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Indeed, so entrenched had productivism become (in one form or another) in socialist thought that Paul Lafargue deemed it necessary to publish in 1883 a book in support of “the right to be lazy.”¹⁰ Antisemitism, too, has accompanied socialism from its very beginning, making its appearance in the writings of Fourier, Proudhon, and their disciples.¹¹ Rather than viewing all these cases as some kind of “aberrations” from an imagined “ideal” or “core” concept of socialism, we need to understand them as so many episodes in a non-essentialized conceptual history of socialism. Accepting these features as part of the *history* of socialism does not necessarily entail, of course, their *normative* espousal. It is merely a matter of acknowledging the ineluctable multiplicity of perspectives—the “messiness,” if you will—making up “socialism” as a conceptual-historical field. By attempting to tidy up this mess, we merely end up with an impoverished understanding of the conceptual dynamics of socialism, not only in the past but also in the present and for as long as this term will remain in currency. The main scholarly task is not to become mired in conceptual border-policing, but to develop strong, persuasive arguments in favor of one’s own normative commitments and to critique competing arguments. From this perspective, those of us—myself included—who wish to advance forms of socialism deemed to be more emancipatory only stand to gain from a more nuanced historical perspective and from greater clarity about the contestations at play in the historically contingent conceptual field of socialism.

What then, in more substantive terms, is the relative position of national socialism within this contingent history of socialist thought? To address this question, Herbert Marcuse’s distinction between positive and negative thought, as articulated mainly in his book Reason and Revolution,¹² proves helpful; in what follows I argue that national socialism may be understood as sharing a family resemblance (in the Wittgensteinian sense) with positive forms of socialism.

According to Marcuse, positive thought consists in the affirmation of the social and political order, the desire to perpetuate and intensify that order, and the concomitant repudiation of all negative forces perceived as undermining the positive order. Positivity, in other words, operates as an occlusion of negativity. If negative philosophy highlights the transitoriness, fluidity, and internal contradictions underlying empirical reality, its positive counterpart affirms

Press, 1994), e.g. 99, 124, 159f., 177; and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, System of Economical Contradictions: Or, The Philosophy of Misery, trans. Benjamin R. Tucker, vol. 1 (New York: Arno Press, 1972), e.g. 96, 102f., 117, 324.

⁹ See e.g. William Clarke, “The Basis of Socialism: Industrial,” Fabian Essays in Socialism, ed. G. Bernard Shaw (New York: Humboldt, 1891), 72f.; Sydney Oliver, “The Basis of Socialism: Moral,” Fabian Essays in Socialism, ed. G. Bernard Shaw (New York: Humboldt, 1891), 95, 110-14, 118f., 124; G. Bernard Shaw, “The Basis of Socialism: Economic,” Fabian Essays in Socialism, ed. G. Bernard Shaw (New York: Humboldt, 1891), 132, 137; G. Bernard Shaw, “Transition,” Fabian Essays in Socialism, ed. G. Bernard Shaw (New York: Humboldt, 1891), 226, 235, 241f.; Hubert Bland, “The Outlook,” Fabian Essays in Socialism, ed. G. Bernard Shaw (New York: Humboldt, 1891), 249, 251.

¹⁰ Paul Lafargue, The Right to be Lazy, trans. Charles H. Kerr (Chicago: Kerr, 1975).

¹¹ Wistrich, “Radical Antisemitism.” Saint-Simon, however, was philosemitic.

¹² Marcuse, Reason and Revolution; but see also Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) and Herbert Marcuse, Negations: Essays in Critical Theory (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968). Other works I have found useful include Theodor W. Adorno, Negative Dialectics, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1973); Richard J. Bernstein, “Negativity: Theme and Variations,” Praxis International 1.1 (1981); Susan Buck-Morss, The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute (New York: Free Press, 1977); and Diana Coole, Negativity and Politics: Dionysus and Dialectics from Kant to Poststructuralism (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

and naturalizes the existing state of affairs, and refuses to look beyond immediately given experience. If negative logic stresses non-identity, positive logic construes phenomena as self-identical. If negative thinking unsettles and disrupts, positive thinking clings to reificatory notions of stability, order, and organization. If negative epistemology irrevocably problematizes the distinction between the subject and the object of knowledge and entwines them in an indissoluble dialectic, positive epistemology upholds the subject-object dichotomy and tends to embrace a naturalistic mode of knowledge that traces all historical phenomena to some eternal or fixed essence. If negativity is marked by a dialectical or deconstructive dynamic, positivity works with static dichotomies, classifications or law-like generalizations. Finally, there is a crucial difference between negativity and positivity in the way they construe themselves and their relation to each other. Negativity understands itself in non-essentialist fashion dialectically linked to the positive order of things; it engages in an immanent critique of the given reality, historicizing and de-naturalizing it, laying bare its tensions and contradictions, and tracing its hidden potentialities. Positivity, by contrast, elides this dialectical dimension, and instead constructs its relation to negativity as a reified dichotomous opposition: the positive order is good, its negative disruption is bad; positive philosophy is constructive, negative philosophy is destructive; and so on. Alternatively, as in the case of the right-wing Hegelians, a dialectical moment may be preserved but only to bring any perceived contradiction to closure under an overarching, harmonious and closed synthesis.

As Marcuse shows, positive modes of thinking have been present in socialist thought from its early stages, primarily in the writings of Saint-Simon and Lorenz von Stein. Both of these thinkers articulated, in different ways, naturalistic conceptions of world history and social life, analyzed history and society in terms of unalterable “natural” laws, rejected any revolutionary change that would spawn disorder, and proposed social reform aimed at smoothing out all social contradictions on the way to a higher plane of social and political order.¹³ A similar positive thrust was also harbored by the Fabians in England, who contrasted the “chaos” and “anarchy”¹⁴ of capitalist society with their own reformist and anti-revolutionary vision of a gradual “reorganization” of the “social organism”; a vision based in turn on the “scientific” knowledge produced by Auguste Comte, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Spencer.¹⁵ As these cases suggest, positive thought does not necessarily preclude the advocacy of a departure from the existing state of affairs through social and political change. But such change would always be advocated in the name of (the instauration or restoration of) order. All positive change is geared towards ultimate closure; every alteration of order is only accepted insofar as it serves as a stepping stone for a new, improved, intensified order.

The national socialisms of Friedrich Naumann and Theodor Fritsch are directly continuous with this positive strain in nineteenth-century socialist thought; indeed, their biologism only deepened the positive character of their socialism, fastening it all the more firmly

¹³ Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, 330-40 (for Saint-Simon), 374-88 (for Stein). On Saint-Simon, cf. Henri Comte de Saint-Simon, “Letters of Henri de St.-Simon to an American (1817): Sixth Letter,” *Selected Writings*, ed. F. M. H. Markham (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952) and Saint-Simon, “On Social Organization (1825).” On Stein, cf. Stein, *History of the Social Movement in France*, 44ff., 75ff.; and Pasquino, “Lorenz von Stein,” as well as my discussion of Stein in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

¹⁴ Sydney Webb, “The Basis of Socialism: Historic,” *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, ed. G. Bernard Shaw (New York: Humboldt, 1891), 16ff., 41f.; Shaw, “Transition,” 217.

¹⁵ Webb, “The Basis of Socialism: Historic,” 5, 37-41.

to a solid bedrock of naturalistic assumptions about history and society. What differentiates their national socialism from Saint-Simon, Lorenz von Stein, and the Fabians is not only the greater intensity of their naturalism, but also the key role attributed to nationalism as the organizing principle for the harmonization of the social, the principle that pulls all the other ideational threads together to form an internally consistent ideological fabric. Nationalism is posited as the only legitimate politico-cultural framework for demanding and implementing social reform, thereby discrediting programs of social change based on trans- or sub-national identities. Nationalism also functions as a theoretical framework for conceptualizing social order and dynamics, which framework in turn affords the motivation and justification for theorizing, analyzing, and operating on the social as a field of systematic nationalist intervention. In short, the national constitutes for our protagonists the primary historical positivity that needs to be consolidated, maintained, and intensified.

Positive thought is directly visible in the repeated usage by both Naumann and Fritsch of the terms “positive” and “negative” in connection with their attempt to contest the Social-Democratic conception of socialism. Thus we find Naumann, on the brink of his definitive break with Christian socialism, expressing his dismay at “how far away the mass of today’s Social Democrats is from positive social reform,” claiming instead that “social reform” has to be “united ... with the living idea of loyalty to the German state.”¹⁶ A few years later he further elaborated on the Social Democrats’ attitude of “negation” in his widely read book, Demokratie und Kaisertum. Negation, Naumann explains here, is not intrinsically harmful, but at the hands of the Social Democrats—along with Eugen Richter’s brand of left-liberalism—“negation has become the very essence of democracy.” What is more, this negationism has not been accompanied by a “positive politics of the present” and is therefore politically unsustainable.¹⁷ The Social Democrats have in fact made things worse by adding two new “negations”—of the “new industrial entrepreneurship” and of the “idea of nationality embodied in the new German Empire”—on top of the old “negations” they had inherited from “bourgeois democracy” (i.e., negations of the sovereignty of the German princes, of the churches and the aristocracy, of the state bureaucracy and the military).¹⁸ Naumann especially singles out “the negation of the sovereignty of the Kaiser and of the military” for “a complete rethinking, if German democracy wishes to cross over from an essentially negative period into a positive epoch.” The “negation of industrial entrepreneurship,” too, should be significantly curbed as well.¹⁹ Not only Social Democracy, however, but also the Kaiser can contribute to Germany’s transition to this “positive epoch” if he were to recognize the possibility of a “positive, practical socialism.”²⁰

In Fritsch’s writings we find a similar positive attack on Social Democracy. He assigns to the latter “the ethical duty” of “leaving the comfortable waterway of negation and cussing and stepping forward with serious positive proposals.”²¹ For in the present, Fritsch laments, the Social Democrats “are neither capable nor willing to perform any positive work.”²² In a

¹⁶ Naumann, “Wochenschau [10 November 1895],” 2.

¹⁷ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 63.

¹⁸ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 65f.

¹⁹ Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum, 67.

²⁰ Friedrich Naumann, “Neue Kaiserworte,” Deutsche Volksstimme: Halbmonatsschrift für Jedermann im Volke 2.3 (1897): 50.

²¹ “Zeit-Glossen. Wahl-Betrachtungen. I,” 349.

²² Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. I,” 488.

subsequent article Fritsch provides the nationalist underpinning of his positive critique of Social Democracy: “Where is there anything useful and beneficial for the nation as a whole [*für die Gesamt-Nation*] that this movement has created or could have created by itself?” The Social Democrats’ anti-national negativity constitutes in Fritsch’s view sufficient grounds for their criminalization: “People who only overthrow and ravage without constructing are called criminals.”²³

In sum, both Naumann and Fritsch understood themselves as advancing a positive, nation-building alternative to the “negative” socialism of the Social Democrats. Both have underestimated, however, the degree to which Social Democracy was itself also permeated with a positive-nationalist mode of thinking, as its support of the national war effort in 1914 testifies. This brings us to our next topic, namely the career of national socialism during the First World War.

National socialism and the First World War

The existential national socialism first articulated by Naumann and Fritsch at the turn of the century literally exploded into the foreground of history with the outbreak of the First World War.²⁴ The widespread rapture with which the war was greeted by German society as a historic moment of national unity and renewal—especially by “the bourgeois strata and the intellectuals, but on a smaller scale also [by] the broad masses including the great majority of the workers”²⁵—has been well documented and is often referred to as “the spirit of 1914” and “the ideas of 1914.”²⁶ What I would like to underline here is the national existentialism permeating

²³ Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Von unseren Revolutionären. II,” 518. For additional utterances by Fritsch against the negativity of the Social Democrats, see also Fritsch, “Zeit-Glossen. Wahl-Betrachtungen. II,” 395; “Wahl-Sorgen,” 35; “Wahl-Betrachtungen,” 98; “Ist die Sozial-Demokratie ein Kultur-Faktor?” 614.

²⁴ This observation, incidentally, sheds new light on the phenomenon of political existentialism, which thus far—in the precious few works that discuss it to any significant extent—has usually been thought to be an essentially post-1918 phenomenon, a political offshoot of the *Existenzphilosophie* of that decade: see Christian Graf von Krockow, *Die Entscheidung: Eine Untersuchung über Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1958); Herbert Marcuse, “The Struggle Against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State,” trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro, *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 31-42; Martin Jay, “The Political Existentialism of Hannah Arendt,” *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Karl Löwith, “The Political Implications of Heidegger Existentialism,” *New German Critique* 45 (1988); Richard Wolin, “Carl Schmitt, political existentialism, and the total state,” *Theory and Society* 19.4 (1990). This dissertation, by contrast, makes it clear that political existentialism became a significant intellectual phenomenon in Germany at least as early as the 1890s, when in fact it was a mark of an entire generational shift.

²⁵ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Der Erste Weltkrieg: Anfang vom Ende des bürgerlichen Zeitalters* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2004), 39. Naumann and Fritsch participated too, of course, in this enthusiasm, and with the same national existentialism that we are already familiar with. For Naumann’s reaction to the outbreak of the war, see e.g. Friedrich Naumann, “Der Krieg,” *Die Hilfe* 6 August 1914; Friedrich Naumann, “Deutsche Organisation!” *Die Hilfe* 24 September 1914; Friedrich Naumann, “Volksheer,” *Die Hilfe* 8 October 1914; and Friedrich Naumann, “Blutopfer fürs Vaterland,” *Die Hilfe* 15 October 1914. For Fritsch, see Theodor Fritsch, “Der Weltkrieg (September 1914),” *Neue Wege: Aus Theodor Fritsch’s Lebensarbeit. Eine Sammlung von Hammer-Aufsätzen zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstage*, ed. Paul Lehmann (Leipzig: Hammer, 1922) and Theodor Fritsch, “Der Krieg und die Juden (September 1914),” *Neue Wege: Aus Theodor Fritsch’s Lebensarbeit. Eine Sammlung von Hammer-Aufsätzen zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstage*, ed. Paul Lehmann (Leipzig: Hammer, 1922).

²⁶ In addition to Mommsen, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, see also Klemens von Klemperer, *Germany’s New Conservatism: Its History and Dilemma in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 47-

much of the intellectual discourse supporting the war and its regimented economy. Indeed, not only bourgeois intellectuals but also Social-Democratic leaders understood the war as absolutely necessary for defending Germany's national existence. This intellectual climate, in turn, was highly conducive to the dissemination of existential national socialism.

To illustrate the widespread national-existentialist disposition and the proliferation of national socialism on this existentialist foundation, consider a representative wartime collection of essays titled The Workers in the New Germany.²⁷ This volume, discussing the future status of the workers in Germany in the wake of the new sociopolitical realities established by the war, was co-edited by a socialist trade-union leader (Carl Legien) and a bourgeois publicist (Friedrich Thimme). It encompasses twenty essays, half of which—as the editors make it a point to note in their preface—are written by Social Democrats, and the other half by bourgeois authors, including some of Germany's most illustrious intellectuals: bourgeois-reformist historian Friedrich Meinecke, who after 1945 still looked upon 1914 as Germany's greatest moment of national socialism à la Naumann,²⁸ left-liberal constitutional scholar Gerhard Anschütz, who later became a key interpreter of the Weimar constitution;²⁹ national economist Edgar Jaffé, co-editor (with Max Weber and Werner Sombart) of the celebrated periodical Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik; sociologist and national economist Ferdinand Tönnies who numbered among what Ursula Krey has called the "Naumann circle";³⁰ liberal theologian Ernst Troeltsch, a "friend and colleague"³¹ of Max Weber whose collaboration Naumann sought out

69; Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "German Artists, Writers and Intellectuals and the Meaning of War, 1914-1918," State, Society and Mobilization in Europe During the First World War, ed. John Horne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jeffrey Verhey, The spirit of 1914: militarism, myth and mobilization in Germany (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Steffen Bruendel, Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat: Die "Ideen von 1914" und die Neuordnung Deutschlands im Ersten Weltkrieg (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003), esp. 110-32. Bruendel elsewhere draws a distinction between the "spirit of 1914" and the "ideas of 1914" as follows: "Whereas the 'spirit of 1914' was the retrospective description of a new community-oriented attitude, the 'ideas' embodied the translation of this spirit into a political program of reform." Steffen Bruendel, "Die Geburt der 'Volksgemeinschaft' aus dem 'Geist von 1914': Entstehung und Wandel eines 'sozialistischen' Gesellschaftsentwurfs," Zeitgeschichte-online, 2004: 6. Web. 3 May 2010 <<http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/site/40208198/default.aspx>>.

Beyond the ideological construct, however, the degree of cross-class national solidarity in wartime Germany was quite thin; cf. Gerald D. Feldman, "The Political and Social Foundations of Germany's Economic Mobilization, 1914-1916," Armed Forces and Society 3.3 (1976).

²⁷ Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien, eds., Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915). On the importance of this book in Germany's wartime public discourse, see Ursula Ratz, "'Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland': Eine bürgerlich-sozialdemokratische Arbeitsgemeinschaft aus dem Jahre 1915," Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung 13 (1971): 1.

²⁸ Meinecke, The German Catastrophe, 18f.: "Naumann's national socialism ... was a wonderful attempt to bring together in an exceedingly rich synthesis both the most spiritual and the most practical and realistic elements in the German people. ... [B]efore the First World War the Naumann movement, even after it had failed as an independent political party, helped to create bridges and possibilities of understanding between the bourgeoisie and the working classes. ... In the exaltation and feeling of brotherhood during the August days of 1914 there lay something of the ethos and pathos of Naumann's dream."

²⁹ In 1914, just before the outbreak of the war, Anschütz was slated to be one of the contributors to Naumann's abortive Staatslexikon. The project was abandoned as soon as "the state," as Naumann put it in August 1914, started to "struggle for its life." Heuss, Friedrich Naumann, 295.

³⁰ Ursula Krey, "Der Naumann-Kreis: Charisma und politische Emanzipation," Friedrich Naumann in seiner Zeit, ed. Rüdiger vom Bruch (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 136.

³¹ Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 31.

after the outbreak of the war;³² and neo-Kantian philosopher Paul Natorp. On the Social-Democratic side, authors included leading figures in the right wing of the movement—most of them associated specifically with the movement’s trade-union branch³³—such as Gustav Noske, Philipp Scheidemann, Paul Lensch, August Winnig and Robert Schmidt.³⁴

There are some thematic differences, of course, between the bourgeois and the Social Democratic contributors to this volume: the former tend to emphasize the necessity of preserving national unity for the sake of national power and in anticipation of future wars; the latter point up the workers’ political and organizational maturity, counter the imputation of anti-nationalism to their movement, and stress the need to guarantee greater political freedom for the workers to reflect their wartime induction into national life. Beyond these differences, however, a number of shared convictions run as a red thread throughout book. Most fundamentally, the book is permeated by a conviction that at stake in the war is “our national existence” itself, as Anschütz puts it,³⁵ driven by the enemy’s desire “to exterminate Germany” (Meinecke).³⁶

For all the authors, furthermore, this national-existential predicament is moving Germany’s political economy and social relations in a direction that corresponds exactly to Naumann’s national socialism. First, the contributors express their enthusiasm about the cross-class national unity and solidarity forged in the existential cauldron of the war: the “joyful determination of the entire nation [*Volk*] to bring forth for the fatherland any sacrifice in goods and blood ... the admirable concentration of all our economic and spiritual forces on the goal of national defense ... the unity between employers and employees.”³⁷ Second, many of the

³² Heuss, Friedrich Naumann, 329.

³³ Cf. Ratz, “Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland,” 4f.

³⁴ The national socialism embraced by the right wing of the Social-Democratic movement during the war had independent roots within German Social Democracy: see Stefan Vogt, Nationaler Sozialismus und Soziale Demokratie: Die sozialdemokratische Junge Rechte 1918-1945 (Bonn: Dietz, 2006), ch. 1. Among the prewar national socialists within the movement was Max Maurenbrecher, an erstwhile key member of Naumann’s National-Social Association who joined the Social Democrats in 1903 to continue the project of nationalizing the workers from within their own movement. Cf. Dieter Fricke, “Nationalsoziale Versuche Zur Forderung Der Krise Der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie: Zum Briefwechsel Zwischen Max Maurenbrecher Und Friedrich Naumann 1910-1913,” Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung [East Germany] 25.4 (1983).

³⁵ Gerhard Anschütz, “Gedanken über künftige Staatsreformen,” Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 42; cf. Gustav Noske, “Der Krieg und die Sozialdemokratie,” Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 13, 17; Paul Lensch, “Die Neugestaltung der Wirtschaftsordnung,” Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 141; Ferdinand Tönnies, “Die Sozialpolitik nach dem Kriege,” Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 147f.; Paul Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes nach dem Kriege,” Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 194. Most of these citations are taken from the first page or two of the respective articles, a locus indicative of the framing function of the national-existential claim.

³⁶ Friedrich Meinecke, “Sozialdemokratie und Machtpolitik,” Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 28.

³⁷ Friedrich Thimme, “Gemeinsame Arbeit, der Weg zum inneren Frieden,” Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 222; cf. Philipp Scheidemann, “Zur Neuorientierung der inneren Politik,” Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 59; Ernst Francke, “Die Mitwirkung der Arbeiter an den öffentlichen Aufgaben in Deutschland,” Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel,

contributors point out that Germany's existential predicament has accelerated the workers' economic and political integration into national life and consolidated their national subjectivity, and agree that this momentum must be maintained and continued after the war. The following words by August Winnig might as well have been written by Friedrich Naumann at the turn of the century, and so are worth quoting at length:

The mass of the people [*Volk*] knows and feels that the fate of the nation [*Nation*] and of its organizational embodiment, the state, is also its own fate. It no longer gazes at the state as at an elemental force hovering over the water, but recognizes the state's dependence on the freely acting forces of the national whole [*Volksganzen*] ... It feels itself economically, politically, and culturally belonging and bound to this community embodied by the state. Its economic well-being depends on the condition of the national political economy [*nationalen Volkswirtschaft*], which needs freedom of movement in order to develop. Its trade-union organizations can only influence wages and labor favorably if trade and traffic [*Handel und Wandel*] thrive. So the mass of the workers has an interest in the fate of the national political economy and thus in the political standing of the collectivity [*Staatsgemeinschaft*], and therefore feels itself connected in solidarity with the nation in its entirety [*Gesamtheit des Volkes*] in its defense against the dangers that threaten it from without.³⁸

The workers, Winnig seems to intimate here, have even before the war already been what Naumann had always wanted them to be: namely, integrated into the nation, both objectively and subjectively.³⁹ The existential setting of the war did not engender this integration, but it did make it so visible as to render it incontrovertible.⁴⁰ The nationalization of the workers, in the view of Winnig and other contributors just as in Naumann's view, must be acknowledged and advanced still further by way of expanding their political liberties and assigning them a larger share of the national income.⁴¹

At the same time, just as in Naumann's national socialism, the integration of the workers can only come at the price of their abandonment of class conflict. As Troeltsch puts it, "Social Democracy must learn that any theory of permanent class antagonism falters in the face of the living conditions of the state, the psychological foundations of the other strata of the nation

1915), 81; Edgar Jaffé, "Die Vertretung der Arbeiterinteressen im neuen Deutschland," Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 98.

³⁸ August Winnig, "Der Krieg und die Arbeiter-Internationale," Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 37; cf. Hermann Oncken, "Die Deutschen auf dem Wege zur einigen und freien Nation," Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 7f., 10f.; Noske, "Der Krieg," 14; Hugo Heinemann, "Vom Arbeiterrecht nach dem Kriege," Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 119.

³⁹ On the nationalization of the workers' subjectivity, see also Tönnies, "Die Sozialpolitik," 158.

⁴⁰ Other Social-Democratic contributors to this book also adduce the wartime national-existential solidarity as evidence for countering the imputation of anti-nationalism to the workers: Noske, "Der Krieg," 14; Scheidemann, "Zur Neuorientierung," 65; Carl Legien, "Die Gewerkschaften," Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 91, 94; Heinemann, "Vom Arbeiterrecht," 119. On the bourgeois side, the same argument is voiced by Thimme, "Gemeinsame Arbeit," 225.

⁴¹ Winnig, "Der Krieg," 40; Anschütz, "Gedanken," 47, 57; Legien, "Die Mitwirkung der Arbeiter," 97; Jaffé, "Die Vertretung der Arbeiterinteressen," 99, 101f., 110; Lensch, "Die Neugestaltung," 146; Thimme, "Gemeinsame Arbeit," 224-7.

[*Volksschichten*], military camaraderie and the need, even of [Social Democracy's] own people, to partake in the collective great deeds, hopes, and memories of the nation [*Nation*]."⁴² Other authors articulate the same idea by calling for a transformation of Social Democracy from a "negative" to a "positive" movement in its relation to the nation-state. A long passage in the chapter by Thimme recapitulating the volume is a faithful representative of this view, and reads like Friedrich Naumann redux:

Social Democracy can in the future no longer persist in its principled negation of the state; rather, it must position itself vis-à-vis the state on the grounds of a positive political bearing. Everything, it seems to us, pushes towards such a positive bearing. Above all the sentiment of the many hundreds of thousands of workers in the battlefield. They have entered over there into the most unmediated and positive relation to the state, ... their will is directed entirely to the realistic, to the real, to a positive collaboration with their comrades and superiors, regardless of class ... In the workers at home, too, especially in the trade unions which are engaged in such positive work there is ... a real hunger for positive work, for extensive cooperation in the construction of the new Germany, a hunger which has been strengthened by the concerted collaboration during the war. ... As matters stand, however, [the workers] have time and again been pushed back into a negative ... critique of all that exists and becomes. Nevertheless, today the circumstances have radically changed. Today bourgeois Germany in its entirety desires ... the extensive collaboration of Social Democracy. ... [The bourgeoisie is saying:] 'The more positive Social Democracy becomes, the stronger the attention it will find for the rights that it wishes. ... And it is totally certain that, on a positively acting working class, political rights can be bestowed that cannot be bestowed on a negatively acting working class.' Nay, not 'can be bestowed,' but '*must and will* be bestowed!'⁴³

Just as in Naumann's approach, then, national inclusion of the workers is conditional upon their political docility—even after they had proven their purportedly "existential" solidarity with the nation.

Beyond the issues related to the present and future status of the working class and its relation to the nation-state, the authors also touch more broadly on the political-economic shift brought about by the existential experience of the war. On this question, too, the volume under discussion comes very close to the political economy envisioned by Naumann's national socialism, with its national productivism, its faith in large-scale, state-led organization, and its aim of harnessing all socioeconomic forces in the service of the nation's aggressive foreign policy. In Edgar Jaffé's view, for example, "a far-reaching strengthening of state intervention in economic life" will be needed after the war in order to ensure the nation's "future military readiness."⁴⁴ This long-term political-economic reorientation would amount, Jaffé declares, to a

⁴² Ernst Troeltsch, "Die Kirchen- und Religionspolitik im Verhältnis zur Sozialdemokratie," Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland, eds. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915), 168.

⁴³ Thimme, "Gemeinsame Arbeit," 230. For other examples in which the terminology of "positive" and "negative" is deployed with reference to Social Democracy, see Noske, "Der Krieg," 12, 18, 20; Winnig, "Der Krieg," 41; Anschütz, "Gedanken," 47; Scheidemann, "Zur Neuorientierung," 64-7; Legien, "Die Mitwirkung der Arbeiter," 97; Heinemann, "Vom Arbeiterrecht," 123. It is striking that Social-Democrats are represented in this list of citations no less than bourgeois authors.

⁴⁴ Jaffé, "Die Vertretung der Arbeiterinteressen," 106.

“reshaping and ‘militarization’ of our economic life imposed on us by our national fate.”⁴⁵ Lensch similarly attributes existential significance to national organization, opening his chapter with the words: “If Germany wins in this war, it will have won by virtue of its organization, military as well as economic.”⁴⁶ And he concludes his chapter by evincing his hope for “a higher form of [social] co-existence” characterized by “the social regulation of the methods of production.”⁴⁷ Scheidemann associates “socialism” with “the development of our economy towards higher forms of organization.”⁴⁸ And Tönnies concurs, stressing that “*organization* is the task, in peace as in war,” particularly the “organization of labor.”⁴⁹ Paul Natorp, too, calls ambitiously for an “organization of social education” that “encompasses all aspects of national culture [*Volkskultur*],”⁵⁰ and regards the “organization of national labor” as “the most productive investment of national capital.”⁵¹

Finally, in Natorp’s contribution we also find a Naumann-like concern with the quantity and quality of Germany’s population. Natorp begins by stipulating in national-existentialist fashion that the “rebirth of our nation after the war”—“a rebirth as if out of death”—depends on Germany’s ability to preserve the wartime “assertion of our national existence [*nationale Existenz*] through the arraying of all our energies [*Kräfte*].”⁵² The biologicistic slant suggested by the imagery of death and rebirth as well as of energy becomes patent when Natorp turns in this context to the “population question,” which he regards as “a point . . . that a rebirth of our nation [*Volk*] most earnestly needs [to address].”⁵³ For “the struggle for life” currently undertaken in the war cannot be allowed to “devour life itself”;⁵⁴ and that is precisely what is in danger of happening as a result of the war, which “demands from us sacrifices in blood such that never before have been made by a nation [*Volk*]. And unfortunately it is precisely . . . the age-groups that are physically and mentally and ethically the most decisive for the propagation of the nation [*Fortpflanzung der Nation*]” that are being sacrificed. Natorp continues with gnawing anxiety: “From whence will an . . . offspring of noble nature come to us if only the physical, mental, and ethical cripples remain? And meanwhile a falling birth-rate is already visible...”⁵⁵

It is this nationalist standpoint that necessitates, in Natorp’s view, certain minimal welfare provisions for the “working people, on whom the main burden of population renewal falls.”⁵⁶ Both the workers and the “female . . . part of the population” need to develop a “consciousness of earnest social and national duty” to procreate.⁵⁷ The “social and national

⁴⁵ Jaffé, “Die Vertretung der Arbeiterinteressen,” 114. On the primacy of “defending the German fatherland,” see also Noske, “Der Krieg,” 12f., 15; Heinemann, “Vom Arbeiterrecht,” 122, 127; Thimme, “Gemeinsame Arbeit,” 22.

⁴⁶ Lensch, “Die Neugestaltung,” 139.

⁴⁷ Lensch, “Die Neugestaltung,” 146.

⁴⁸ Scheidemann, “Zur Neuorientierung,” 65.

⁴⁹ Tönnies, “Die Sozialpolitik,” 156. Original emphasis.

⁵⁰ Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 202.

⁵¹ Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 206.

⁵² Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 194; the expression “rebirth as if out of death [*einer Wiedergeburt wie aus dem Tode*]” appears on 196.

⁵³ Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 197.

⁵⁴ Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 196.

⁵⁵ Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 197.

⁵⁶ Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 198.

⁵⁷ Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 199.

education” that the “male part of the nation” has received through “many years of soldierly training” needs now to be complemented by a “general and methodical social and national education of the female sex, directed towards the production and sustainment of life.”⁵⁸ Through such “socialization of education and breeding [*Aufzucht*],”⁵⁹ a “healthy construction of social and national life”⁶⁰ will be made possible. In these passages, Natorp in effect replicates (nay, outdoes) Naumann’s population-centered national socialism, complete with all its existential, biologicistic, and militaristic trappings.

In sum, Friedrich Meinecke was right:⁶¹ the “ideas of 1914” that received their quintessential expression in Legien and Thimme’s edited volume are nothing other than a Naumannite national socialism.⁶² Although the term “national socialism” itself does not appear in the book, it does come up in another text, written by one of the chief proponents of the “ideas of 1914”—indeed, the one who coined the term:⁶³ national economist Johann Plenge’s 1789 and 1914.⁶⁴ Plenge, who was strongly influenced by Saint-Simon, Karl Rodbertus, and Lorenz von Stein,⁶⁵ had even before 1914 called for a national, “organizational socialism” that would submit the nation’s social and economic life to centralized state administration.⁶⁶ But the existential war experience seems to have lifted Plenge’s confidence in the prospects of a national socialism to new heights.⁶⁷ According to Plenge, the “war economy”—consisting *inter alia* in the “firm

⁵⁸ Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 200.

⁵⁹ Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 200. Natorp mentions Plato in this connection as his distant predecessor.

⁶⁰ Natorp, “Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes,” 201.

⁶¹ Meinecke, The German Catastrophe, 18f. (see passage cited above).

⁶² On the affinity between Naumann’s ideas and those expounded by the Thimme-Legien collection, see Ratz, “Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland,” 3. Steffen Bruendel mentions the Thimme-Legien volume as representative of the “ideas of 1914”; and he further asserts that “The ‘birth of national socialism in the World War and the birth of the ‘national community’ out of the ‘spirit of 1914’ are immediately connected to each other.” See Bruendel, “Die Geburt der ‘Volksgemeinschaft’ aus dem ‘Geist von 1914,’” 6, 25 (respectively). See also Bruendel, Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat, 118-24, where he shows how “national socialism” constituted a central pillar in the “ideas of 1914.” Another scholar who makes an explicit link between the “ideas of 1914”—especially the Lensch-Cunow-Haenisch group and Johann Plenge—and national socialism is Rolf Peter Sieferle, “Die Geburt des nationalen Sozialismus im Weltkrieg: Paul Lensch,” Die konservative Revolution: Fünf biographische Skizzen (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1995).

⁶³ Wolfgang Michalka, “From War Economy to ‘New Economy’: World War I and the Conservative Debate About the ‘Other’ Modernity in Germany,” War, Violence and the Modern Condition, ed. Bernd Hüppauf (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 91; and Bruendel, Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat, 111-13.

⁶⁴ Johann Plenge, 1789 und 1914: Die symbolischen Jahre in der Geschichte des politischen Geistes (Berlin: Springer, 1916). Another key text of the “ideas of 1914” discourse is Werner Sombart, Händler und Helden: Patriotische Besinnungen (München and Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1915); see e.g. 80f. for national existentialism and 124f. for an implicit national socialism.

⁶⁵ Axel Schildt, “Ein Konservativer Prophet Moderner Nationaler Integration: Biographische Skizze Des Streitbaren Soziologen Johann Plenge (1874-1963),” Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte [West Germany] 35.4 (1987): 526f. For Plenge’s reception of Saint-Simon, cf. Johann Plenge, Gründung und Geschichte des Crédit Mobilier (Tübingen: H. Laupp, 1903).

⁶⁶ Johann Plenge, Marx und Hegel (Tübingen: H. Laupp, 1911), e.g. 178-81.

⁶⁷ Another reason for Plenge’s optimism was no doubt the influence he gained during the war on the right wing of the Social-Democratic movement, specifically the Lensch-Cunow-Haenisch group and, towards the end of the war, Carl Legien: see Schildt, “Ein Konservativer Prophet,” 538f., 542f., 553; and Vogt, Nationaler Sozialismus, 46-8. In the academic world, Plenge enjoyed the support of Max Weber who, in 1913, managed to secure a position for Plenge at the University of Münster. Schildt, “Ein Konservativer Prophet,” 530f.

centralization of all the forces of the national productive organism [*aller Kräfte des nationalen Produktionsorganismus*]”—constitutes

the first ‘socialist’ society that has become a reality. . . . Under the exigency of the war, the socialist idea broke its way into German economic life, its [i.e. the German economy’s] organization coalesced in a new spirit, and thus the self-determination of our nation gave birth for humanity the new idea of 1914, the idea of German organization, the people’s confraternity of national socialism [*die Volksgenossenschaft des nationalen Sozialismus*].⁶⁸

Friedrich Naumann, too, seems to have felt more confident to use the term “national socialism” again, after more than a decade of repressing it following the collapse of the National-Social Association and his party-political migration to left-liberalism. In his 1916 book *Mitteleuropa* (“Central Europe”)—one of the most widely read wartime books, in Germany and beyond—Naumann observes that “there grows up from all sides a state- or national-socialism [*Staats- oder Nationalsozialismus*], there grows up the ‘administered national economy.’”⁶⁹ This passage may be read, I submit, as Naumann’s confirmation that the wartime political economy is in a sense a fulfillment of his old national-socialist vision.

As the war progressed, and even more so after the war, national socialist ideas continued to be produced and disseminated with increasing vigor. From 1916 to 1919, Walther Rathenau and especially Wichard von Moellendorff, the two main architects of the German war economy, advanced the idea of a *Gemeinwirtschaft* or “communal economy” along lines very similar to the agenda of the Thimme-Legien volume discussed above, arguing that the social and political-economic lessons acquired during the war should continue to shape German collective life in peacetime.⁷⁰ Weimar Germany also witnessed an explosion of radical right-wing (or “conservative-revolutionary”) forms of national socialism, articulated by cultural icons such as Oswald Spengler, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, and Ernst Jünger; Ernst Niekisch and his “national Bolshevism”; the circle around the influential periodical *Die Tat* (“The Deed”); celebrated sociologist and national economist Werner Sombart; and most dramatically, of course,

⁶⁸ Plenge, *1789 und 1914*, 82; also 125. Cf. Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat*, 119.

⁶⁹ Friedrich Naumann, *Mitteleuropa*, in *Werke*, ed. Theodor Scheider, vol. 4 (Köln und Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), 609. I follow, with slight modifications, the translation in Friedrich Naumann, *Central Europe*, trans. Christabel M. Meredith (New York: Knopf, 1917), 123. Cf. Klemperer, *Germany’s New Conservatism*, 50, 55f., where Naumann’s *Mitteleuropa* vision is placed at the very center of the “ideas of 1914.” See also the reference to Naumann by Ratz, “Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland,” 3.

⁷⁰ On Moellendorff, see David E. Barclay, “A Prussian Socialism? Wichard von Moellendorff and the Dilemmas of Economic Planning in Germany, 1918-19,” *Central European History* 11.1 (1978); Christoph H. Werth, “Wichard von Moellendorff: Konservativer Sozialismus und Gemeinwirtschaft,” *Sozialismus und Nation: Die deutsche Ideologiediskussion zwischen 1918 und 1945* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996); Wichard von Moellendorff, *Konservativer Sozialismus* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1932), which despite its title’s claim to conservatism actually adheres to an explicitly Taylorian technocratic industrialism on a grand scale (see 45ff.) that has little to do with the ethical social conservatism discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

On Rathenau, see James Joll, “Walther Rathenau - Intellectual or Industrialist?” *Germany in the Age of Total War*, eds. Volker Rolf Berghahn, et al. (London: Croom Helm, 1981), 53-7, 60; Christoph H. Werth, “Walther Rathenau und die zentralistisch-maschinelle Gemeinwirtschaft,” *Sozialismus und Nation: Die deutsche Ideologiediskussion zwischen 1918 und 1945* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996); Walther Rathenau, *Deutschlands Rohstoffsversorgung* (Berlin: Fischer, 1916); Walther Rathenau, *Probleme der Friedenswirtschaft* (Berlin: Fischer, 1917).

the National-Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), especially its left wing led by the Strasser brothers.⁷¹ Theodor Fritsch also continued to expound the same ideas until his death in 1933, shortly after the Nazi seizure of power. Naumann's national socialism, too, continued to resonate throughout the Weimar period and beyond, although he himself died in 1919. One example of this resonance are Meinecke's remarks cited earlier, which date from 1946. Another example is Martin Heidegger's statement, with reference to his turn to Hitler in the dying days of Weimar, that "[a]t that time I saw no alternative. In the general confusion of opinions and of the political trends of 22 parties, it was necessary to find a national, and above all a social, point of view, perhaps of the sort attempted by Friedrich Naumann."⁷²

National socialism and Nazism

By the time the NSDAP was founded, then, and throughout the Weimar period there existed in Germany a complex, multifaceted conceptual field of national socialism spanning the entire political spectrum. Rudolf Jung, one of the founding fathers of the Nazi movement and one of the first Nazis to offer a systematic exposition of the movement's national socialism, seems to have been aware of the presence of this conceptual field. In 1922 Jung—then a leading member of the Sudeten “German National-Socialist Workers' Party” (DNSAP, a sister-movement of Hitler's NSDAP)—published a book titled National Socialism: Its Foundations, Its History and Its Goals, wherein he traces the origins of national socialism to the Sudetenland of the 1880s. He acknowledges that “in the nineties of the previous century [Friedrich] Naumann ... attempted to establish a national-social party in the German Empire,” but downplays the

⁷¹ On all of the names and movements mentioned, the best survey of their national socialism is Werth, Sozialismus und Nation. See also Klemperer, Germany's New Conservatism; Herman Lebovics, Social Conservatism and the Middle Classes in Germany, 1914-1933 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969); and George L. Mosse, “The Corporate State and the Conservative Revolution in Weimar Germany,” Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left, and the Search for a “Third Force” in Pre-Nazi Germany (New York: Fertig, 1970). On Moeller van den Bruck, see also Fritz Stern, “Moeller van den Bruck and the Third Reich,” The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974). For Moeller's national socialism see e.g. Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Das Recht der jungen Völker: Sammlung politischer Aufsätze, ed. Hans Schwarz (Berlin: Verlag der Nahe Osten, 1932), 112-16; and Klemperer, Germany's New Conservatism, 66-9, which includes additional references to Moeller's work.

Spengler's national socialism is most extensively articulated in Oswald Spengler, “Prussianism and Socialism (1920),” trans. Donald O. White, Selected Essays (Chicago: Regnery, 1967); this essay is probably the first specimen of the Weimar-era wave of national socialism. Sombart marks the tail end of this wave; his national socialism only came to full fruition after the rise of the Nazis to power, and is presented systematically in Werner Sombart, Deutscher Sozialismus (Berlin-Charlottenburg: Buchholz & Weisswange, 1934). On the other hand, as is clear from Lebovics's discussion of Sombart in the book cited above, the latter's national socialism was born years earlier, during the First World War at the latest. In-between Spengler and Sombart, national bolshevik Ernst Niekisch was joined in the mid-1920s by August Winnig, the erstwhile Social-Democrat and contributor to the Thimme-Legien volume: see Sieferle, “Die Geburt des nationalen Sozialismus,” 71.

On the national socialism of the left wing of the Nazi movement, see also Broszat, Der Nationalsozialismus, esp. 47-62; and Bruendel, “Die Geburt der ‘Volksgemeinschaft’ aus dem ‘Geist von 1914’,” 20f. The right wing of the movement, which was led by Adolf Hitler and which ultimately won out in the internal power struggle with the left wing, adhered to a national socialism qualitatively different from the variants discussed in this dissertation, due to its single-minded obsession with the total extermination of the Jews. Nonetheless, it stood to gain from the ideational capital accrued to the national-socialist idea by the efforts of its other adherents.

⁷² Martin Heidegger, “‘Only a God Can Save Us’: Der Spiegel's Interview with Martin Heidegger (1966),” The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader, ed. Richard Wolin (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 95.

significance of this attempt on the grounds that “it happened later” than parallel developments in the Sudetenland; and even then, Naumann’s political experiment (i.e. his National-Social Association, which existed from 1896 to 1903) did not come to fruition “because it was undertaken with ineffectual means.” The struggle against Marxism, Jung explains, “can never be carried out by a wishy-washy social movement penetrated by foreign elements, but only by a *völkisch* and socialist movement.”⁷³ Jung is obviously not seeking here to use Naumann’s name as a mantle of bourgeois respectability. He rather seems to perceive Naumann as a competing, if inferior, political carrier of a national socialism they both share, beyond the ideological and organizational differences between them.

The relationship between the respective national socialisms of these two figures may or may not have been as Jung portrays it. But the fact that he saw in the left-leaning Friedrich Naumann a fellow (if errant) national socialist suggests that the broad conceptual field of national socialism described in this chapter was not just an “objective” reality in wartime and postwar Germany, but was also recognized and referred to by members of the Nazi movement. To be sure, the immediate causes that led to the *initial* adoption by Hitler’s movement of a national-socialist name and program in 1920 are not to be found primarily in the bourgeois-reformist and Social-Democratic milieu that disseminated the idea of a national socialism before and during the First World War. Instead, the roots of the name and the program are clearly tracable to *völkisch*-antisemitic movements in Germany and Austria, especially the Bohemian *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (DAP; German Workers’ Party) founded in 1904 and its subsequent incarnations.⁷⁴ But in order to understand the ideational underpinnings of Nazism’s longer-term survival, growth, and seizure and exercise of power, one has to go beyond immediate causes to investigate broader historical dynamics, including the conceptual and discursive resources that the movement could draw upon in its interaction with German society. From this perspective, the national socialist ideas that circulated widely during and after the First World War no doubt served, whether consciously or indirectly, as valuable ideational capital that helped the Nazi movement gain broader attention within the German public sphere. These connections across the national-socialist spectrum must be thoroughly explored if we are to gain deeper insight into the formative currents of this fateful era.

Let us not, however, limit ourselves to grasping national socialism as a prefiguration of Nazism alone. In its contemporary context of the *Kaiserreich*, the national socialism examined in the dissertation needs to be understood as an arm of Germany’s post-unification nation-state-building project. It was, in other words, above all a political endeavor seeking to discipline and engineer the social so as to sustain an ongoing process of consolidating the national state.

As the term suggests, nation-building is above all a process. It is a “pro-ject” in the sense of a claim to (re)shape the present on the basis of and in orientation towards a certain vision of the future in which ideally all of collective life is mapped onto the national template. It is a claim to collective being-towards-nation. At the same time, the future-oriented concept of nation-building also implies that the present state of collective affairs is at some remove from the

⁷³ Rudolf Jung, *Der nationale Sozialismus: Seine Grundlagen, sein Werdegang und seine Ziele* (München: Deutscher Volksverlag, 1922), 66.

⁷⁴ In addition to Rudolf Jung’s first-hand account in his book cited above, the Austrian origins of the movement are also traced by Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism*, trans. Jean Steinberg (New York: Praeger, 1970), 50-7.

anticipated nationalized future; i.e., that there are forces at play—social movements, political loyalties, cultural traditions, individual and collective subjectivities—that do not conform to the nationalist logic. Insofar as nation-building works to bring about a nationalized future, it must *eo ipso* engage in a sustained effort to domesticate, marginalize, suppress, at times even eradicate these countervailing forces.

Such is the case with national socialism as an arm of Germany's nation-building efforts at the turn of the twentieth century. Its support for inclusion of the workers was conditional upon their exclusion from transnational social action. Its national productivism posited the priority of nationally circumscribed cross-class cooperation over transnational class solidarity. Its subordination of the social to the political framework of the national state rendered it suspicious of autonomous, self-determinative political organization on the basis of non-national (ethnic, religious, class) identities. Its loyalty to the nation-state led it to reject revolutionary action that might point beyond the nation-state. Its instrumentalization of the social in the service of a nationalist political agenda left little or no room for a program of social change guided primarily by principles of social justice. In short, the construction blueprint sketched out by national socialism for the nation-building project was at the same time a blueprint for exclusion.⁷⁵

One of the ironies of national socialism as the construction blueprint of Imperial Germany's nation-“building” project is that it also ended up serving as a blueprint for its destruction. For without the systematic organization of the national economy during the First World War, Germany's severe raw materials crisis might well have led to its defeat within a few months' time.⁷⁶ Instead, the effectiveness of national socialism in prolonging the war by regimenting and mobilizing the social made it a central accomplice in producing the incalculable levels of human suffering, social devastation, and political upheaval inflicted by the War upon German collective life. Such were the accomplishments of national socialism even before Adolf Hitler started preaching the National Socialist gospel in the beerhalls of Munich.

⁷⁵ Another case of national socialism underpinning a nation-building project, that of the pre-state Zionist labor party, was animated by a similar exclusionary drive, directed primarily against the indigenous Palestinian population as well as against transnational class consciousness. See Sternhell, [The Founding Myths of Israel](#).

Senghor's African socialism—its universalistic trappings notwithstanding—is another noteworthy case of a nation-building-oriented national socialism, “an ‘African road to socialism,’ built on national values and starting from national realities.” Léopold Sédar Senghor, [On African Socialism](#), trans. Mercer Cook (London: Pall Mall, 1964), 3. In the name of his nation-building socialism, Senghor rejects class consciousness (55) and maintains that “the labor unions . . . must integrate themselves into the quasi-nation” so as to “help the federal state to build the nation” (57). With respect to the “rights of the minority, of the opposition,” Senghor makes it clear that “they will find the natural and legal limits in the rights of the majority, the popular will, which is sovereign; in other words, in the rights of the nation-state” (52f.). On African socialism as a national socialism, cf. A. James Gregor, “African Socialism, Socialism and Fascism: An Appraisal,” [Review of Politics](#) 29.3 (1967): esp. 326-9. Senghor, incidentally, was formatively influenced by (among others) the work of French national socialist Maurice Barrès: see Jacques Louis Hymans, “French Influences on Leopold Senghor's Theory of Negritude, 1928-48,” [Race & Class](#) 7.4 (1966): 365f.

⁷⁶ Gerald D. Feldman, [Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918](#) (Providence and Oxford: Berg, 1992), 51.

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