The Spirit of 1914

Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany

Jeffrey Verhey

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This book is the first systematic analysis of German public opinion at the outbreak of the Great War and the first treatment of the myth of the "spirit of 1914," which stated that in August 1914 all Germans felt "war enthusiasm" and that this enthusiasm constituted a critical moment in which German society was transformed. Jeffrey Verhey's powerful study demonstrates that the myth was historically inaccurate. Although intellectuals and much of the upper class were enthusiastic, the emotions and opinions of most of the population were far more complex and contradictory. Jeffrey Verhey further examines the development of the myth in newspapers, politics, and propaganda, and the propagation and appropriation of this myth after the war. His innovative analysis sheds new light on the German experience of the Great War and on the role of political myths in modern German political culture.

JEFFREY VERHEY is a researcher at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Bonn, and has previously taught at the University of California, Berkeley, the University of California, Davis, and the Free University of Berlin. He is the author of numerous articles on modern German cultural history, the history of comparative propaganda, and the history of comparative stereotypes.

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Militarism, Myth, and Mobilization in Germany

Jeffrey Verhey
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Betsy

Enthusiasm always does, and always must, defeat him who is not so enthusiastic. It is not the power of the army nor even of the weapons, it is the strength of the will alone which achieves victories.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, Eighth Address (1808)

. . . the people's war. Any nation that uses it intelligently will, as a rule, gain some superiority over those who disdain its use. If this is so, the question only remains whether mankind at large will gain by this further expansion of this element of war; a question to which the answer should be the same as to the question of war itself. We shall leave both to the philosophers. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Book 6, chapter 26 (1832)

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Abbreviations

Abt.	Abteilung
AdsD	Archiv der sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn
ADV	Alldeutscher Verband
AK	Armeekorps
BA	Bundesarchiv, Koblenz
BAL	Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde
BA–MA	Bundesarchiv–Militärarchiv, Freiburg
BdF	Bund deutscher Frauenverein
BLA	Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union
DDP	Deutsche Demokratische Partei
DHM	Deutshes Historisches Museum
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei
DVP	Deutsche Volkspartei
FVV	Freie Vaterländische Vereinigung
GhStAPK	Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz
HStA	Hauptstaatsarchiv
KP	Kriegspresseamt
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
KrA	Kriegsarchiv
KrM	Kriegsministerium
NSDAP	Nationale Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei
OHL	Oberste Heeresleitung
OK	Oberkommando
OZ	Oberzensurstelle
RLB	Reichslandbund
SA	Sturm-Abteilung
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
stellv. GK	Stellvertretendes Generalkommando
USPD	Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
VDA	Verein Deutscher Arbeitgeber
WUA	Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses

Introduction: The myth of the "spirit of 1914"

In August 1914 Germany went to war. The war was not unexpected. It had been brewing for quite a while. Yet when it came it came suddenly and, like a whirlwind, transformed German public opinion. In the afternoon of 28 June newspaper vendors sold "extras" telling of the murder of the Austro-Hungarian Crown Prince. For a few days there was excitement in the streets, and small crowds formed around the newspaper stands. Yet this fever quickly subsided. After the first week of July there was almost no mention in the press of Austrian–Serbian foreign relations, or of foreign relations at all. Instead, newspapers contained the sorts of diversions that made for pleasant reading alongside a glass of beer in the good summer weather: the trial of Rosa Luxemburg for anti-militaristic remarks, the scandals in France, and yet another call from the right for patriotic Germans to join together to fight the peril of Social Democracy.

On 23 July this changed. Newspapers reported that Austria had issued Serbia an ultimatum, due to expire on Saturday, 25 July at 6.00 p.m. Readers need not be reminded that as Germany was allied with Austria this could lead to German involvement in a European conflagration. In the late afternoon on 25 July vast crowds of curious and excited people gathered in the larger German cities at the sites where they expected the news of the Serbian response first to be distributed: at the city squares downtown, in front of the newspaper office buildings, in the downtown cafés. After learning that Serbia had rejected the ultimatum, in Berlin and a few other large cities "parades" of enthusiastic youths marched through the streets, singing patriotic songs.

The next week Germans wondered if they would be going to war. Crowds of curious people gathered where the extras would first be distributed, in public squares or in front of the newspaper buildings. As the week continued the curious crowds grew in size. People waited for hours, wondering about their fate. The tension was palpable. Finally, on 31 July the news came: the proclamation of the state of siege. The next day even more nervous, curious people gathered in public squares and in front of

the newspaper buildings, waiting for the extras which, in the afternoon, informed them of the mobilization. Germany was at war.

In many places the extras stating that Germany was at war were greeted with a chorus of patriotic outbursts, people yelling hurrah and singing patriotic songs, which many contemporaries and most historians have characterized as "war enthusiasm." On 1 August 1914 tens of thousands in front of the Berlin castle broke out in what seemed to many contemporaries to be a "religious" ecstasy when the Kaiser spoke to his people, proclaiming from a castle window that he no longer recognized any parties, he knew only Germans.

The first month of the war resembled a month-long patriotic festival. In the first three weeks of August Germans said good-bye to their troops, smothering them with flowers and so much chocolate that the Red Cross asked the population to be less generous; the soldiers were getting sick.[1] At the end of August Germans celebrated the news of the first successful battles with exuberance, as if the war had been won. The national flag flew everywhere, even in the courtyards of Berlin's working-class apartment houses, where it had never been seen before.

When published in newspapers or shown in movie-house newsreels, the photographs of the August enthusiasm had an immediate "historic" aura. In the next few days and weeks journalists, politicians, and government officials contributed to this aura by employing a religious vocabulary to describe what was already known as the "August experiences." The "war enthusiasm" was a "holy" moment,[2] a "holy flame of anger,"[3] "heroic,"[4] a "revelation,"[5] it had brought forth a "rebirth through war,"[6] had brought Germans "out of the misery of everyday life to new heights."[7] "What Germany has experienced in these days was a miracle, a renewal of oneself; it was a shaking off of everything small and foreign; it was a most powerful recognition of one's own nature," wrote a *Tägliche Rundschau* journalist.[8] "Whatever the future may have in store for us," Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg stated at the close of the 4 August session

[1] See the letter from Prof. Dr. Messerer, 4 September 1914, Staatsarchiv München, Polizeidirektion, no. 4556.

[2] Gottfried Traub, "Heilige Gegenwart," *Illustrierte Zeitung* (Leipzig), no. 3713, 27 August 1914, p. 344.

[3] "Eine erhebende Kundgebung des geistigen Berlins," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 4 August 1914, no. 211, p. 3.

[4] "Der Siegessonntag," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 24 August 1914, no. 398 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 4.

[5] "In der Reichshauptstadt," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 August 1914, no. 182, p. 1.

[6] Oscar Schmitz, "Die Wiedergeburt durch den Krieg," *Der Tag*, 9 August 1914, no. 185.

[7] Quoted in Wilhelm Pressel, *Die Kriegspredigt 1914–1918 in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands* (Göttingen, 1967), p. 14.

[8] H. R., "Mobilisierung in Deutschland und in Frankreich," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 2 August 1914, no. 358 (Morgen), p. 1.

of parliament, "the fourth of August 1914 will, for all time, remain one of Germany's greatest days."[9] "One will speak and talk of this first week of August as long as the German people exist and the German language sounds. Whoever was able to experience it, he will be accompanied by its pictures and its emotions as long as he lives," wrote a *Tägliche Rundschau* journalist on 9 August.

As time passed the "spirit of 1914" would be invoked as an experience and a goal, as a holy memory and a utopian future. The "spirit of 1914," wrote the Berlin historian Friedrich Meinecke in late 1914, must be the "victory prize."[10] Future generations, wrote the journalist Ferdinand Avenarius in October 1914, would judge their present by how much of the "spirit of 1914" remained.[11] On 1 August 1915 the theologian Gottfried Traub claimed that "the August days . . . will remain a source of future strength, destroying all doubters."[12] The young author Walter Flex professed in 1916:

> It is my belief that the German spirit in August 1914 and after achieved heights such as no people before or after has seen. Happy is he who has stood at this peak and did not have to climb down. The following generations of Germans and other nations will look at this, God's water mark, as the edge of the border from which they walk forward.[13]

After the war the memory of 1914 would be invoked as an ideal and a goal. Gustav Stresemann claimed at the 1921 conference of the Liberal German People's Party that "never did a people stand purer before God and history than the German people in 1914." If we have "not been able to find our way back to the unity of 1914," continued Stresemann, "it must remain our goal."[14] The *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* wrote on the ten-year anniversary of the beginning of the war, one year after the Ruhr crisis, that we must look back to the "spirit of 1914" to "awaken the belief in the future of our own people."[15] Gertrud Baümer, one of Germany's leading female politicians and journalists, wrote in her memoirs, pub-

[9] Bethmann Hollweg's speech is reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire 1914–1918. Documents of the German Revolution*, vol. I (Stanford, 1932), p. 16.

[10] Friedrich Meinecke, "Um welche Güter kämpfen wir (19 August 1914)," pp. 50–51; and "Staatsgedanke und Nationalismus (October 1914)," p. 76, both in Friedrich Meinecke, *Die deutsche Erhebung von 1914. Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1914). Similarly, the Berlin law professor, Wilhlem Kahl, in "Dr. Kahls Rede in schwerer Zeit," *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 10 October 1914, BAL, RLB Pressearchiv, no. 7565, p. 8.

[11] Ferdinand Avenarius, "Die neue Zeit," *Der Kunstwart* 28, no. 1 (October, 1914), p. 4.

[12] Gottfried Traub, "Deutschlands Schwerttag," *Eiserne Blätter*, 1 August 1915, BA, Abt. Koblenz, NL Traub, no. 7, no p.

[13] Walter Flex, quoted in Benno Schneider and Ulrich Haacke (eds.), *Das Buch vom Kriege, 1914–1918. Urkunden, Berichte, Briefe, Erinnerungen* (Ebenhausen, 1933) p. 37.

[14] Quoted in *Nationalliberale Correspondenz*, 1 December 1921, BAL, 62 DAF 3, no. 697, p. 176.

[15] "Den Kriegsopfern," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 3 August 1924, no. 209, p. 5.

lished in 1933, that "come what may . . . the memory of that Sunday [1 August] will remain and will continue to be a value in itself."[16] In 1933 the National Socialists claimed that the origins of the present "revolution" lay in the "spirit of 1914." They described their accession to power as a recreation of the days of 1914. On 21 March 1933, the "Day at Potsdam" when Hitler and Hindenburg shook hands, the minister at the official church service, Dr. Dibelius, interpreted this symbolic handshake as the renewal of the "spirit of 1914," thus demonstrating that others saw it that way, too.[17]

What engendered such rhetoric? Certainly the August "experiences" were powerful. In August 1914 one had to be peculiarly dull not to feel the emotions C. E. Montague has so poignantly described (in a different context):

> the evening before a great battle must always make fires leap up in the mind . . . For there the wits and the heart may be really astir and at gaze, and the common man may have, for the hour, the artist's vision of life as an adventure and challenge, lovely, harsh, fleeting, and strange. The great throw, the new age's impending nativity, Fate with her fingers approaching the veil, about to lift – a sense of these things is a drug as strong as strychnine to quicken the failing pulse of the most heart-weary of moribund raptures.[18]

Yet some contemporaries not only asserted that these experiences were exciting, they interpreted them as a liminal moment, what Paul Tillich (in a different context) has termed a *Kairos*: "an outstanding moment in the temporal process, a moment in which the eternal breaks into the temporal – shaking and transforming it, creating a crisis in the depth of human existence."[19] In this "internal transformation,"[20] this purification of the soul, this "rebirth through war,"[21] when individual and collective identities were transformed, Germans felt the ecstasy that accompanies the belief that eternal truths and reality have become one. In the words of Rudolf Eucken, a philosophy professor and a Nobel laureate in literature:

> an exultation took place, a transformation of an ethical nature. We felt ourselves placed completely in the service of a higher task, a task which we ourselves had

[16] Gertrud Bäumer, *Lebensweg durch eine Zeitwende* (Tübingen, 1933), pp. 264–265.

[17] Thus, as on 4 August 1914, the text for the sermon was Romans 8, verse 31: "If God is for us, who can be against us."

[18] C. E. Montague, *Disenchantment* (Westport, 1978, first published 1922), p. 122.

[19] Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago, 1949), p. 45, and "Kairos. Ideen zur Geisteslage der Gegenwart," in Paul Tillich (ed.), *Kairos. Zur Geisteslage und Geisteswendung* (Darmstadt, 1926), pp. 1–21.

[20] Karl Mayr, "Wilhelm II," *Süddeutsche Monatshefte* 11 (September 1914), p. 790.

[21] Oscar Schmitz, *Das wirkliche Deutschland. Die Wiedergeburt durch den Krieg* (Munich, 1915), pp. 4 ff.; Schmitz, "Die Wiedergeburt durch den Krieg," *Der Tag*, 9 August 1914, no. 185.

not sought, but which had been placed upon us by a higher power, and which had therefore the compelling power of an imperative duty . . . We experienced a powerful upswing in our souls: the life of the whole became directly the life of each individual, everything stale was swept away, new fountains of life opened themselves up. We felt ourselves taken above ourselves, and we were full of burning desire to turn this new consciousness into action.[22]

The enthusiasm made Germans more religious, more courageous, more masculine, more authentic, brought the end of the "the superficiality of the soul and the mind, the drive for fun and pleasure."[23]

Above all, the "August experiences" were an experience of fraternity, of community, and a catalyst that would create what would later be termed the *Völksgemeinschaft*. In the words of the sociologist Emil Lederer, writing in 1915, "during the days of mobilization the society (*Gesellschaft*) which had existed transformed itself into a community (*Gemeinschaft*)."[24] It was here, in describing the nature of their experience of community, that contemporaries found their most colorful, their most inspired language. The conservative minister Eduard Schwartz professed:

The *Völk* has risen up as the only thing which has value and which will last. Over all individual fates stands that which we feel as the highest reality: the experience of belonging together.[25]

The theologian Ernst Troeltsch asserted:

Under this incredible pressure German life melted in that indescribable wonderful unity of sacrifice, brotherhood, belief, and certainty of victory which was, and is, the meaning of the unforgettable August.[26]

According to the liberal journalist Hellmut von Gerlach, "prejudices have fallen, false opinions have been corrected, people, divided before by enormous mountains, have come to see one another as comrades (*Völksgenossen*)."[27] The liberal journalist and feminist Gertrud Bäumer claimed that in August 1914 "the limitations of our egos broke down, our blood flowed to the blood of the other, we felt ourselves one body in a mystical unification."[28]

[22] Rudolf Eucken, "Der Sturm bricht los!," *Deutsche Kriegswochenschau*, 29 July 1917, no. 34, p. 1.

[23] Otto von Pfister, *Neues deutsches Leben und Streben*, second edition (Berlin, 1915), p. 5.

[24] Emil Lederer, "Zur Soziologie des Weltkrieges," in *Kapitalismus, Klassenstruktur und Probleme der Demokratie in Deutschland 1910–1940* (Göttingen, 1979), pp. 120–121. The essay is from 1915.

[25] Eduard Schwartz, *Der Krieg als nationales Erlebnis. Rede gehalten im Saal der Aubette zu Straßburg am 24. Oktober 1914* (Strasburg, 1914), pp. 2–3.

[26] Ernst Troeltsch, *Der Kulturkrieg* (Berlin, 1915), pp. 25–26.

[27] Hellmut von Gerlach, "Das Jahr des Umsturzes," *Die Welt am Montag* 20, no. 52 (28 December 1914), pp. 1–2.

[28] Gertrud Bäumer, "Frauenleben und Frauenarbeit," in Max Schwarte (ed.), *Der Weltkrieg in seiner Einwirkung auf das deutsche Volk* (Leipzig, 1918), p. 314.

Did this account of the "August experiences" accurately describe the emotions and feelings of the German people in 1914? Curiously, only recently have historians turned their attention to this question. Although there is an enormous literature on the outbreak of the First World War, on "war guilt," on the actions, intentions, and motivations of government officials, until recently most historians simply accepted contemporaries' accounts of German public opinion in 1914 as "enthusiastic" without systematically analyzing or investigating it.[29] George Mosse has typically written that the outbreak of war was met with "indescribable enthusiasm." Modris Eksteins saw the August experiences as a German "*Frühlingsfeier*, her rite of spring." Eric J. Leed claimed that "August 1914 was the last great national incarnation of the 'people' as a unified moral entity."[30]

Historians engaged in local histories on First World War Germany have suggested, however, that the mood of the population in July and August 1914 cannot be adequately explained by the adjective "enthusiastic." Klaus Schwarz noted in his 1971 history of Nuremberg in the First World War that "the population of Nuremberg reacted to the increasing possibility of war in a much more nuanced manner than is expressed by the cliché of broad war enthusiasm."[31] Volker Ullrich came to similar conclusions in his 1976 study of Hamburg,[32] Friedhelm Boll in his 1981 study of Braunschweig and Hanover,[33] Michael Stöcker in his 1994 study of Darmstadt,[34] Wolfgang Kruse in his 1994 study of the German working class and the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) in 1914,[35] Benjamin Ziemann in his 1997 study of the wartime experience in rural

[29] See Wolfgang Jäger, *Historische Forschung und politische Kultur in Deutschland. Die Debatte 1914–1980 über den Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Göttingen, 1984). Nor was this tendency limited to academic literature. In two popular books on the outbreak of the First World War there was also little discussion of the "spirit of 1914": Eugen Fischer, *Die kritischen 39 Tage. Von Sarajewo bis zum Weltbrand* (Berlin, 1928); and Emil Ludwig, *Juli 14. Vorabend zweier Weltkriege* (Hamburg, 1961 [first published in 1929]).

[30] George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York, 1990), p. 70; Modris Eksteins, *The Rites of Spring. The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Era* (Boston, 1989), p. 94; Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land. Combat and Identity in First World War* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 30. The most recent example in this vein is Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, 1998).

[31] Klaus Dietrich Schwarz in his *Weltkrieg und Revolution in Nürnberg. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Stuttgart, 1971), p. 106.

[32] Volker Ullrich, *Die Hamburger Arbeiterbewegung vom Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges bis zur Revolution 1918/1919* (Hamburg, 1976), p. 11; and *Kriegsalltag. Hamburg im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Cologne, 1982).

[33] Friedhelm Boll, *Massenbewegungen in Niedersachsen 1906–1920. Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den unterschiedlichen Entwicklungstypen Braunschweig und Hannover* (Bonn, 1981), p. 151.

[34] Michael Stöcker, *Augusterlebnis 1914 in Darmstadt. Legende und Wirklichkeit* (Darmstadt, 1994).

[35] Wolfgang Kruse, *Krieg und nationale Integration: eine Neuinterpretation des sozialdemokratischen Burgfriedensschlusses 1914/1915* (Essen, 1993).

Bavaria,[36] and Christian Geinitz in his 1998 study of Freiburg.[37] Although these works have gone a long way toward reforming the traditional view of the history of the August experiences, we still lack a study of German public opinion in July and August 1914 as a whole.[38] What were the German people feeling and thinking in those warm days in July and August 1914? How broad was the "war enthusiasm?" What were the geographical, occupational, and temporal variations in the way Germans greeted the outbreak of the war? What emotions are described by "war enthusiasm?" And what were the other emotions people felt in these exciting and confusing days? The first part of this book (chapters 1–3) attempts to answer these questions.

The second part (chapters 4–8) concentrates on the creation, genealogy, and reception of a narrative of the meaning of the August experiences, a narrative that contemporaries termed the "spirit of 1914." This narrative was one of the most important narratives of the war. On 31 July 1916 Theodor Wolff, the editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, wrote:

> Two years ago today the state of siege was declared . . . We know how false it is when *Temps* and similar newspapers reassure their readers that the German people greeted the outbreak of war with joy. Our people had heavy hearts; the possibility of war was a frightening giant nightmare which caused us many sleepless nights. The determination with which we went to war sprang not from joy, but from duty. Only a few talked of a "fresh, wonderful war." Only a very few, too, in comparison to the great masses, found flags immediately after the Austrian ultimatum and marched in front of the windows of the allied embassies, including the Italian, and in front of the Chancellor's office, screaming themselves hoarse.[39]

[36] Benjamin Ziemann, *Front und Heimat. Ländliche Kriegserfahrungen im südlichen Bayern 1914–1923* (Essen, 1997), pp. 39–54. Other local studies, such as Karl-Dietrich Ay, *Die Entstehung einer Revolution. Die Volksstimmung in Bayern während des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Berlin, 1968), Eberhard Lucas, *Die Sozialdemokratie in Bremen während des ersten Weltkrieges* (Bremen, 1969), Gunter Bers (ed.), *Die Kölner Sozialdemokratie und der Kriegsausbruch* (Hamburg, 1974), and Detlef Josczak, *Die Entwicklung der sozialistischen Arbeiterbewegung in Düsseldorf* (Hamburg, 1980), do not investigate war enthusiasm in 1914. For a brief account of the mood among the working classes in the Ruhr, see Jürgen Reulecke, "Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Arbeiterbewegung im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet," in *Arbeiterbewegung an Rhein und Ruhr. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung in Rheinland-Westfalen* (Wuppertal, 1974), pp. 205–239, especially pp. 210 ff.

[37] Christian Geinitz, *Kriegsfurcht und Kampfbereitschaft. Das Augusterlebnis in Freiburg. Eine Studie zum Kriegsbeginn 1914* (Essen, 1998). This work appeared after I had completed this book.

[38] Thomas Reithel's *Das "Wunder" der inneren Einheit. Studien zur deutschen und französischen Öffentlichkeit bei Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Bonn, 1996) by concentrating almost exclusively on newspapers, is unable to go beyond impressionistic accounts of the German public realm at the beginning of the war.

[39] T. W., untitled, *Berliner Tageblatt*, 31 July 1916, no. 387, p. 1, reprinted in Theodor Wolff, *Vollendete Tatsachen 1914–1917* (Berlin, 1918), p. 119.

Upon reading this, the Berlin censor, the Oberkommando in den Marken, General von Kessel, forbade indefinitely the newspaper's further publication. Kessel was upset, he wrote to Wolff, because "the many thousands who two years ago gave joyful expression to their patriotic feelings are described as an insignificant lump of hoarse screamers."[40] Although the *Berliner Tageblatt*, one of Germany's most respected newspapers, had many difficulties with censors during the war, this was its most serious crisis. Only Wolff's promise that he would not write any more articles during the war convinced Kessel to allow the *Berliner Tageblatt* to resume publication. (The prohibition against Wolff was lifted in November 1916.)

Why was a certain memory of the August experiences so important to Kessel? Certainly Kessel was not angry because he believed Wolff's version to be historically inaccurate. Rather, aware (whether consciously or unconsciously) that modern political power cannot be sustained through physical coercion but only through consensus, Kessel and compatriots aimed to turn a certain narrative of the history of the "spirit of 1914" into a social myth, that is, an important, unquestioned historical narrative. Kessel hoped to inscribe in the myth of the "spirit of 1914" the conservative norms and values, and to make this narrative the representation of the "common sense" of the German political culture, "the values, expectations, and implicit rules that expressed and shaped collective intentions and actions."[41] The conservative history of the "spirit of 1914" claimed that all Germans had felt that peculiar emotion known to contemporaries as "war enthusiasm," that in this moment of enthusiasm they had become not only aware of their common national identity – the ideas a community shares as beliefs – but that the best description of that identity, of what was German, was found in the conservative ideology. This conservative history of the "spirit of 1914" was thus a narrative of a past

[40] Kessel's 1 August 1916 letter, as well as the correspondence which followed, is in BAL, Reichsamt des Innern, no. 12276, pp. 247 ff., and in BAL, Reichskanzlei, no. 1392, p. 24. Theodor Wolff's reflections on the affair can be found in his diary, *Tagebücher 1914–1918*, vol. II (Boppard am Rhein, 1984), pp. 406 ff.

[41] This is Lynn Hunt's definition of "political culture" in her *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, 1984), p. 10. I have discussed aspects of my understanding of the mythical nature of the narrative of the "spirit of 1914" in "Der Mythos des 'Geistes von 1914' in der Weimarer Republik," in Wolfgang Bialas and Bernhard Stenzel (eds.), *Die Weimarer Republik zwischen Metropole und Provinz. Intellektuellendiskurse zur politischen Kultur* (Weimar, 1996), pp. 85–96. My understanding of political myth owes much to William McNeil, "The Care and Repair of Public Myth," in *Mythistory and other Essays* (Chicago, 1986), pp. 23 ff.; Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York, 1922); Leszek Kolakowski, *The Presence of Myth* (Chicago, 1989); Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven, 1946); and Manfred Frank, *Der kommende Gott. Vorlesungen über die Neue Mythologie* (Frankfurt/Main, 1982). My understanding of collective, or social memory has benefited especially from James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, 1992).

event, but with a purpose distinctly in the present. Indeed, given the myth-makers' intentions, it is not surprising that their myth of the "spirit of 1914," an account of the history of German public opinion in July and August 1914, became increasingly more removed from its real history. As Northrop Frye has noted: "a myth, in nearly all its senses, is a narrative that suggests two inconsistent responses: first, 'this is what is said to have happened,' and second, 'this almost certainly is not what happened, at least in precisely the way described.'"[42]

Political myths are an essential part of modern political culture. They constitute that web of shared meaning by which the members of a complex society form and sustain their association. A political myth, as a representation of the nation, allows a complex social system to perceive itself as a unit, as an entity and to perceive this "unity" as something natural, self-evident. In other words, a political myth is both an explanation of social reality, and a constituent element of that reality, a stabilizing social influence.[43] That in the First World War conservative elites attempted to employ the narrative of the "spirit of 1914" as the most poignant representation of the German collective identity points not only to the power of this narrative, but also to a latent crisis of conservative legitimacy;[44] for this particular construction of collective memory represented a break with the collective memories that had governed Germany in the past.

Before 1914 German political culture was not national, but divided into partial political cultures. In spite of the efforts of government elites in socializing institutions such as the schools and the military, there were no unquestioned national "myths," rather, Social Democrats worked hard to expose the conservative narratives as ideology, as the expression of class interests. The ideological differences in Wilhelmine Germany were profound: if what contemporaries termed the bourgeois ideology was, in its own words, "*staatserhaltend*," that is, upholding the state, the working-class ideology was "revolutionary." The right tried to unite the bourgeois parties against the red menace to culture and decency (*Sammlungspolitik*). The left accused the right of immorality – Socialist newspapers published all the tawdry scandals of Wilhelmine society, exposing the moral injustices of a class society.[45] The ideological and class divisions were even reflected in the existence of at least two of almost

[42] Northrop Frye, "The Koine of Myth: Myth as a Universally Intelligible Language," in *Myth and Metaphor. Selected Essays 1974–1988* (Charlottesville, 1990), p. 4.

[43] Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Urbane, 1967), p. 159.

[44] Andreas Dörner, *Politischer Mythos und symbolische Politik* (Opladen, 1995).

[45] Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture. Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (New York, 1985). On the concept of partial political cultures, see Detlef Lehnert and Klaus Megerle (eds.), *Politische Identität und Nationale Gedenktage. Zur politischen Kultur in der Weimarer Republik* (Opladen, 1989).

every form of sociability: a Social Democratic and a *bürgerlich* singing society, gymnastic, swimming, or bicycling club, a Social Democratic and a *bürgerlich* newspaper, theater, or library.

In 1916, by contesting the "history" of the conservative narrative of the "spirit of 1914," Theodor Wolff attempted to expose the conservative narrative as ideology, much as Social Democratic authors had done before 1914. Yet in the First World War Wolff was a lonely actor. Almost all other participants in political discourse in the First World War subscribed to the narrative that in the 1914 experiences German society became a German community. Like Kessel, almost all participants in political discourse in Germany during the First World War hoped to accumulate political capital by identifying their ideology with the "spirit of 1914." In this political discourse the "spirit of 1914" was employed as a metaphor for one's own political ideology. These efforts at identification were most bluntly stated in a 1919 campaign poster: "Vote DNVP [German National People's Party, that is, the Conservative Party], we are the spirit of 1914." Yet radical nationalists, a political movement with its institutional basis in the Pan-German League, likewise claimed that in the "spirit of 1914" all Germans had become Pan-Germans. Social Democrats and democratic liberals asserted that the willingness of all citizens in 1914 to assist in the defence of the nation proved that the nation was composed of competent, mature citizens. A reform of the Bismarckian constitution would provide a healthier, a stronger state, would uphold the "spirit of 1914."

If the discourse on the "spirit of 1914" had been limited to debates over the nature of political ideology the symbol would not have attained the power it did, would not have been so widely accepted. Yet the war was a collective experience; the German people needed to know what they were fighting for, what they were dying for. There were many appeals during the war to sustain German unity; very often these appeals were couched as a call to sustain the "spirit of 1914." The unity of 1914 would be conserved by subscribing to a shared memory of these experiences, that is, it was both a story that described the group to itself and the means by which that group, by holding the story sacred, sustained its community.

The narrative of the "spirit of 1914" attained its widespread acceptance, however, not only because it spoke to a need to understand the origins and nature of the German collectivity, a need for representation, but also by becoming a part of the strategy for winning the war. There were two different forms of the myth of the "spirit of 1914" during the war, reflecting two different functions. There was a social myth, a collective narrative of a past event, a representation of the nation. Alongside it was what I term a transcendent myth, a claim that through faith one could

overcome difficulties that could not be overcome through a more rational approach. In German propaganda the myth of the "spirit of 1914" was a means of mobilizing enthusiasm. The successes of the German army against a numerically superior opponent were interpreted as the product of a greater faith against an overly rational opponent, a victory of "faith over disbelief."[46] In the words of Gustav Stresemann in 1917, "it was this spirit that has produced the victory of the minority over the majority."[47] As morale declined and the "enthusiasm" faded, propagandists repeatedly invoked the "spirit of 1914." In 1917 a propaganda officer, Spickernagel, asked his follow officers to work to bring back the "spirit of 1914:"

> this "spirit of 1914," which is still alive in the army, this spirit of manliness and the happy and willing incorporation of the individual in the whole, this faithful and unshakeable trust in the leadership and in one's own strength, . . . to reawaken this spirit is the key to our propaganda.[48]

Till the very end of the war Germans hoped that victory would come through total commitment, that the army possessing – in Fichte's oft quoted words – "holy enthusiasm" would defeat the army lacking it. Thus, in propagandistic discourse the myth not only described the community that the soldiers were dying for, it also discussed eternal, transcendent, religious questions, offering hope to the believers. In other words, it valorized a mythological as opposed to a critical epistemology. Faith was opposed to rationality, belief to critical thought.

These two forms of the myth served different functions, and met different intellectual and emotional needs. The social myth spoke to the need to represent to the German people the nation that they were fighting and dying for; the transcendent myth spoke to the need to find a way out of this crisis.[49] Any study of the myth of the spirit of 1914 must not only describe the genealogy of the myth – the various forms of the narrative as it developed over the years – it must also treat the specific ways in which various groups and ideologies constructed their version of the myth, and analyze the context in which the propagation of the myth took place.

[46] Rudolf Borchardt, *Der Krieg und die deutsche Selbsteinkehr. Rede öffentlich gehalten am 5. Dezember 1914 zu Heidelberg* (Heidelberg, 1915), pp. 10–11.

[47] Gustav Stresemann, *Deutsche Gegenwart und Zukunft. Vortrag gehalten in Stuttgart am 18. November 1917* (Stuttgart, 1917), pp. 3–4. Similarly, Arden Buchholz, *Glaube ist Kraft!* (Stuttgart, 1917), Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Ideal und Macht*, second edition (Munich, 1916), J. Kessler, *Unser Glaube ist Sieg* (Dresden, 1915), and Gertrud Prellwitz, *Durch welche Kräfte wird Deutschland siegen? Religiöse Vorträge* (Jena, 1914).

[48] Stanford, Hoover Collection Archives, Moenkmoeller collection, Box 3, Liste no. 833–837, p. 6 of brochure.

[49] See Hans Blumenberg, *Work on Myth* (Cambridge, 1985); and Sabine Behrenbeck, *Der Kult um die toten Helden. Nationalsozialistische Mythen, Riten und Symbole* (Vierow, 1996).

1 Public opinion in Germany, July 1914: the evidence of the crowds

Newspapers as a source for studying German public opinion in 1914

How can one study public opinion, defined here as the sum of individual opinions on a specific issue, in an era before public-opinion polls? The greatest difficulty is in finding the sources that allow us to recreate a representative sample, one which recognizes the differences in occupation, class, age, gender, and geography. In their path-breaking works on French public opinion in the First World War Jean-Jacques Becker and P. J. Flood were able to employ a rich variety of unpublished contemporary governmental reports, often written by local schoolteachers.[1] Unfortunately, German government officials were neither as diligent nor as curious as their French counterparts. In August 1914 the Prussian government, perceiving a sufficiently patriotic population, cancelled the customary quarterly reports on the events and mood of the local population (*Zeitungsberichte*), as well as the reports on the state of the Social Democratic and anarchistic "movement," asking government officials to concentrate on other, more pressing duties.[2] Those governmental reports on public opinion which do exist either start too late – as with the reports of the Berlin Police Chief, the first of which is dated 22 August 1914,[3] or are little more than one official's readings of the newspapers, as with the "public-opinion" reports prepared by Geheimrat von Berger for the Prussian Interior Ministry,[4] or simply state that there was nothing excep-

[1] Jean-Jacques Becker, *1914: comment les Français sont entrés dans la guerre* (Paris, 1977); P. J. Flood, *France 1914–1918: Public Opinion and the War Effort* (New York, 1990).

[2] The proclamation of the Prussian Interior Minister of 18 August 1914 is in GhStAPK, Rep. 2II, no. 2811, Bd. 7.

[3] These have been edited and published by Ingo Materna and Hans-Joachim Schreckenbach (eds.), *Dokumente aus geheimen Archiven. Band 4: 1914–1918. Berichte des Berliner Polizeipräsidenten zur Stimmung und Lage der Bevölkerung in Berlin 1914–1918* (Weimar, 1987). The reports of the local political police, on which these reports are based, are generally more interesting, and are only excerpted in this edition. They can be found in BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, Sect. 7, nos. 15805–15806.

[4] The "reports on the mood of the population," prepared by Berger, can be found in GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 949, no. 20. They are biased in as much as the Prussian Minister of the Interior used these reports to support his calls for more propaganda.

tional to report.[5] Furthermore, almost all the reports reflect more the prejudices of their author than the public opinion the authors were supposed to be describing.

In theory it should be possible to put together a representative sample of private letters and diaries. Yet, although there are many letters and diaries in archives and libraries, most of those who wrote diaries and letters in 1914 and, more importantly, who deposited their letters and diaries in libraries and archives, belonged to the middle or upper class, or were soldiers at the front. We lack the letters and diaries of farmers, the working class, the lower middle class, or, in general, of those waiting at home.[6] Although we can use the material collected in archives for an occasional insight it will not serve as the foundation for a broad study.

The student of German public opinion in 1914, unable to rely upon archival material, is forced therefore to turn to published material. Yet which texts? Memoirs have been cited by many historians as evidence of widespread enthusiasm for, as Hanna Hafkebrink has noted, most memoirs describe an "ecstatic expression of happiness" in 1914. Yet most memoirs were written by the educated elite.[7] Just as important, most were written years after the event. As Paul Fussell has shown for English First World War memoirs, such memoirs provide more evidence concerning the a priori with which the authors organized their experiences than evidence about their authentic feelings or the feelings of those around them.[8] In Germany memory was even less likely than in Great Britain to be objective, for after the creation of a social memory around the "spirit of 1914" how well could one remember what one had felt in 1914? Even if one did remember, how likely was one to tell the truth? The National

[5] These are the problems with the only governmental reports on the mood of the population in August 1914 (that I have found). These reports were prepared by two very ambitious *Regierungspräsidenten*, in Trier and in Düsseldorf. The underlying problem is that the mood of the population was one of the criteria for advancement in the Prussian bureaucracy. Thus, there was always a tendency to depict the mood of one's own population in rosy terms. For Trier, see GhStAPK, Rep 77, Tit. 332r, no. 68; for Düsseldorf, see GhStAPK, Rep 77, Tit. 332r, no. 123; HStA Düsseldorf, Landratsamt Düsseldorf, no. 201; and HStA Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf Regierung, Politische Akten, no. 14911. In Bavaria, all local government officials responded to a request by the Bavarian government for information concerning problems during the mobilization with: "none". HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, Stellv. GK des I AK, no. 955.

[6] Bernd Ulrich has analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of this source in "Feldpostbriefe im Ersten Weltkrieg. Bedeutung und Zensur," in Peter Knoch (ed.), *Kriegsalltag* (Stuttgart, 1989), pp. 40–83; and in *Die Augenzeugen. Deutsche Feldpostbriefe in Krieg und Nachkriegszeit, 1914–1933* (Essen, 1997).

[7] Hanna Hafkebrink, *Unknown Germany. An Inner Chronicle of the First World War based on Letters and Diaries* (New Haven, 1948), p. 30. The only detailed working-class memoir I could find is Karl Retzlaw, *Spartacus: Aufstieg und Niedergang. Erinnerungen eines Parteiarbeiters* (Frankfurt/Main, 1971).

[8] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford, 1975).

Liberal lawyer and member of parliament, Eugen Schiffer, who was in Berlin in July and August 1914, wrote in his private diary that the population was depressed. In his published memoirs, however, written forty years later, after Schiffer had been Finance Minister and Vice-Chancellor during the Weimar Republic, and President of the "German Administration for Justice" in the Soviet occupation zone, Schiffer wrote that "Germany" had been enthusiastic at the beginning of the war.[9]

Only contemporary sources avoid the danger of looking back at the August experiences through the lens of the narrative of the "spirit of 1914," only contemporary sources reveal the individual experiences before the memory of the 1914 experiences became a social memory. Yet here, too, which texts? Many historians, arguing that a nation's public opinion is expressed by its intellectual elite, the group who, in Mannheim's famous phrase, "provide an interpretation of the world for that society," have concentrated on the contemporary writings of Germany's intellectual elite.[10] This approach produces a perception of a widespread German "war enthusiasm" for, as Thomas Mann noted in 1915, in 1914 most German intellectuals "sang as if in competition with each other the praises of war, with deep passion, as if they and the people, whose voice they are, saw nothing better, nothing more beautiful than to fight many enemies."[11] Yet language and culture were hotly debated in Wilhelmine Germany. Between 1890 and 1914 Social Democratic "intellectuals" developed an oppositional, "working-class" culture, developed what Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge have termed a "counter public realm," with their own newspapers, magazines, theaters, and clubs.[12] The ideas of academic intellectuals were hardly the only ideas for Germans to choose from. Moreover, one must keep in mind that in the First World

[9] Schiffer's diary is in BA Koblenz, Nl Eugen Schiffer, no. 3 – Tagebuch. His memoir is *Ein Leben für den Liberalismus* (Berlin, 1951), pp. 26 ff.

[10] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, 1964), p. 10.

[11] Thomas Mann, "Gedanken im Krieg," *Die Neue Rundschau* (November 1914), p. 1473. Klaus Vondung, "Geschichte als Weltgericht," in Klaus Vondung (ed.), *Kriegserlebnis. Der erste Weltkrieg in der literarischen Gestaltung und symbolischen Deutung der Nationen* (Göttingen, 1980), p. 64; Klaus-Peter Philippi, *Volk des Zorns: Studien zur 'poetischen Mobilmachung' in der deutschen Literatur zu Beginn des 1. Weltkrieges, ihren Voraussetzungen und Implikationen* (Munich, 1979); Klaus Schröter, "Der Chauvinismus und seine Tradition. Deutsche Schriftsteller und der Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkriegs," in *Literatur und Zeitgeschichte. Fünf Aufsätze zur deutschen Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert* (Mainz, 1970), pp. 7 ff.; and Eckart Koester, *Literatur und Weltkriegsideologie* (Kronberg, 1977) see a general war enthusiasm on the basis of literary texts; as does Klaus Schwabe, in *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral. Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Göttingen, 1969), on the basis of published texts by German professors.

[12] Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge in *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (Frankfurt/Main, 1973). More generally, see Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture. Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (New York, 1985).

War government officials censored any history of the August experiences that varied from the official narrative of the "spirit of 1914." The only journalist during the war who attempted to criticize the official narrative, Theodor Wolff, was harshly punished for his temerity.

Recognizing that intellectual discourse can not by itself be considered equivalent with public opinion, some historians have chosen to analyze the statements of the leaders of the political parties on a particular issue. Within this analytic framework the Social Democratic Party's vote for war credits on 4 August is viewed as evidence of working-class support for the war.[13] Yet election results do not provide a precise gauge of the mood of the public on a specific issue. It is by no means clear that because one voted for the Social Democratic Party in 1912 one agreed with the party's vote on 4 August 1914. As a practical matter, parliament met only briefly on 4 August before recessing until December 1914.

We are required to rely upon newspapers. Fortunately, newspapers provide a rich and representative sample of published public opinion.[14] Wilhelmine Germany had a rich newspaper culture, with over 3,600 newspapers. The larger cities had at least two newspapers; Berlin had over fifty. Most of these newspapers published daily; some of the larger newspapers, such as those in Berlin, had three daily editions. Most had a small circulation. Yet some newspapers in the larger cities had a circulation of around half a million. Not only were there many newspapers, newspaper culture was highly variegated and distinctly segregated. In 1914 all political parties had their own official or semi-official newspapers, which were either the "spokesman" for the party, or the place to find out the party line on any particular issue. The Social Democratic Party had *Vorwärts*; the Progressive Party (*Fortschrittliche Volkspartei*) had the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, and the *Vossische Zeitung*; the National Liberals had the *Kölnische Zeitung* and the *Magdeburgische Zeitung*; the Center Party had the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*; traditional conservatives had the *Neue Preußische Zeitung*, better known as the *Kreuz-Zeitung*; the agrarian conservatives had the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*; and the radical nationalist, or

[13] This is especially the case with Social Democratic historians. See Susanne Miller, *Burgfrieden und Klassenkampf. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf, 1974); and Dieter Groh, *Negative Integration und revolutionäre Attentismus. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges.* (Frankfurt/Main, 1973).

[14] The best overview of the Wilhelmian press is in Klaus Wernecke, *Der Wille zur Weltgeltung. Aussenpolitik und Öffentlichkeit im Kaiserreich am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Düsseldorf, 1970), pp. 11–25. Peter Fritzsche's *Reading Berlin* (Cambridge, 1996) has a superb description of the popular press of Berlin around the turn of the century. Unfortunately, Fritzsche's analysis of the impact of this media, i.e., that it helped create an urban consciousness, a local identity that transcended class boundaries, exaggerates the power of the press and underestimates the powerful traditions and experience of class identity.

Pan-German right had the *Tägliche Rundschau*, the *Deutsche Zeitung*, and the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*. The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (and much of the smaller provincial press) presented the views of the government.

In this hotly contested market the press could with some justice be considered the voice of public opinion. In the words of one contemporary journalist:

> the newspaper has a fine nose for the changes in weather in the mood and opinions of its readership. The readership and the newspaper react to each other, and in the degree to which a newspaper is capable of bringing its opinion into harmony with that of a large part of the population, so, too, grows its power and importance; so, too, it becomes the voice of the people.[15]

Of course, the press not only reflected "public opinion," it also shaped it, as mediator, as agency. Fellow travellers within a political community, be he or she a reader of the conservative *Kreuz-Zeitung* or the Social Democratic *Vorwärts*, tended to look to their newspaper for instruction.

Accordingly, many contemporaries interested in studying public opinion turned first to the press. The political police in Hamburg began their investigations by reading the lead articles of a broad spectrum of newspapers.[16] When in the last week of July 1914 newspapers described "The Mood in Germany" these articles consisted either of quotes from the lead articles of a spectrum of newspapers, or descriptions of the crowds in the streets.[17] Examining the lead articles of a set of newspapers from different political directions should therefore provide one with a literary seismograph of the different strains of public opinion; the newspaper descriptions of the crowds in the streets should provide one with the evidence we need to develop our own account of the August experiences.

In his superb study of newspaper opinion in July and August 1914 Theo Goebel concluded that in July 1914 the bourgeois and conservative press was generally bellicose, whereas the SPD press was anti-war, and harshly critical of the government.[18] Although bourgeois newspapers recognized

[15] Dr. Dammert, "Die Aufgabe der Presse," *Zeitungs-Verlag* 16, no. 44 (29 October 1915), p. 958.

[16] See, for example, the newspaper clippings in Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Politische Polizei, S20132, vol. 9 – Verbote der Friedensdemonstration der Sozialdemokratie.

[17] For example: "Die Stimmung in Deutschland," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 25 July 1914 (Abend), no. 890, p. 1.

[18] Theo Goebel, *Deutsche Pressestimmen in der Julikrise 1914* (Stuttgart, 1939). In spite of its publication date, this is not a piece of National Socialist historiography. It remains the best study of German newspaper opinion during these days, although it has recently been supplemented by Thomas Reithel, *Das "Wunder" der inneren Einheit. Studien zur deutschen*

that the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia on 23 July meant war, with the exception of the radical nationalist *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* and the *Post* they approved the Austrian action; there was surprisingly little deviation in the interpretations of the left-liberal, the National Liberal, and the conservative press. They hoped, however, that the coming war between Austria and Serbia would remain localized.[19] If the war could not be localized, if Russia should intervene, bourgeois newspapers declared that Germany was willing to stand by Austria. As many newspapers recognized that it was likely that Russia would intervene, they in essence accepted German involvement in a coming war.[20]

In the next week many bourgeois newspapers began to employ the heroic tropes that would dominate the pages of the press in the first week of August. A *Weser-Zeitung* (liberal) journalist wrote on 26 July that although war is terrible, peace is not worth retaining if Austria is to be humbled, ending with a quote from Schiller:

> we cannot allow Austria to go under. For then we would ourselves be in danger of becoming a part of the larger Russian colossus, with its barbarism. We must struggle now in order to win ourselves our freedom and our peace. The storm from the east and the west will be enormous but the ability, the courage, and the sacrifice of our army will shine through. Every German will feel the glorious duty of being worthy of the forefathers of Leipzig and Sedan. A single pulse will run though every German's veins:
>
> Only he who is willing to lose his life
> Can win it.
>
> (*Und setzet Ihr nicht das Leben ein,*
> *Nie wird Euch das Leben gewonnen sein.*)[21]

This heroic trope was constructed in order to prepare Germans for war. A stereotypical description of the enemy followed a similar aim. The

und französischen Öffentlichkeit bei Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges (Bonn, 1986). For a list of the newspapers I have read see the bibliography. There is a very useful and immense compilation of excerpts from German newspapers from July to October 1914 in Eberhard Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente. Der Weltkrieg 1914/15 in der Darstellung der zeitgenössischen Presse* (Munich, 1914–1917). The literature on the outbreak of the First World War is enormous. The two best discussions of German policy during July 1914 are Fritz Fischer's courageous *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York, 1967); and Volker R. Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914* (London, 1973).

[19] Some of the reactions to the note are excerpted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, pp. 10 ff. See Goebel, *Deutsche Pressestimmen in der Julikrise 1914*, pp. 73 ff. Among bourgeois newspapers only the left-liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung* expressed doubts about the Austrian foreign policy without, however, directly criticizing it.

[20] "Oesterreichs Note bei Freund und Feind. Einmischung Rußlands," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 25 July 1914, no. 543 (Morgen).

[21] "Krieg oder Nichtkrieg," *Weser-Zeitung*, 26 July 1914 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe, no. 24350), p. 1.

Social Democratic *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung* noted that "with the revolver shots in Sarajevo an epoch of the wildest agitation against everything which is Serbian or Slavic has begun . . . in all bourgeois papers the pan-Slavic danger is being painted in the most vivid colors."[22] The *Kreuz-Zeitung* justified German assistance with "the absence of culture in the Balkans." Russia was described as "Asiatic," "barbaric," and the coming battle as one between "Germans and Slavs."[23] Indeed, Theo Goebel, writing in 1939, noted that he found "almost word for word the same arguments and calumny" in July 1914 against Pan-Slavism as were employed in German newspapers in 1939 against Bolshevism.[24]

Although such rhetoric was bellicose almost all newspapers hoped that the war could be localized, either between Serbia and Austria, or between Serbia and Austria and Germany and Russia; that is, journalists hoped that the French and English would not participate. Only Pan-Germans openly called for a preventative war. The Pan-German leader Heinrich Class wrote on 25 July in the *Alldeutsche Blätter* that:

> our law must be: to stand by Austria to the last man – with all our might, in the awareness that we are not to be permitted to lose – and no matter what may come – to use this opportunity to the full for the noble inner cleansing of our people, for their rebirth.[25]

In contrast, the SPD press emphatically criticized the Austrian ultimatum. On 25 July *Vorwärts* published a proclamation painting war in the darkest terms: "unemployed men, widowed women, and orphaned children." The SPD blamed Austria for working "directly to provoke war," and stated:

> the class-conscious proletariat protests in the name of humanity and culture against the criminal actions of those agitating for war (*Kriegshetzer*) . . . Not one drop of German blood should be sacrificed for the power-hungry Austrian rulers and the imperialistic profit interests.[26]

Throughout the following week, up till the imposition of censorship with the state of siege on 31 July, SPD newspapers continued to describe

[22] "Der Popanz des Panslawismus," *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, 9 July 1914, no. 157, p. 1.

[23] "Europas Schicksalstunde," *General-Anzeiger* (Dortmund), 27 July 1914, p. 1; and "Vor der Entscheidung," *Alldeutsche Blätter* 24, no. 31 (1 August 1914), p. 277. The *Kreuz-Zeitung* is quoted in Theo Goebel, *Deutsche Pressestimmen in der Julikrise 1914*, p. 33. "Asiatic" is from *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten*, quoted in "Die Sozialdemokratie gegen den Krieg," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 345 (Morgen), p. 2. "Barbaric" is from "Der Menschheit heilige Rechte," *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, quoted in Goebel, *Deutsche Pressestimmen in der Julikrise 1914*, pp. 194–195.

[24] Goebel, *Deutsche Pressestimmen in der Julikrise 1914*, p. 213.

[25] Heinrich Class, *Alldeutsche Blätter*, no. 31, quoted in Lothar Werner, *Der Alldeutsche Verband 1890–1918* (Berlin, 1935), pp. 198–199.

[26] "Aufruf," *Vorwärts*, 25 July 1914, no. 200a (Extra).

war's horrors, continued to argue that Germany should not fight for Austria.[27]

Such criticism was expected. More exceptional was the criticism of Austria by *Die Post* (Berlin) and the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (Essen), both controlled by heavy industry, both known to have ties to the Pan-German League, and both often criticized before 1914 for their chauvinism. These newspapers warned Germany on 25–27 July not to undertake a world war for the defence of Austria. The *Post*, for example, wrote:

> If in fact the Austrian government has gone forward entirely on its own responsibility and has neglected getting in touch with Berlin, then the responsibility for its step which this time, in truth, leaves nothing to be desired in the matter of energy, falls back on it alone. Austria-Hungary goes forward independently? Good. Then let her go forward independently. We can wait.[28]

The *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* wrote that "we are not required to support Habsburg wars of aggression."[29]

Late on 29 July newspapers reported that the Russian mobilization, which would bring with it the German mobilization and war, was near.[30] When the next day extras told of the Russian mobilization the news was consumed by a public well prepared for it. On 31 July 1914, German newspapers discussed the proclamation of the state of siege and the German ultimatum to Russia, due to expire early the next day. Most bourgeois newspapers hoped for peace, although they recognized that a war might be just over the horizon.[31] In general, bourgeois newspapers on 31 July reflected a mood of tense waiting. Many articles stated – often in the same paragraph – their hope that war would not come and their belief that if war did come it would be a just war, and a war for which Germany was well prepared.

The SPD leadership, in contrast, published an extra on 31 July calling for mass demonstrations on Sunday, 2 August, "for peace and against the

[27] For example, "Der Auftakt zum Weltkrieg," *Vorwärts*, 26 July 1914, no. 201, p. 1; and "Bluthunde, Massenmörder und Volksunterdrücker wollen den Weltkrieg heraufbeschwören," *Volksfreund* (Braunschweig), 27 July 1914, no. 172, p. 1.

[28] Quoted in Jonathan Scott, *Five Weeks. The Surge of Public Opinion on the Eve of the Great War* (New York, 1927), p. 119.

[29] "Habsburgische Gewaltpolitik," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 24 July 1914 (Abend), p. 1. On the divisions within the Pan-German League in 1914, see the book by the editor of the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, Theodor Riesmann-Grone, *Der Erdenkrieg und die Alldeutschen* (Mülheim, 1919).

[30] "Der Entscheidung entgegen," "Direkt vor der Entscheidung," and "Bisher keine Mobilmachung," are, for example, the headlines of the lead articles in the *Magdeburgische Zeitung* on 30 and 31 July 1914, nos. 557–559 respectively.

[31] "Die Krise ist noch nicht überstanden," *Kösliner Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 177, p. 1.

warmongers (*Kriegshetzer*!)."[32] These were strong words. Yet careful readers of the SPD press in the last week of peace also noted that although most SPD newspapers were stridently anti-war some Social Democratic newspapers reminded readers of the party's traditional dislike of Russia, even evoking a fear not only of Russian autocracy but of the Russian population.[33] Some SPD journalists and politicians openly stated that if war came the working class would join in the defence of the fatherland. Friedrich Stampfer, who would later become the editor of *Vorwärts*, wrote that the coming war would decide the "existence or non-existence" of Germany. A defeat of Germany would be:

> something unthinkable, horrible. If war alone is the most horrible of horrors, this war is made even more gruesome by the fact that it is not being fought between civilized nations . . . we do not desire that our women and children should be the victims of the cossack's bestialities.[34]

In summary, the "public opinion" reflected in the lead articles of the newspapers in July 1914 speaks neither of a broad "war enthusiasm" nor of German unity. Most bourgeois newspapers hoped that the war could be localized and couched the coming war as defensive, as necessary, as historic, as inevitable. Only a few embraced the war as a positive good. Social Democratic newspapers supported the German diplomatic efforts but continued to publish articles describing the horror of war, labelling war an atrocity incompatible with civilization, and hoping that this war would soon end.[35]

Although aware that few newspapers openly called for war, the Viennese author and journalist Karl Kraus, in his scathing critique of German and Austrian newspaper opinion, "In these Great Times," written in 1914, claimed that newspapers were in part responsible for engendering a climate of war enthusiasm. He did not assert that the newspapers were themselves "enthusiastic," but that the press in its political commentary, with its tendency to simplify, to sensationalize, with its phrases and clichés, had "brought humanity to the point of such a lack of imagination that it is able to undertake a war of attrition against itself."[36]

[32] "Das Ende der sozialdemokratischen Proteste," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 3 August 1914, no. 385, (Morgen), p. 3.

[33] For example, "Hände weg!," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 852 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 1.

[34] Friedrich Stampfer, "Sein oder Nichtsein," quoted in Miller, *Burgfrieden und Klassenkampf*, p. 54; and Groh, *Negative Integration*, pp. 664–665.

[35] On 4 August 1914, for example, the *Rheinische Zeitung* wrote that "now the absolute horror has arrived . . . the World War has begun." "Ernste Tage," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 178, p. 2.

[36] Karl Kraus, "In dieser grossen Zeit," in *Weltgericht I* (Frankfurt/Main, 1988), pp. 9–24. The quote is on p. 16. The talk was given on 19 November 1914.

Contemporary SPD newspapers stated this more bluntly. They accused bourgeois journalists of "warmongering" (*Kriegshetzen*). The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), for example, warned that "the bourgeoisie, at least according to the language of its newspapers, desires war."[37] The *Leipziger Volkszeitung* was especially upset by the claims of bourgeois newspapers to speak for the German people:

These German press cossacks speak of themselves as if four and three-quarters of a million Social Democratic voters, and all of the hundreds of thousands who stand behind the SPD, simply did not exist . . . Every bourgeois newspaper promises "in the name of the German people" to go each step of the way with the insanity of the Austrian politics; each newspaper states that "Germany" stands behind Austria.[38]

The claim that "Germany" stands behind Austria was first made in articles entitled "War enthusiasm in Germany,"[39] articles describing the "enthusiastic" crowds in the larger German cities on 25 and 26 July. In these articles, journalists first formulated the account of German public opinion which would become the myth of the "spirit of 1914." The *Tägliche Rundschau* journalist wrote of the crowds in Berlin:

Yes, that was a beautiful song these last twenty-four hours has sung. Many experienced its power and beauty as a revelation, and the memory of this revelation will remain a living value, come what may. What we have experienced in these hours is that we are a single *Volk*. Differences, usually far too emphasized, have been subsumed under the grandeur of a greater idea.[40]

The *Kölnische Zeitung* journalist wrote:

today the street demonstrations scream out a public opinion which can be characterized with the words: the German people are ready and determined, if it must be, to take out their swords, to take out their old symbol, the Iron Cross, to fight, to bleed, and perhaps to die for our beloved German Fatherland, for the Kaiser, and the empire.[41]

Such articles were curious not only for their seeming embrace of war, but also for the way in which the journalists treated these crowds as evidence of "public opinion." Crowd behavior in Wilhelmine Germany was a hotly contested field of activity. Before 1914 conservative journalists

[37] "Die Arbeiterklasse und der Weltkrieg," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), 31 July 1914, no. 176, p. 1.

[38] "Gemeingefährliche Anmaßungen," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 25 July 1914, no. 169, p. 1.

[39] "Begeisterung in Berlin und Wien," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 345 (Morgen), p. 1; "Die Begeisterung in Berlin," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 374 (Morgen), p. 2; and "Begeisterung in Deutschland," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 564 (Abend), p. 1.

[40] "Eine Hoffnung für . . .," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 27 July 1914, no. 346 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 1.

[41] "Hände weg!," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 852 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 1.

had written deprecatingly about "crowds," asserting that they had nothing to do with "public opinion," but were rather the expression of degenerate, irrational, irresponsible, and destructive "masses." In contrast, Social Democratic authors claimed that under certain conditions crowds expressed the true voice of the people. Now, conservative and liberal journalists claimed that, because spontaneous, the exuberant crowds shed an unwitting light on popular sentiments whereas Social Democratic journalists complained about the irrational, "patriotic mob," about "politics in the streets."[42]

Given the paucity of sources we must rely on these effusive accounts. Yet we do not have to accept the journalist's subjective interpretations of the meaning of these crowds. Rather, we can use their descriptions in order to study the symbolic, ritual statements made by these crowds, and to interpret these statements in the context of the political culture of the time. For fortunately the details in the instant reportage of the crowds are virtually identical in newspapers of different political directions, in memoirs and diaries, and in the few available police accounts.

Mass psychology and the analysis of the crowds of 1914

Crowds are an especially rich text for studying public opinion – "text" in the sense of constitutive patterns and dynamics of crowd behavior. But they are a text fraught with danger. As the historian Robert Rutherdale has noted, "scholars of crowd behavior are saddled by a number of interpretative frameworks that reveal as much about the ideological struggles within social science as they do about crowds themselves."[43] Not all "crowds" fall under the rubric of collective action. There is a difference between an audience and an active crowd, that is, between a group of people who gather to watch a performance but who are not themselves active, and a group of people who influence each other's behavior and who are identifiable as a group, actively pursuing some goal. Only the active crowd can be considered collective action.

[42] For examples of the Social Democratic rhetoric, see "Die Politik der Straße," *Mainzer Volkszeitung*, 27 Juli 1914, no. 171, p. 2; and "Momentbilder vom Dienstag," *Vorwärts*, 30 July 1914 (no. 205), 2. Beilage.

[43] Robert Rutherdale, "Canada's August Festival: Communitas, Liminality, and Social Memory," *Canadian Historical Review* 77 (June, 1996), p. 221. Out of the vast literature on crowd behavior see especially Clark McPhail, *The Myth of the Madding Crowd* (New York, 1991). More generally, see Bernd Jürgen Warneken, "'Die friedliche Gewalt des Volkswillens.' Muster und Deutungsmuster von Demonstrationen im deutschen Kaiserreich," in Bernd Jürgen Warneken (ed.), *Massenmedium Straße. Zur Kulturgeschichte der Demonstration* (Frankfurt/Main, 1991), pp. 97–119; and Thomas Lindenburger, *Straßenpolitik. Zur Sozialgeschichte der öffentlichen Ordnung in Berlin 1900 bis 1914* (Bonn, 1995).

The central issue of debate among scholars of collective action is that of volition. Is crowd behavior to be understood as being guided by irrational, unconscious, or emotional impulses or by objectives that are consciously understood and generally shared? Most contemporaries believed that the masses were irrational, and therefore emotional, dangerous, and powerful.[44] (Social Democrats subscribed to this discourse. The "organized" proletariat, they argued, was different than the mass crowd; it was the SPD's cultural duty to "organize" the masses.[45]) According to the contemporary discourse on mass psychology, the individual in a crowd lost his individuality, his identity, and assumed a group identity, a mass personality.

In the past fifty years sociologists, social psychologists, and social historians have revised the work of their earlier colleagues, and have rejected the so-called "transformation hypothesis."[46] People in crowds do not develop a new, a different group identity; they both remain individuals and retain their old identity. Furthermore, people in crowds are not "mad." Crowd actions are, however, symbolic in form and their content can be understood only within the particular historical cultural framework. Historians such as Eric Hobsbawm, George Rudé, E. P. Thompson and Charles Tilly have demonstrated that, if we take this framework into account, the "rioters" of earlier years were not unruly mobs who committed random violence without rational goals but men and women who came together in order to defend their rights; indeed, the "rioters" often had utilitarian, democratic motivations.[47]

[44] A good overview of the history of mass psychology can be found in J. S. McClelland, *The Crowd and the Mob: from Plato to Canetti* (Winchester, 1989). On French and Italian mass psychology see Susanne Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors* (New Haven, 1981); Robert Nye, *The Origins of Crowd Psychology: Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Mass Democracy in the Third Republic* (Beverly Hills, 1975); and Jaap van Ginneken, *Crowds, Psychology and Politics 1871–1899* (Cambridge, 1992). There has been little work on German mass psychology. The best overview of the contemporary discourse remains Arthur Christensen's *Politik und Massenmoral. Zum Verständnis psychologisch-historischer Grundfragen der modernen Politik* (Leipzig und Berlin, 1912).

[45] The most important texts in this debate are reprinted in Antonia Grunenberg (ed.), *Die Massenstreikdebatte. Beiträge von Parvus, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Kautsky und Anton Pannekoek* (Frankfurt/Main, 1970). For a brief summary of the SPD's position on mass psychology, see Bernd Jürgen Warneken, "'Die friedliche Gewalt des Volkswillens,'" pp. 99 ff.

[46] There is a superb discussion of this literature in McPhail, *The Myth of the Madding Crowd*, pp. 13 ff.

[47] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (1958; reprinted New York: Praeger, 1963); George Rudé, *The Crowd in History. A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England 1730–1848* (New York, 1964); Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, 1978). There is a superb synopsis of the historical research on crowds in Colin Lucas, "The Crowd and Politics," in Colin Lucas (ed.), *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture. Volume II: The Political Culture of the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 259 ff.

The crowd behavior of July and August 1914 is, of course, very different from that analyzed by Hobsbawm, Rudé, Thompson, and Tilly. It was not a protest, but an affirmation. Yet the crowds of 1914 also conveyed symbolic representations, drew upon what Clark McPhail and Charles Tilly have termed a "repertoire of collective action."[48] This repertoire was well defined and confined to a limited set of well-known rituals, symbols, and expressions. The patriotic displays of August 1914 – the cheering, singing, marching, and speechmaking – drew upon the repertoire of conventions associated with patriotic display, with student marching, or with the public festival.[49]

These ritual practices and their symbolic vocabulary were taught in the schools. As Eric Hobsbawm has noted,

> the chronicles of one Gymnasium record no less than ten ceremonies between August 1895 and March 1896 recalling the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Franco-Prussian war, including ample commemorations of battles in the war, celebrations of the Emperor's birthday, the official handing-over of the portrait of an imperial prince, illuminations and public addresses on the war of 1870–1871, on the development of the imperial idea during the war, on the character of the Hohenzollern dynasty, and so on.[50]

They were also a part of everyday life, a part of holidays and special events such as, in 1913, the celebrations of the twenty-fifth anniversary of rule by Wilhelm II and the centenary anniversary of the defeat of Napoleon.[51] The festivals generally included the following elements: a public ovation (*Huldigung*) when royalty was present, a parade, and an official speech. The site for these festivals conformed to the patriotic geography of the city. An official speech on the Kaiser's birthday, for example, was likely to take place in front of the statue of Kaiser Wilhelm I. Although the organized patriotic festival was an everyday event, spontaneous ovations were quite rare. Only in 1907 were there such spontaneous ovations after the "nationalist" parties did well in the national election.[52]

[48] McPhail, *The Myth of the Madding Crowd*, p. 131.

[49] Rutherdale, "Canada's August Festival," p. 223. I have benefited in my understanding of festival and ritual from Mary Ryan, "The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order," in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1989); Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*; and Behrenbeck, *Der Kult um die toten Helden.*

[50] Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions," in Eric Hobsbawm (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 277. See also Dieter Düding, Peter Friedemann and Paul Münch (eds.), *Öffentliche Festkultur. Politische Feste in Deutschland von der Aufklärung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Reinbek, 1988); George Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses; Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (New York, 1975).

[51] Wolfram Siemann, "Krieg und Frieden in historischen Gedenkfeiern des Jahres 1913," in Düding, Friedemann, and Münch (eds.), *Öffentliche Festkultur*, pp. 311 ff.

[52] Discussed in Thomas Lindenburger, *Straßenpolitik*, pp. 362 ff.

These rituals of patriotic practice were designed, along with the military service, to turn peasants and working-class citizens into "Germans." These national ritual practices did not, however, describe the national political culture. The SPD had their own rituals, their own political culture. The Social Democratic working class did not celebrate the Kaiser's birthday or Sedan day (2 September). Instead, they commemorated 18 March (in memory of 1848 and the Paris commune), 1 May, and the death day of Lassalle (31 August).

When looking at the crowds of 1914 we need to try to understand them within the framework of Wilhelmine culture. How justified was the equation of the patriotic crowd's mood with that of "Germany?" Did the social composition of the "enthusiastic" crowds reflect that of the population as a whole, or were certain groups and classes overrepresented? Why were certain groups within the community more likely than others to participate? Why were some willing to lead, some willing to co-operate, and some opposed? In short, we need to analyze both the socio-economic background of the crowd and the patterns or rituals of the crowd in order to uncover the participant's sense of its significance and validity.

But of course there can be something special about a crowd, which literary theorists and cultural anthropologists have tried to capture with the categories of carnival and liminality. Carnival, according to the literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, "is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it."[53] Carnival not only involves all, it upturns hierarchy;

> one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions.[54]

The "enthusiastic" crowds were carnivalesque in the sense that in the last week of July a well-dressed *Bürger* could be found singing loudly in the streets late at night, that is, people were doing things normally prohibited. This sort of audacity is, perhaps, a subtle subversion of the traditional, monarchical, bureaucratic political culture, the existing social order and its rules. Yet we will need to examine the degree to which hierarchies or existing social rules were actually overturned or subverted versus the degree to which the enthusiastic participants were just having a good time, were just participating in a "spectacle seen by the people."

It is telling that contemporary critics of the "war enthusiasm"

[53] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1984), p. 7.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

described the crowds as carnivalesque, whereas conservative myth-makers did not. Rather, they interpreted the 1914 crowds as transformation experiences, as experiences that altered characters, that changed the relationship between men, what Paul Tillich has termed a *Kairos*.[55] Such transformation experiences have been characterized by the anthropologist Victor Turner as liminal, a sort of "time out of time," a moment "when the past has lost its grip and the future has not yet taken definite shape," a time when identities are recreated.[56] (In Turner's work, liminality very often refers to a rite of passage.) In his study of the enthusiastic crowds in Canada in 1914, Robert Rutherdale has shown how liminality can help us understand the crowds. In these crowds of celebration, according to Rutherdale, people experienced "liminality," were "liberated" from "constraints of individual identities so that they might celebrate, as thousands did when war was declared, a wider communion or consensus." According to Rutherdale, in Canadian cities in 1914 for an effervescent moment a sense of wholeness and solidarity temporarily supplanted individual identities.[57]

Many contemporaries explained the "August experiences" in a vocabulary similar to that employed by Turner and Rutherdale, asserting that the enthusiasm had wrought a structural transformation of society, had created a new social order. Yet it is interesting to note that the transformation experiences of 1914 were generally seen by contemporaries as something that happened to others; the experiences were generally described employing the contemporary vocabulary of mass psychology, described as the individual subsuming his individuality to the mass, the collective soul. Were the 1914 crowd experiences "liminal," did they bring about a change of identity? Were they examples of contagion, of people being "hypnotized" into doing things they normally would not have done? How did the participants understand the logic of their actions? And how typical or common was the experience of a *Kairos*, of a transformation experience?

Curious and enthusiastic crowds in Berlin, 25 July

Late on Saturday afternoon, 25 July, tens of thousands gathered in Berlin's public squares, in cafés, and in front of the newspaper office buildings, awaiting the extras with the news of the Serbian reply to the

[55] See Goebel, *Deutsche Pressestimmen in der Julikrise 1914*, pp. 73 ff.

[56] Victor Turner, "Variations on a Theme of Liminality," in Sally Moore and Barbara Myerhoff (eds.), *Secular Ritual* (Assen, 1977), p. 49.

[57] Rutherdale, "Canada's August Festival," p. 239. For an interesting analysis of the German August experiences as "liminal" experiences, see Leed, *No Man's Land*, pp. 12–18, 39–72.

Austrian ultimatum, due by 6.00 p.m.[58] Such crowds were commonplace in Wilhelmine Germany whenever important news was expected. Twenty-five years later people would be waiting at home, in front of their radios. Berlin had last seen such crowds in 1913, during the Kaiser's twenty-fifth jubilee. In 1913 the mood was festive, relaxed. That Saturday afternoon, however, people were tense and worried. According to Theodor Wolff, editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, they came together not only to find out the news, but because they were afraid of being alone: "here outside there was a common fate, there was the possibility of sharing one's common worries, of running away from one's own fears as well as from fearful questioning looks."[59] Being nervous, strangers talked to one another, asking each other if they had heard the latest news.[60]

When between 7.00 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. the first extras appeared, people literally tore them out of the hands of those distributing them:

> Suddenly the crowds move. A couple of *Acht-Uhr-Abendblatt* autos flit by . . . Everyone storms towards the packed auto. [It distributes its extras.] Some hold a white piece of paper, others stare over their shoulder, the empty autos turn around, new ones come. People stand in their autos and carriages, hang on the trees, stare out, waiting for certainty . . . Never before has there been so much reading in the streets, never before have newspaper vendors had such a business. Everyone reads, the flower seller in front of Café Kranzler just like the elegant lady in the café itself.[61]

These extras claimed, based on reports from Viennese newspapers, that Serbia would agree to the Austrian demands. Yet the anxious crowds remained, waiting for certainty. At around 9.30 p.m. extras reported that Serbia had rejected the Austrian ultimatum.[62] A few people yelled hurrah. Most went home.

Those who did not go home staged one of the most spectacular

[58] "Die Stimmung auf den Strassen Berlins," *Vorwärts*, 26 July 1914, no. 201. There is a similar description in "Stimmungsbilder. Die Stimmung in Berlin," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 546 (Morgen), p. 1. There is a brief discussion of these crowds in Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, pp. 56–57. In his unpublished, and quite descriptive, diary, Pastor Falck described the curious crowds as "mostly younger people." BAL, 92 Sachthematische Sammlung, no. 266, p. 2. However, as most observers did not describe the social composition of the curious crowds, I have been unable to corroborate Falck's observation.

[59] Theodor Wolff, *Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus* (Zurich, 1934), p. 328. Similarly, "Die erste Entscheidung," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 26 July 1914, no. 345, p. 1.

[60] "Die Berliner Demonstration," *Volksblatt für Hessen und Waldeck*, 27 July 1914, no. 172.

[61] The *Tägliche Rundschau*, reprinted in "Ein Stimmungsbild aus Berlin," *General-Anzeiger* (Dortmund), 27 July 1914. Similarly described in "Österreichfreundliche Kundgebungen in Berlin," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 26 July 1914, no. 374, 1. Beiblatt.

[62] MK, "Stimmung," *Weser-Zeitung*, no. 24355, 31 July 1914 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1; "Die Wacht am Rhein," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 26 July 1945, no. 345 (Morgen), p. 3; and "Die Begeisterung in Berlin," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 374 (Morgen), p. 2.

spontaneous patriotic demonstrations in German history. Around 8:00 p.m. between 200 and 2,000 people, mostly Austrian citizens and university students, who had gathered in front of the Austrian and Italian embassies (*Moltkestraße*), began screaming patriotic slogans such as "hurrah for Austria," "hurrah for Italy," and "down with Serbia," and singing patriotic songs such as "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser," "Heil dir im Siegerkranz," and "Die Wacht am Rhein."[63] After the news of the Serbian response, nationalistic choirs and audiences also formed in front of the Chancellor's office.[64]

Most often the choirs congregated inside the better cafés and beerhalls in the center of the city. In the Café Bauer on the corner of Unter den Linden and Friedrichstrasse, one of the most famous cafés in Berlin, "on a table . . . a man stands and preaches. Preaches politics. Excited. His arms gesticulate wildly. No one laughs. No one pulls him down."[65] In another café, one with an orchestra (and in 1914 most of the better cafés in Germany had small orchestras), according to one journalist:

> Finally the doors opened. For a dozen walking out, two dozen pushed their way in. Once again music is played. A march, a war song. Pity those who did not want to accommodate their program to the mood of the day. Once the band attempted to sneak in a fashionable waltz. Scarcely had the first notes been played when the public answered with a whistling protest. The conductor had to stop, and a dozen voices intoned *a cappella* what he must play: "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles." The choir grew powerfully, and then the orchestra joined in. The music rose sublimely to the heavens. All rose. Two, three guests believed that they could remain indifferent to the general enthusiasm, that they could remain seated. After two or three seconds a storm of indignation forced them to stand up. One still remained seated. He was thrown into the fresh air, without being allowed to pay his bill or fetch his hat or coat. A new troop pushed in from outside. Over their heads a flag, black and gold [the Austrian colors]. That was the signal for a last

[63] Austrian citizens are described in "Österreichfreundliche Kundgebungen in Berlin," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 26 July 1914, no. 374, 1. Beiblatt. Students are described in "Begeisterung in Berlin und Wien," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 345 (Morgen), p. 1. The 2,000 is from "Kundgebungen in Berlin," *Ingolstädter Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 172, p. 3. In contrast, the report of the "XI. Polizei Mannschaft," 26 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 13, states that there were a "couple of hundred." It is not clear whether the Austrian ambassador appeared at 8.00 p.m. or later. The *Berliner Tageblatt* says he appeared then but see the conflicting, and, I think, more likely account below. Wolff, *Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus*, p. 328, states that on Friday evening there were "proclamations" in the streets. I have been unable to find any corroboration.

[64] "Stimmungsbilder. Die Stimmung in Berlin," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 546 (Morgen), p. 1. According to this article, the crowds either believed the Chancellor to be in Berlin (there were lights on in the building), or they expected that he would be returning to Berlin that evening. A similar description is in "Die Straßendemonstration in Berlin," *Augsburger Neueste Nachrichten*, 27 July 1914, p. 1.

[65] The *Tägliche Rundschau*, reprinted in "Ein Stimmungsbild aus Berlin," *General-Anzeiger* (Dortmund), 27 July 1914.

raging increase in enthusiasm. Roaring yells of hurrah, glowing eyes, an exuberance which causes hearts to overflow. And once again music. And once again the song: Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser.[66]

The most spectacular patriotic performances that evening were the "parades" (*Züge*). Immediately after hearing that Serbia had rejected the Austrian ultimatum, groups of students formed in front of the university and began to "march" up and down Unter den Linden, singing patriotic songs and shouting patriotic phrases. Soon many joined them. "No one knows his companion," a *Tägliche Rundschau* journalist wrote:

> but all are possessed of the same serious emotion: war, war. One is pulled through the evening streets . . . a rumbling roar accompanies the measured, rhythmic steps . . . What is that? A song . . . someone has begun to sing, another joins in, and then it rises up to the evening sky, serious and joyous: "Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall."[67]

Within a hour many small "parades," each composed of about 100 to 150 people, and a few large ones composed of a couple of thousand people, marched past each other in the streets of downtown Berlin.[68] All the parades that evening followed a similar script; all visited the same collection of statues; all sang and yelled the same songs and slogans, all listened to the same sorts of speeches by anonymous speakers. Let us follow one parade, the largest, on its way through Berlin.

Around 10.00 p.m. a couple of thousand strangers who had gathered at the Brandenburg Gate began marching arm in arm in rows twenty to thirty across down Unter den Linden, the most important street in the center of Berlin, the street connecting the city palace and the Brandenburg Gate. At the front of the parade students carried the German, Prussian, and Austrian flags.[69] While marching, the paraders screamed "patriotic" slogans such as "Long live the Kaiser," "Hurrah for Austria," and sometimes "down with the SPD." They also sang the usual

[66] Essen, *Generalanzeiger*, quoted in "Schwindelnachrichten im Generalanzeiger," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), 28 July 1914.

[67] The *Tägliche Rundschau*, quoted in "Ein Stimmungsbild aus Berlin," *General-Anzeiger* (Dortmund), 27 July 1914.

[68] MK, "Stimmung," *Weser-Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 24355 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1, writes of 100 to 150. A police report likewise states that the early parades were quite small: BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 17.

[69] My description is based on "Österreichfreundliche Kundgebungen in Berlin," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 26 July 1914, no. 374, 1. Beiblatt; "Die Wacht am Rhein," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 26 July 1914, no. 345 (Morgen), p. 3; "Die Berliner Demonstration," *Volksblatt für Hessen und Waldeck*, 27 July 1914, no. 172; "Begeisterung im Reich," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 205, p. 1; MK, "Stimmung" *Weser-Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 24355 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1; police reports in BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360; and the description in Pastor Falck's diary, BLA, 92 Sachthematische Sammlung, no. 266.

patriotic, militaristic songs.[70] Spectators in the expensive cafés on both sides of Unter den Linden shouted "hurrah" and waved their hats as the paraders passed by. Upon reaching the empty palace (the Kaiser was on his ship on the Baltic sea) the paraders paused. They sang more patriotic songs and listened to each other's speeches. Then they returned back down Unter den Linden, marching through the Brandenburg Gate to the statue of Bismarck in front of the Reichstag. On the way back from the palace, at the bridge over the Spree, a policemen told the paraders to roll up their flags because, in the policeman's words, "in this late evening hour" a "rowdy patriotism" (*Radaupatriotismus*) had developed which did not honor the flags.[71] At Bismarck's statue there were more speeches and more songs. The paraders, by now between 2,000 and 10,000 strong, then marched the short distance to the Austrian embassy, where they joined the choir who had been singing here since 8.00 that evening. Here again, "one of the paraders climbed on the shoulders of another and gave a speech: Austria, Serbia, Triple Alliance, etc. . . ." The Austrian ambassador appeared and thanked the people for their support.[72]

The parade then returned through the Brandenburg Gate and turned right down the Wilhelmstrasse, marching to the empty Chancellor's office (the Chancellor was at his country estate). Here, Herr Sikoski, a high-school teacher, gave the only speech that evening whose content was recorded:

> we are standing in front of a historic house. Here lived the man who was the blacksmith of the German Empire and the Triple Alliance. Today the Triple Alliance faces its greatest test. [I] hope that Bethmann Hollweg will show himself worthy of Bismarck.[73]

The parade then went back down Unter der Linden, and "now public speakers shot up like mushrooms."[74] At around 11.00 p.m., after marching – once again – through the Brandenburg Gate, this time to the General Staff building, the parade, by now a good deal smaller, broke

[70] The "down with the SPD" is noted in "Die Stimmung auf den Strassen Berlins," *Vorwärts*, 26 July 1914, no. 201.

[71] Report by the 1. Schutzmannschaft, 26 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 17.

[72] The 10,000 is from the report by the "XI. Polizeiliche Hauptmannschaft," 26 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 13. "In der Reichshauptstadt," *Hamburger Montagsblatt*, 27 July 1914, no. 32, refers to "many thousands." "Kundgebungen in Berlin," *Ingolstädter Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 172, p. 3, claims there were 4,000 paraders. The police report by the "I. Schutzmannschaft," 26 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 17, states that the largest parade that evening had 2,000 people.

[73] "Die Berliner Demonstration," *Volksblatt für Hessen und Waldeck*, 27 July 1914, no. 172, citing the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*.

[74] "Die Berliner Demonstration," *Volksblatt für Hessen und Waldeck*, 27 July 1914, no. 172.

up into a number of smaller parades. The last parade ended at 3.45 a.m.[75]

The myth of the "spirit of 1914" was born the next day in the conservative interpretation of these "enthusiastic" crowds. A *Tägliche Rundschau* journalist wrote that these demonstrations were "so beautiful, so enriching that the memory of them will never diminish."[76] A day later the *Tägliche Rundschau* wrote that what "we have experienced in these hours [is] that we are a single *Volk*. Differences, usually far too emphasized, have disappeared in these hours behind the grandeur of a greater idea."[77] The nationalist Oscar Schmitz wrote a couple of weeks later that:

> on that Saturday evening, when it became known that Serbia had rejected the Austrian note, and the Berlin population marched in front of the Austrian embassy singing the song "Ich hatt' einen Kameraden," on that evening a population divided into classes and parties, a population divided by the striving for pleasure was suddenly welded together once again into a unit . . . The scream for rights has suddenly become silent, the recognition of the value of things in themselves is once again a common possession of individuals, classes and occupations. In this lies our rebirth through war.[78]

These crowds were certainly unusual. Yet, although spontaneous enthusiastic patriotic crowds were a sight seldom seen in Germany, such an interpretation was even more unusual. That evening "Germany" had not paraded. Only a small minority of the Berlin population had participated – no more than 30,000, or less than 1 per cent of the population of greater Berlin. This was far, far fewer, as *Vorwärts* noted the next day, than the hundreds of thousands who had demonstrated for Prussian suffrage reform in 1910.[79] Nor did the paraders represent a cross-section of the population. They were mostly educated youths; university students and clerks predominated.[80] The youths were accompanied by young women,

[75] "Kundgebungen in Berlin," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 27 July 1914, no. 375, p. 3; and the report by the "1. Schutzmannschaft," 26 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 17.

[76] "Die erste Entscheidung," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 26 July 1914, no. 345, p. 1.

[77] "Eine Hoffnung für . . .," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 27 July 1914, no. 346 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 1. Similarly, "Kundgebungen im Reiche," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 1 August 1914, no. 257 (Abend), p. 2.

[78] Oscar Schmitz, "Die Wiedergeburt durch den Krieg," *Der Tag*, 9 August 1914, no. 185.

[79] The 30,000 is arrived at by adding the most generous estimates given of the various parades in police and newspaper reports. Many estimates were much less. "Patriotischer Mob," *Vorwärts*, 26 July 1914, no. 201, p. 2, for example, after comparing the patriotic crowd with the crowd of 1910, stated that the patriotic crowd had numbered only 2,000 to 3,000. On the 1910 suffrage demonstrations see Groh, *Negative Integration*, pp. 135 ff.; and Boll, *Massenbewegungen in Niedersachsen 1906–1920*, pp. 133 ff.

[80] So described by Social Democratic journalists in "Patriotischer Mob," *Vorwärts*, 26 July 1914, no. 201, p. 2; and "Die Berliner Demonstration," *Volksblatt für Hessen-Waldeck*, 27 July 1914, no. 172; and by liberal journalists in "Kundgebungen in Berlin," *Berliner*

also well dressed, who marched with them arm in arm and, by all accounts, sang as loudly as the young men. The older citizens who participated were, in the words of a Berlin policeman, "the better and best members of society."[81]

Had the liberal and conservative newspapers at least interpreted correctly the paraders' intent? Was this "patriotism" an expression of "war enthusiasm," as, for example, the *Tägliche Rundschau* claimed: "[the crowds cheered] as if war was already there?"[82] Had the crowd behavior aimed to rejuvenate the energy of the community, to sanction its institutions? Certainly the paraders drew upon a patriotic vocabulary which they had learned in the schools (especially in their history courses where they were taught about the "enthusiasm" of 1813 and 1870), in youth organizations, or in university fraternities (*Burschenschaften*). Thus, although few could hear the speeches, as one author noted, "they do not have to hear them," everyone knew their content.[83] It was the patriotic content which inspired a top aide to Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, Under-Secretary of State Arnold Wahnschaffe, to instruct the police not to enforce the law prohibiting unauthorized public demonstrations.[84] (In contrast, in 1910, when hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated in Berlin in support of suffrage reform, the Berlin Police Commissioner, Jagow, published the following poster: "The 'right to the streets' has been announced. The streets exist for traffic. Resistance to the power of the state will lead to the use of weapons. I warn the curious."[85])

Social Democratic journalists, however, asserted that the paraders were motivated only by the desire to have fun, to enjoy themselves. "Once

footnote 80 (*cont.*)
Tageblatt, 27 July 1914, no. 375, p. 3; "Kundgebungen für Oesterreich," *Würzburger Journal*, 27 July 1914, p. 2; "Die Kundgebungen in Berlin," *Dortmunder Tageblatt*, 27 July 1914, no. 173, p. 2; "Begeisterung im Reich," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 205, p. 1. Conservative journalists concurred. See "Die Wacht am Rhein," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 26 July 1914, no. 345 (Morgen), p. 3; "Die Stimmung in Berlin," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 894, p. 1; and "Die Begeisterung in Berlin," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 374, p. 2. Similarly, too, Wolff, *Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus*, p. 328; and in Pastor Falck's diary, BAL, 92 Sachthematische Sammlung, no. 266, p. 2.

[81] Report of the "XI. polizeiliche Hauptmannschaft," 26 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 13.

[82] "Die erste Entscheidung," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 26 July 1914, no. 345, p. 1. Similarly, "Lokales. Krieg und Kriegsgeschrei," *Bremer Tageblatt*, 26 July 1914; "Für und wider," *Kölnische-Zeitung*, 26 July 1914 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 2; and "Europa und der Krieg," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 27 July 1914, no. 347 (Abend), p. 1.

[83] MK, "Stimmung," *Weser-Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 24355 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1.

[84] The report of the "I. Hauptmannschaft," 27 July 1914 (referring to the events of the evening of 25 July), noting that Under-Secretary of State Wahnschaffe had told him not to disturb the parades, is in BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 280.

[85] Quoted in Groh, *Negative Integration*, p. 141.

again Berlin has had a demonstration," *Vorwärts* wrote in its report on the "Patriotic Mob":

except it wasn't poor workers whose poverty and agony, whose need and suffering, whose anger over the bloody mockery of their rights and interests has driven them to the streets; it was youth, dressed in the latest, absolutely latest fashion – German National students and sales clerks, members of "Young Germany" and debonair types, whose desire for adventure, whose pleasure at provoking, whose chauvinism, and whose drunkenness drove them into the streets.[86]

Another Social Democratic journalist noted that as the evening of 25 July progressed:

the hoarser the throats became, so, too, grew the enthusiasm. One yells now always with one's hat in one's hand, and if by chance someone got caught up in the parade without taking off his hat, he was screamed at and in danger of being physically attacked.[87]

Social Democratic journalists were not the only ones to comment so. A liberal *Weser-Zeitung* journalist wrote of Berlin on 25 July:

One is partying. The masses' parade grows powerfully. The parade must be active, it must use up its enthusiasm. Hurrah, once on the lips, can not be silenced. The enthusiasm falls over the statue of the first chancellor, it rises above the stone, silent image of Moltke. The waves of noise cascade through the Tiergarten out to the suburbs. One sees uniforms and yells hurrah. Simply because one is partying (*Nur weil man Lust hat am Feiern*). One has no motivations, one just yells. This workmanlike, earnest city has gone over into an unconscious ecstasy.[88]

A police officer wrote of the parades on Unter den Linden that the people "yelled in an almost immoral manner" (*brüllte in fast unanständiger Weise*).[89] Some journalists compared the mood with that at a carnival or at a *Schützenfest*.[90]

Crowds in Germany (except Berlin) on Saturday, 25 July

One of the most peculiar claims conservative journalists made when developing their narrative of the "spirit of 1914" was that the enthusiastic

[86] "Patriotischer Mob," *Vorwärts*, 26 July 1914, no. 201, p. 2.

[87] "Die Berliner Demonstration," *Volksblatt für Hessen und Waldeck*, 27 July 1914, no. 172. Similarly in "Der Spektakel geht weiter," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 171, 2. Beilage.

[88] MK, "Stimmung [describing the night of Saturday, 25 July 1914]," *Weser-Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 24355 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1.

[89] Report by the 1. Schutzmannschaft, 26 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 17.

[90] "*Karneval*" is employed by the authors of "Karnevals-Kriegsrausch," *Rheinische Zeitung* (Cologne), 28 July 1914 no. 172, p. 3; and "Krieg oder Karneval," *Rhein und Ruhr Zeitung*, 30 July 1914, no. 384, p. 2. "*Schützenfest*" is the term employed by Kurt Tucholsky, "Der Geist von 1914," *Die Weltbühne* 20/2, no. 38 (7 August 1924), p. 205.

crowds in Berlin spoke for German public opinion. Berlin had neither the central place in the hearts of Germans that Paris, for example, had for the French, nor did most Germans live in large cities. In 1910 only two in ten Germans lived in cities with a population over 100,000, and 66 per cent of the population lived in towns with a population under 20,000 or in the countryside.[91] Were there similar crowds outside of Berlin?

On Saturday afternoon, 25 July, curious crowds formed in most of Germany's larger cities in public squares, in cafés, and in front of the newspaper offices, waiting for extras with the news of the Serbian response. Outside Berlin, these curious crowds rarely numbered more than a thousand people. Nor were there curious crowds everywhere. In many of Germany's large cities, such as Königsberg, Danzig, or Saarbrücken, as well as in many of the working-class cities in the Ruhr, there were no curious crowds at all. In most of Germany's medium-sized cities, or in the smaller towns or in the countryside, there were either no crowds at all or very small ones.[92] If provincial newspapers reported on public opinion in the last week of July it was always on the public opinion in Berlin or in the large cities and never on the mood at home. Only on 31 July and 1 August would they begin to report on local public opinion. Most war chronicles for the towns and the countryside begin with a description of the local curious crowds on 31 July, often noting simply in a foreword that in the week before there was "fear."[93] Accordingly, the description of the crowds below is a description of the crowds in the large cities.

Everywhere the mood in the curious crowds seems to have been tense.

[91] In 1914, although there were forty-eight cities with a population over 100,000, many of these were suburbs of a larger city. Charlottenburg, for example, was a suburb of Berlin. In 1914, 20 per cent of the population lived in cities larger than 100,000; 14 per cent in cities with 20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants; 14 per cent in cities with 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, 11 per cent in towns with 2,000 to 5,000 inhabitants, and 39 per cent in the countryside. *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich 1915* (Berlin, 1915), pp. 2 ff.

[92] I have been unable to find any police or governmental reports describing the mood of the population in cities outside Berlin on 25 July. Thus, my sources are necessarily a random sampling of newspapers, magazines, chronicles, and the like. I have read at least one newspaper from most of Germany's largest cities. I have also profited from Eberhard Buchner's collection of newspaper articles. It turned out to be especially difficult to find information on the public opinion in the towns and in the countryside. Here I have relied upon local newspapers (especially from Bavaria, the Ruhr, and the area around Berlin), war chronicles, and the reports on the mood of the population collected by the *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* in October and November 1914. I am also indebted to the local studies cited in the bibliography.

[93] For example: Bade Häusler, *Gemeinde-Kriegs-Chronik der Stadt Reinerz 1914–1919* (Reinerz, 1928), p. 8 (Reinerz was a small town near Breslau, with a population of about 3,200 in 1914); Fr. Otto Freiherr von und zu Auffess, *Kriegs-Chronik von Koebbel* (Diessen vor Munich, 1920) (Koebbel is a small Bavarian town, with a population of about 1,200 in 1914); or Hans Bumann, *Kriegstagebuch der Stadt Alzey* (Alzey, 1927).

In cafés in Frankfurt, for example, all newcomers were asked "about the newest things, and when he had an extra in his hands he was surrounded by curious people."[94] Everywhere the first extras stated that Serbia had accepted the ultimatum and everywhere there was "a sigh of relief."[95] When the news of the Serbian rejection was proclaimed by extras at around 9.00 p.m., there were some isolated cheers, but most people went silently home.[96]

Yet not everyone went home. In many of the better cafés in large German cities there was a mood of patriotic exuberance similar to that in Berlin. In a Hamburg café, for example:

> The musical bands play patriotic, soldierly war songs, which are greeted with stormy applause. All sing along. Then suddenly one hears the sounds of the Austrian national anthem; everyone rises from their seats and sings along enthusiastically; people swing the Austrian flags, climb on tables and chairs, wave their handkerchiefs and hats, and yell loudly hurrah through the whole room. The same theater repeats itself with the playing of the German national anthem.[97]

There were spontaneous "parades" that evening in the streets of Karlsruhe, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt am Main, Leipzig, Nuremberg, Oberhausen, Königsberg, Munich, Magdeburg, Hamburg, Stuttgart, and in many of the university towns such as Freiburg or Jena.[98]

[94] "Die Stimmung in Frankfurt," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 26 July 1914 (drittes Morgenblatt), no. 205, p. 1.

[95] Described for Hamburg in "Die Aufnahme der Kriegserklärung in Hamburg," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 28 July 1914, p. 5.

[96] Isolated cheers are recorded for Frankfurt in "Die Stimmung in Frankfurt," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 26 July 1914 (drittes Morgenblatt), no. 205, p. 1; for Munich in "Kriegssorgen," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 26 July 1914 no. 379 (Morgen), p. 5; for Hamburg in Volker Ullrich, *Kriegsalltag*, p. 10; for Bremen in "Der Eindruck in Bremen," *Weser-Zeitung*, 26 July 1914 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe); for Karlsruhe in "Die Stimmung in Karlsruhe," *Badischer Beobachter*, 27 July 1914, p. 2, and for Bochum in "Aus Stadt und Land," *Bochumer Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 173, p. 3.

[97] "Die Aufnahme der Kriegserklärung in Hamburg," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 28 July 1914, p. 5. Similarly described for Munich in "Kundgebungen in Berlin und im Reiche. München," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 174, p. 2; for Duisburg in "Lokales. Ein Sonntag vaterländischer Begeisterung," *Duisburger General-Anzeiger*, 27 July 1914, no. 202; for Gelsenkirchen in "Lokale Nachrichten," *Gelsenkirchener Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 173; for Karlsruhe in "Die Stimmung in Karlsruhe," *Badischer Beobachter*, 27 July 1914, p. 2; and for Magdeburg in "In Magdeburg," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 547 (Morgen), p. 3.

[98] Karlsruhe is described in *Chronik der Haupt- und Residenzstadt Karlsruhe für das Jahr 1914. Im Auftrag der städtischen Archivkommision* (Karlsruhe, 1916), p. 93; Düsseldorf is described in various articles in the *Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf) (approximately 200 to 300 people took part in the parades). Frankfurt/Main is described in Hans Drüner, *Im Schatten des Weltkrieges. Zehn Jahre Frankfurter Geschichte von 1914–1924* (Frankfurt/Main, 1934), p. 56. Leipzig is described in "Der patriotische Krampf," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 170, 2. Beilage (about 400 to 500 students marched to the victory memorial, to the Augustusplatz, and to the Austrian consulate). Nuremberg is described in "Kundgebungen in Nürnberg," *Fürther Zeitung*, 26 July 1914,

Everywhere these parades were smaller than in Berlin; nowhere did more than a couple of hundred people join together to express collectively their patriotic sentiment. Nor did parades occur in all major cities. There seem, for example, to have been almost no patriotic demonstrations that evening in the streets of cities in Baden, or in Bremen, Braunschweig, Kiel, Hanover, Darmstadt, Duisburg, Solingen, Mainz, or Cologne, among others.[99]

Only their size distinguished these "enthusiastic" parades from those in Berlin. Everything else was similar, as if the enthusiasm throughout Germany followed an unwritten script. Everywhere the parades were composed of educated youths (especially university students), and a few well-to-do *Bürger*.[100] Everywhere the paraders marched to the same sort of symbols: patriotic statues, especially those of Bismarck, government buildings, the Austrian and Italian consulates, the house of the mayor or of the local Regional Deputy Commander General. Everywhere the patriots listened to the same sorts of anonymous speeches. And everywhere the paraders sang the same songs.

In Hamburg, for example, in the *Alsterpavillion*, one of the city's best cafés, late that evening "a man suddenly turned to the public with the demand that they demonstrate before the Austro-Hungarian consulate." A small parade, about a hundred people (and the only parade in Hamburg that evening) marched from the café to the consulate, singing patriotic songs. Someone in front carried the Austrian flag. At the consulate a parader gave a short speech. As no one appeared – the consul was on vacation, the group then marched to the house of the vice consul, who, after dressing, thanked the crowd for its support.[101] In Stuttgart, only the

footnote 98 (*cont.*)
p. 2, at 11.00 p.m. Oberhausen is described in "Stimmungsbericht zur Mobilmachung," from the mayor of Oberhausen, 20 August 1914, HStA Düsseldorf, Regierung Düsseldorf, Politische Akten, no. 14911, p. 272. Königsberg is described in Ernst Kittel, "Unser Abschied vor Tübinger Jubelsemester," *Wingolfsblätter* 44, no. 3/4 (22 November 1914), pp. 72 ff.; and "Vom Kriege," *Wingolfsblätter* 43, no. 22 (16 August 1914), p. 320. Munich is described in articles in the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*. Magdeburg is described in "In Magdeburg," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 547 (Morgen), p. 3. Freiburg is described in Geinitz, *Kriegsfurcht und Kampfbereitschaft*, pp. 62 ff.

[99] The absence of parades in Baden was reported by the Prussian ambassador in Karlsruhe to the Chancellor on 27 July 1914, reprinted in Karl Kautsky (ed.), *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, vol. II (Charlottenburg, 1919), p. 25. It is, however, difficult to state with certainty that there were no parades. Newspapers did not report that there were no parades. I assume that if there was no mention of a parade in their accounts of local public opinion there probably was not one.

[100] "Kriegshetze der Leipziger Neuesten Nachrichten," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 26 July 1914 (Extra), p. 2, describes those in the parades of Saturday evening as "almost exclusively German-National salesmen and students."

[101] Described in "Die Aufnahme der Kriegserklärung in Hamburg," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 28 July 1914, p. 5. Similarly, "Die Stimmung. Im deutschen Reich,"

forceful hand of the police prevented a bellicose parade from protesting in front of the Russian embassy.[102] In Munich, a couple of hundred people marched to the Austrian consulate twice that evening – at 10.00 p.m. and at 11.00 p.m. Both times the consul spoke, and then "a man from the public gave a speech in which he expressed his joy that Austria is seeking retribution."[103]

As with the Berlin "enthusiasm," there was a carnivalesque, at times mob-like, character to this "enthusiasm." At the Café Fahrig in Munich, when in the early evening patrons sang patriotic songs – as elsewhere – and some Serbian guests whistled at some of these songs, they were beaten up and thrown out of the café by the German patrons. At around 11.00 p.m. the café owner's son foolishly asked the band leader not to play any more patriotic songs out of consideration for some Serbian guests upstairs. A patron who overheard the conversation jumped up on the bandstand and informed the audience what had been said. The café's patrons then destroyed the establishment's tables, chairs, and windows. The police finally dispersed this crowd, but another crowd returned at 3.00 a.m. to throw rocks at what windows were left.[104] (There is an interesting footnote to the episode. It seems that a Berliner, in Munich at the weekend for a vacation, remarked on Sunday to an unknown that "the people in Munich have acted like vandals." He would regret having made that remark, for

> one word followed another, and in no time there was a rumor that a Serbian had yelled "hurrah for Serbia," and "down with Germany." The crowd attacked the man, and he fled. He hurried into a house . . . and sought refuge in a pension located on the third floor. Quickly a crowd of many hundreds gathered, which screamed for the man to be delivered to them. In front of a nearby hotel a gallows was set up in which a dummy was hanged.[105]

The police finally arrived, and took the man into their auto, which the crowd attacked with sticks, umbrellas, and stones. Surprisingly, no one was badly injured.)

Hamburger Montags-Blatt, 27 July 1914, no. 32, p. 22, Hamburg Staatsarchiv, Politische Polizei, S 20132, vol. 58. Again, the sources give no numbers and my estimate is based on the description of the parade.

[102] "Kundgebungen in Berlin und im Reiche," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 174, p. 2. Similarly Wilhelm Kohlhaas, *Chronik der Stadt Stuttgart 1913–1918* (Stuttgart, 1967), p. 108.

[103] "Kriegssorgen," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 26 July 1914, no. 379 (Morgen), p. 5. The sources give no numbers. My estimate is based on the description of the parades.

[104] Briefly described in Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, p. 58. Best described in "Tumulte in Café Fahrig," *Münchner Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 172, p. 5.

[105] "Die Kriegsstimmung in München," *Bamberger Neueste Nachrichten*, 28 July 1914, no. 173, p. 3. Similar scenes occurred in Mannheim and in Bochum: "Mannheim," *Frankenthaler Tageblatt*, 27 July 1914, p. 3; "Aus Bochum und Umgebung," *Westfälische Volkszeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 170.

Enthusiastic and curious crowds in Germany, Sunday, 26 July–Thursday, 30 July 1914

On Sunday, 26 July, there were large "enthusiastic" crowds in most of Germany's larger cities.[106] According to SPD journalists, these curious people were "mostly in a very serious, even a depressed mood."[107] This may have been true for some. But most of the people who came downtown that afternoon did so to watch the events and spectacles such as the changing of the guard, to see how Café Fahrig looked, if the police had anything to do, the "enthusiastic" parades, or just the crowds themselves.[108] They were, in other words, more an audience than a curious crowd, and their very existence contributed to creating, in the words of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, a "festive atmosphere."[109]

The main attraction was the newspapers, the extras. Newspapers worked hard to stay at the center of attention, publishing up to ten extra editions a day, although there was often no "news." (In a large city, such as Berlin, with over thirty dailies, this meant that there was almost a continual stream of new extras.) The *Hamburger Echo* (SPD) complained that:

> purely to make money the public is being turned into fools, the public is being lied to in a way without conscience . . . Lies, or half-truths – it does not matter, only they must be sensational, for sensation is pure money.[110]

The Hanover *Volkswille* (SPD) warned:

> whoever visited the inner city and one of its larger bars on either Saturday or Sunday would have been the observer of a sort of war rapture brought forward by the extra editions of the bourgeois newspapers, published one after another . . . Through report after report – all of which are unofficial – the passions are whipped up and common sense is deadened.[111]

There were other attractions as well. In Berlin a Sunday crowd two to three times the normal size ("many thousands") cheered the changing of

[106] Described for Berlin in "Die 'patriotischen' Demonstrationen in Berlin," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 29 July 1914; "Die Sonntagsstimmung in Berlin," *Kölnische Zeitung* (Morgen), 27 July 1914; and by Pastor Falck in his diary, BAL, 92 Sachthematische Sammlung, no. 266, p. 2. In Bremen, at 11.15 p.m. Sunday evening 800 curious, unenthusiastic people still milled in front of the *Bremer Tageblatt*, waiting for news. Report of "II. Polizei Distrikt," Bremen, 26/27 July 1914, Staatsarchiv Bremen, Kr. A.1.b.N.1.

[107] "Pfui über die Kriegshetzer!," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), 27 July 1914 (describing the mood in Berlin). Similarly, "Kriegsstimmung in Berlin?," *Volksfreund* (Braunschweig), 27 July 1914, no. 172, p. 2.

[108] Kurt Heinig, "Im Gebiete des politischen Wettersturzes," *Bergische Arbeiterzeitung* (Solingen), 31 July 1914.

[109] "Kundgebungen in Berlin und im Reiche," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 174, p. 2.

[110] "Die Presse und der Krieg," *Hamburger Echo*, 30 July 1914, no. 175. Similarly, "Extrablatt, Geschäft und Schwindel," *Hamburger Echo*, 29 July 1914, no. 174; and "Gegen den Kriegstaumel," *Volksstimme* (Wiesbaden), 27 July 1914, no. 172, p. 2.

[111] "Sie toben sich noch aus!," *Volkswille* (Hanover), 29 July 1914, p. 3. Similarly, "Kulturträger," *Frankfurter Volksstimme*, 28 July 1914, no. 173, 1. Beilage.

the guard on Unter den Linden, remaining after the parade had finished to sing patriotic songs, accompanied by the military band. In the words of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*:

> No one in this crowd, unless he is truly old and grey, has experienced such an hour . . . It was *a large crowd of similarly minded people*. And come what may, even if the expression of the mood takes a less pretty form, *the memory of this Sunday hour will remain and will retain its value*.[112]

In Munich, after the changing of the guard, the military band, not having yet understood the tenor of the times, attempted to play waltzes and popular tunes. The public became enraged, and started singing a militaristic song, the "Kameraden." For a while the two groups challenged each other. The crowd won, the conductor admitted defeat, and for the rest of the afternoon the band played patriotic songs.[113]

One could also hear patriotic melodies in the cafés and beer-gardens. In the *Alsterpavillion* in Hamburg, for example:

> Again and again the German and the Austrian national anthem sounded along with German and Austrian marching tunes. These were accompanied by a crowd singing loudly, by the rhythm of applauding hands. The café's impressive rooms were thus transformed into a festive chamber. Hurrahs for the German and the Austrian Kaiser were the only interruptions in this powerful music.[114]

And one could hear patriotic melodies in the "parades." All cities which had seen "enthusiastic" parades on Saturday saw them again on Sunday. And many large cities which had not seen such parades on Saturday, such as Bremen, Kassel, Cologne, Mannheim, Strasburg, or Hanover, as if inspired by the local newspaper accounts of the parades in Berlin, now found patriots willing to parade.[115] And whereas Sunday's "enthusiastic" parades in Berlin were generally smaller than on Saturday, in most of

[112] *Frankfurter Zeitung*, quoted in "Zeitungsschau," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 178, Beiblatt (italics in original). According to a police report "many thousands" watched this parade. See "Meldung über den Verlauf des 26. Juli," by the "I. Hauptmannschaft," 27 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 28. The enthusiastic Sunday crowds in Berlin are described in "Das Aufflammen des nationalen Hochgefühls in Berlin," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 346 (Morgen), p. 2; "Die 'patriotischen' Demonstration in Berlin," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 29 July 1914; and "Kundgebungen in Berlin und im Reiche," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 174, p. 2.

[113] "Münchener Kriegsstimmung," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 2 August 1914, p. 2.

[114] "Die Aufnahme der Kriegserklärung in Hamburg," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 28 July 1914, p. 5.

[115] Bremen is described in "Aus Bremen," *Weser-Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 24151 (Mittag), Beilage. Kassel is described in "Kundgebungen," *Volksblatt* (Kassel), 27 July 1914, no. 172. Cologne is described in "Bierstimmung in Köln," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 171, p. 3. Mannheim is described in "Mannheim," *Frankenthaler Tageblatt*, 27 July 1914, p. 31. Strasburg is described in "Kundgebungen in Elsass-Lothringen," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 899 (Morgen), p. 2. Hanover is described in "Lokales," *Volkswille* (Hanover), 27 July 1914, no. 173, p. 3.

Germany they were larger. In Leipzig, for example, a couple of thousand participated in the Sunday parades, whereas only 500 had participated on Saturday.[116]

Such spontaneous "patriotic" demonstrations were unusual in Germany. The liberal press was delighted with evidence of a politicized "national" opinion. Yet in spite of the conservative and liberal accounts of German public opinion in the last week of the war, the enthusiastic crowds remained uncharacteristic of Germany as a whole. The "enthusiasm" remained concentrated in large cities. Only seldom were there parades in towns or in the countryside, with the exception of university towns.[117] And the enthusiasm remained limited to a certain class. Mostly educated youths, joined by some well-to-do *Bürger*, marched in the parades.[118] Although bourgeois journalists asserted that these crowds were evidence of "war enthusiasm," it was not a purely masculine enthusiasm. Men and women marched together. The *Leipziger Volkszeitung* described a Leipzig parade that Sunday evening as:

> exclusively young people, many were barely fourteen or fifteen; there were even young girls of this age there. The young girls – to be sure there were also older ones – held the young men in their right and left arms and screamed from the depths of their lungs: "German women, etc.!" . . . The youths were the loudest screamers.[119]

The *Rheinische Zeitung* described the social composition of the "enthusiasm" in Cologne as "students . . . and young boys who marched like 'Young Germans.'"[120] In Kassel, in Frankfurt am Main, in Essen, indeed everywhere the sources speak of youth.[121] Nowhere was there evidence of

[116] "Der patriotische Krampf," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 170, 2. Beilage.

[117] For Erlangen see "Aus Erlangen und Umgebung," *Fränkische Nachrichten*, 27 July 1914, p. 3; for Jena see "Jena," *Frankenthaler Tageblatt*, 27 July 1914, p. 3; for Tübingen see "Unser Abschied vom Tübinger Jubelsemester," in Otto Schröder (ed.), *Deutschlands Akademiker im Weltkrieg 1914: Ein Ruhmeskranz für Mitkämpfer*, vol. II (Magdeburg, 1916), p. 77; for Freiburg see Geinitz, *Kriegsfurcht und Kampfbereitschaft*, pp. 62 ff.

[118] Described for Berlin in "Kriegsstimmung in Berlin?," *Volksfreund* (Braunschweig), 27 July 1914, no. 172, p. 2; and in the police report, "Meldung über den Verlauf des 26. Juli," by the "I. Hauptmannschaft," 27 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 28.

[119] "Der patriotische Krampf," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 170, 2. Beilage.

[120] "Patriotische Kundgebungen," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 172, p. 7. Similarly in "Ein Kölner Oberlehrer," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 173, pp. 3–4; and "Die Polizei schützt den Janhagel!," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 173, p. 4.

[121] "Gegen den Kriegstaumel," *Volksstimme* (Wiesbaden), 27 July 1914, no. 172, p. 2; "Aus Berlin," *Volksstimme* (Frankfurt), 27 July 1914, no. 172, Beilage; "Die 'patriotischen' Demonstrationen in Berlin," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*,29 July 1914 (describing 29 July); and "Demonstrationen 'für' den Krieg," *Vorwärts*, 28 July 1914, no. 203. Kassel is described in "Kundgebungen," *Volksblatt* (Kassel), 27 July 1914. Frankfurt am Main is described in "Protest gegen den Krieg!," *Volksstimme* (Frankfurt), 29 July 1914, no. 174,

any working-class participation in this Sunday "enthusiasm," something Social Democratic newspapers repeatedly pointed out.[122]

Although most parades were "spontaneous," as on Saturday, the "enthusiasm" throughout Germany seemed to follow an unwritten script. Once again the paraders marched to "national" sites, such as statues and important government buildings, as well as to the Austrian and Italian embassies and consulates. Everywhere they sang the same patriotic songs and listened to the same sorts of patriotic speeches, some of which were by government officials. Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, for example, spoke that evening in Berlin, and crowds in Munich forced the Austrian Consul to speak five times.[123]

The "enthusiastic" parades on Sunday were, however, "staged" not only in the sense that those who paraded drew upon a wealth of ritualized experiences, but also that there were those who, in the words of Theodor Wolff, "mobilized troops, who brought flags, who passed out slogans, who wanted to direct a people's movement in order to move heads, in order to drive the German government to the great goal."[124] Youth group leaders played a prominent role. In Berlin that morning the leaders of the "*Wandervögel*," "Young Germany," and the "*Heimateroberer*" marched their troops from the suburbs into the city, singing patriotic songs.[125] ("*Wandervögel*" and "*Heimateroberer*" were private youth groups, opposed to the militaristic, governmental youth culture. "Young Germany," in contrast, was a government youth organization.) That afternoon "Young Germany" congregated at the Bismarck statue to sing patriotic songs. At 3.45, 5.00, and 6.45 p.m. parades of 200 to 400 "Young Germans"

1. Beilage. Essen is described in "In höchster Spannung," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), 31 July 1914 (describing 30 July 1914). Much of this youth was quite young, between ten and eighteen. "Kriegsstimmung in Berlin?," *Volksfreund* (Braunschweig), 27 July 1914, no. 172, p. 2. Similarly for Leipzig in "Der patriotische Krampf," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 170, 2. Beilage; and for Munich in "Die Stimmung in München," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 28 July 1914, no. 381 (Vorabend), p. 3.

[122] "Die 'patriotischen' Demonstrationen in Berlin," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 29 July 1914: "there was not a worker among them." Similarly, "Erbärmliche Hetze," *Volkswille* (Hanover), 29 July 1914, no. 174, p. 1.

[123] "Die Stimmung in München," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 28 July 1914, no. 381 (Vorabend), p. 3. There were similar events in Hamburg, described in "Die Aufnahme der Kriegserklärung in Hamburg," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 28 July 1914, p. 5; and in Frankfurt, described in Drüner, *Im Schatten des Weltkrieges*, p. 56; and in "In Frankfurt," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 206 (erstes Morgenblatt), p. 3.

[124] Wolff, *Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus*, pp. 329–330. He did not believe, however, that the government organized these parades. There may have been some leadership the evening before. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, for example, reported that "the demonstration parade among the people [in Berlin on 25 July] was led by an old man who drove in front of the parade in his carriage, and who conducted the songs." Yet this is the only mention of any such "manipulation" for Saturday evening that I have found. "Begeisterung im Reich," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 205, p. 1.

[125] "Eine Hoffnung für . . .," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 27 July 1914 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 1.

marched from the statue through the Brandenburg gate, down Unter den Linden to the palace, singing patriotic songs.[126] The *Kreuz-Zeitung* wrote:

> That is the most wonderful aspect of these enthusiastic demonstrations for the Fatherland, that in this serious hour Germany's youth has arisen and from the depths of their hearts they say to their leaders that they are aware of their strength and their duty to their Fatherland.[127]

In the evening "Young Germany" and *Wandervögel* staged more parades.[128] In Munich, according to Kurt Heinig:

> the first demonstrations which I saw were members of "Young Germany," who marched by in full uniform, waving flags, singing patriotic songs . . . Even the *Wandervögel*, probably high school students, took part with vehemence in the small demonstrations which occurred every quarter hour. They marched by with their guitars hung around them.[129]

In Dortmund, too, the patriotic demonstrations that evening were led by the *Wandervögel*.[130]

University students, especially members of the *Burschenschaften* (fraternities), were also prominent leaders of the Sunday "enthusiasm." In one of the Berlin parades late Sunday evening "one could see a whole parade of students 'in *Wichs* [the fraternity uniform],' carrying glittering swords."[131] One fraternity member has left an especially colorful account of his efforts that evening:

> Through the streets marched hundreds of university students. All looked wild, looked as if they were hoping for war. Coleur and Blacks [two fraternities], who a couple of weeks ago were fighting, and who were strongly criticized by the student leadership, marched together arm in arm. I ran to the balcony of our pub, thinking a single thought. "Should I carry our flag to the front? Should I?" My little brother replied, "Of course; I'll tell the others to do it, too." "Great, but hurry up." It didn't take long and we had four fraternities gathered together under their flags. Everyone looked to us to begin the parade. O.K. Flags forward. Stop! Here is a statue of the Kaiser. And here one of Frederick the Great. The flags must surround them. Ready? Yes, came back the hundred voiced reply. And so we

[126] "Die Sonntagsstimmung in Berlin," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 27 July 1914 (Morgen). Similarly, "Meldung über den Verlauf des 26. Juli," by the "I. Hauptmannschaft," 27 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 28.

[127] "Das Aufflammen des nationalen Hochgefühls in Berlin," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 346 (Morgen), p. 2.

[128] Described in "Meldung über den Verlauf des 26. Juli," by the "I. Hauptmannschaft," 27 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 29.

[129] Kurt Heinig, "Im Gebiete des politischen Wettersturzes," *Bergische Arbeiterzeitung* (Solingen), 31 July 1914. Similarly for the parades on Monday in "Die Kriegsstimmung in München," *Bamberger Neueste Nachrichten*, 28 July 1914, no. 173, p. 3.

[130] "Lokale Nachrichten: Kriegsstimmung in Dortmund," *General-Anzeiger* (Dortmund), 27 July 1914.

[131] Wolff, *Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus*, p. 329.

marched through the . . . Friedrichstrasse. The people right and left take off their hats . . . Then they join the parade by the hundred.[132]

The press, which kept the excitement at a feverish pitch with a steady stream of extras, was the other prominent group behind the "war enthusiasm." Filmmakers incited more directly. On Sunday afternoon the first of the famous films documenting the "enthusiasm" was made. It was described by one commentator:

What the crowd saw as ecstasy and brilliance was for quiet, competent observers an embarrassing sort of reality. One small episode: an auto came by loudly. In the auto, gesticulating people waved wildly the Austrian and German flags. In the open back seat of the car sat an extremely well dressed, corpulent man, who gave fanatical speeches in an unusual German. Slowly the auto drove down the Linden, stormily cheered by thousands who ran along beside the car, and who listened drunkenly to the fiery speeches which the corpulent man spewed forth with assiduous industry into the excited crowd. Not all the thousands saw that behind the crowds drove a second auto, which quite discreetly and unnoticed filmed this wonderfully patriotic scene, and that between the actors in the first auto and the operators in the second there existed an extremely close business relationship. One did not see it or feel it and believed it to be a great moment.[133]

Already three days later, on Wednesday, 29 July, these movies, entitled "War Enthusiasm in Berlin," would be shown at movie houses throughout Germany.[134]

Not only was the "enthusiasm" scarcely evidence of a "German" public opinion, it was characterized by a great deal of rowdiness. *Vorwärts* complained of the:

dangerous actions of the educated youths. They were allowed to curse out decent citizens, to beat them bloody, to force citizens to yell hurrah and sing patriotic songs or take off their hats. They beat people up and threw them out of restaurants just because they remained seated. And the rowdy youths (*Raufbold*), who have well studied the customary activities of the scum in order to imitate them, all come from a "good house" (*gute Kinderstube*).[135]

[132] A. Conrad, "Ein Stimmungsbild," in Schröder (ed.), *Deutschlands Akademiker im Weltkrieg 1914*, vol. II, p. 59.

[133] "Berliner Brief," *Rhein und Ruhr Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 390, p. 4. "Pfui über die Kriegshetzer!," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), 27 July 1914, says that the police assisted the filmmakers.

[134] See the advertisement for the Marmorhaus (Kurfürstendamm), "Kriegs-Begeisterung in Wien, Berlin, München u. Kiel. Ankunft des Deutschen Kaisers in Kiel," *Berliner-Zeitung am Mittag*, 29 July 1914, no. 175, last p. These movies are described in "Der Abend unter den Linden," *Berliner Lokalanzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 385 (Morgen), p. 2. I have been unable to find a copy of any of these movies.

[135] "Momentbilder vom Dienstag," *Vorwärts*, 30 July 1914, no. 205, 2. Beilage. Similarly, "Kriegshetzer!," *Volksstimme* (Frankfurt), 27 July 1914, no. 172, 1. Beilage; and "Maulhelden," *Bergische Arbeiterstimme* (Solingen), 29 July 1914.

In Duisburg a poor fellow who neglected to stand for the national anthem was thrown violently down the stairs, so that he broke some of his ribs.[136] In Kiel students violently beat up those who failed to stand when it was played.[137] In Hamburg a certain H. Schulz was almost beaten up by a patriotic mob. Schulz, who unfortunately lived near the Austrian consulate, had one evening somewhat rashly thrown some water on the boisterous patriots who reappeared every evening – stating, as he poured the water, that he needed his sleep.[138]

If Social Democratic journalists criticized the patriotic crowds bourgeois journalists celebrated them. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote on 31 July 1914:

> no matter how the dice fall – the last days of July in 1914 will long remain in our memory. If someone completely free of all political knowledge and doubts was to be thrown in our city, he would have believed by looking at the masses who filled the streets and the public places . . . that he had come to a great festive community. That was a yelling and a pleasure at the end of the last and the beginning of this week![139]

As the week progressed, however, some bourgeois journalists came to share the views of the Social Democratic journalists. Theodor Wolff wrote in the *Berliner Tageblatt*:

> it appears necessary that one sends to bed the young children and men who in the last few nights enthusiastically made noise in Berlin's streets . . . The participants, who left their customary bars (*Stammtisch*) and their student bars, and who brought their waitresses along, have made enough of a racket.[140]

A Dortmund *General-Anzeiger* journalist similarly wrote that "a bucket of cold water is what is needed to bring such alcohol-patriots to their senses."[141]

Even the government, in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, called on the people on 28 July to assume a "calm and measured demeanor" in the next couple of days. In Munich on 27 July the police chief proclaimed that the parades had to stop as they had "taken on a form which one can no

[136] See "Aus dem Stadtkreise Duisburg," *Rhein- und Ruhr Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 380.

[137] "Schleswig-Holstein," *Hamburger Echo*, 29 July 1914, no. 174.

[138] "Wie lange noch?," *Hamburger Echo*, 29 July 1914, no. 174. Similar events are described for Leipzig in "Kriegsnachrichten," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 174, 2. Beilage; for Kassel in "'Nationale' Rüpel," *Volksblatt* (Kassel), 29 July 1914, no. 174, Beilage; for Frankfurt in "Hurrapatriotische Rowdies," *Volksstimme* (Frankfurt), 29 July 1914, no. 174; and for Hanover in "Der Alkoholpatriotismus," *Volkswille* (Hanover), 1 August 1914, no. 178, p. 3.

[139] "Ernste Tage," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 210 (drittes Morgenblatt), p. 3.

[140] T. W., "Die Bemühungen zur Lokalisierung des Krieges," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 27 July 1914, no. 375, p. 1.

[141] "Polizeiliche Maßregeln gegen nächtliche Skandalmacher," *Dortmunder General-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914.

longer with a good conscience see as being inspired by national enthusiasm." A similar language was employed by police chiefs in Hamburg on 30 July, in Wiesbaden on 30 July, and in Dortmund on 1 August.[142]

On Monday, Germans went back to work. The patriotic performances continued in the evening in cafés, the "pleasure spots of the 'better circles.'"[143] In the streets of Berlin, Leipzig, Hamburg, Hanover, Dortmund, Kassel, Essen, and elsewhere there were parades.[144] Yet none of these parades contained more than a couple of hundred patriots. Indeed, life returned to a certain normality. As one observer noted of Berlin in the last week of July:

> In the western part of the city of Berlin during the day there is little to be observed of the general excitement. The face of the streets has scarcely changed . . . Only the cry of "extra" changes suddenly the life and the daily routine. The criers are stormed; thick crowds of people surround them; one tears the newspapers from their hands . . . Similar large crowds of people are to be found in front of the newspaper houses.[145]

In Bochum, according to the *Westfälische Zeitung* (liberal), "the great majority of the population wavers between deep fear and hope, and only

[142] The Munich police chief is quoted in "Münchener Tagesneuigkeiten," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten – General Anzeiger*, 28 July 1914, no. 382, p. 1. The Hamburg police chief is quoted in "In ernster Stunde," *Hamburger Echo*, 31 July 1914. The Wiesbaden police chief is quoted in "Die Polizei und die 'Kriegsfreunde,'" *Frankfurter Volksstimme*, 31 July 1914, no. 176. The Dortmund police chief is quoted in "Polizeiliche Maßregeln gegen nächtliche Skandalmacher," *Dortmunder General-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914.

[143] "Ruhe vor dem Sturm?," *Hamburger Echo*, 28 July 1914, no. 173, p. 1.

[144] For descriptions of the cafés in Berlin during the last week of July, see "Falscher Patriotismus," *Dortmunder General-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, p. 2. The Monday parades in Berlin are described in the report of "XI. Polizeiliche Hauptmannschaft" (Hauptmann Schaft), 28 July, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 94, no. 11360, p. 31. On Monday evening in Leipzig, acccording to "Der Spektakel geht weiter," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 171, 2. Beilage, there were three parades of 500 to 600, and 300 to 400 people. On Tuesday evening, 28 July according to "Um Mitternacht mit Trommel und Trompete," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 172, 2. Beilage, about 100 to 200 people marched to the victory memorial (as did all parades in Leipzig) at 12:45 in the morning, singing songs. On Hamburg see "Kundgebungen in Hamburg," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 31 July 1914. On Hanover see "Erbärmliche Hetze," *Volkswille* (Hanover), 29 July 1914, no. 174, p. 1. According to the reports in the *Dortmunder Tageblatt*, and the *Dortmunder Zeitung*, there were small demonstrations in front of the Austrian consulate in Dortmund every evening that week that grew in size as the week progressed. On Kassel see "Wie Demonstrationen entstehen," *Volksblatt* (Kassel), 29 July 1914, no. 174, Beilage. For Essen see "In höchster Spannung," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), 31 July 1914 (describing 30 July 1914).

[145] Fedor von Zobelitz, *Chronik der Gesellschaft unter dem letzten Kaiserreich. Zweiter Band: 1902–1914* (Hamburg, 1922), pp. 355–356. Similarly, A. Silvius, "Berliner Brief," *Norddeutsche Volkszeitung* (Vegesack), 2 August 1914, no. 179, p. 1: "the picture of Berlin has in general . . . not changed. The powerful demonstration parades in the evening and in the night bring only temporarily a different note. Only when the newspapers publish extras does one see large crowds in the streets."

youthful thoughtlessness expresses itself in loud demonstrations. These are inspired by the desire for something sensational."[146]

As the week continued, as people grew more and more worried about their future, the number of people who participated in the "enthusiasm" continued to decline. In contrast, the curious crowds grew.[147] On Tuesday evening newspapers reported that Austria had declared war on Serbia. The *Darmstädter Zeitung* commented on the reception of the news in Darmstadt: "we become quieter, more serious. That is war."[148] When on Thursday morning newspapers reported that the Russian army had mobilized, enormous crowds of people – in the larger German cities tens of thousands, in Berlin hundreds of thousands – came to the places they expected extras would proclaim the German mobilization.[149] In the smaller cities, too, people gathered at the town square and in front of the Post Office, where the telegrams were posted. And in the countryside many farmers left their towns for the next large city in order to find out the news.[150] At around 3.00 p.m., the *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* published the long-awaited extra stating that the order for a German mobilization had been given. Although false – Germany had not yet mobilized – the news travelled throughout the whole of Germany – and it caused great excitement before it was retracted a few hours later.[151]

In the next few days almost all traces of "war enthusiasm" vanished under the specter of a real war. The young people in Berlin who attempted to form parades Thursday evening found few willing to march along.[152] Elsewhere, too, where there had been any enthusiasm earlier in the week it died down on Wednesday and Thursday. Rather, the mood in the enormous curious crowds was tense. In Frankfurt that Thursday evening according to a *Frankfurter Zeitung* journalist:

A powerful excitement has taken hold of our whole city. Everything is changed . . . Over everything lies a enormous seriousness, a frightening peace and quiet . . .

[146] "Aus Bochum und Umgebung," *Westfälische Volkszeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 170, p. 5. Similarly, although with a different emphasis: "Aus Stadt und Land-Schicksalsstunden," *Bochumer Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 177, p. 3.

[147] Noted in "Der gestrige Tag," *Augsburger Neueste Nachrichten*, 30 July 1914, no. 175, p. 5.

[148] "Darmstadt. Die Kriegserklärung," *Darmstädter Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 175, p. 4.

[149] See the description of Hamburg on Thursday, 30 July 1914 in "Die verwandelten Umzüge," *Hamburger Echo*, 31 July 1914.

[150] For example, into Passau, described in "Stimmungsbilder aus der Provinz," *Passauer Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 172.

[151] The *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* article is reprinted in Philipp Scheidemann, *Memoiren eines Sozialdemokraten* (Dresden, 1928), vol. I, pp. 244 ff. The excitement in Berlin after the publication of the extra is described in "Mobilmachungsgerüchte," *Völksfreund. Sozialdemokratisches Organ für das Herzogtum Braunschweig*, 31 July 1914, no. 176, p. 1.

[152] Described in "Unter den Linden," *Augsburger Neueste Nachrichten*, 31 July 1914, no. 176, p. 4; and "Die Lage verschärft sich," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 30 July 1914 (Abend), no. 353, p. 1.

Inside in their quiet rooms wives and young women sit with their serious thoughts concerning the near future. Separation, a great fear of the horrible, a fear of what may come.[153]

A National Liberal *Kölnische Zeitung* journalist described the mood in Berlin:

at around midnight the Friedrichsstadt was still filled with tens of thousands of people walking endlessly back and forth; the picture, however, is completely different from that of the last couple of days, loud demonstrations do not take place . . . the basic mood is serious. . . . In the looks of all the people the question is to be read: what will this night, what will the following day unveil?[154]

Crowds of panic and fear

The curious crowds were evidence of a growing fear among the population. The clearest evidence of fear came from what contemporaries called crowds of "panic." In Berlin, already at 5.00 a.m. Monday, 27 July, a couple of thousand people gathered in front of the Sparkasse (municipal savings banks) in order to withdraw their savings when the banks opened at 9:00 a.m. Although there had been such panics in 1908, 1911, and 1912, this was the first time that all large German cities were affected, and the first time that there was also a run on private banks. The people feared that if war came the government would steal their money to finance it.[155]

Like the enthusiasm, the panic was largely an urban phenomenon; in the countryside there was little panic, and what panic there was came later, on 31 July and 1 August. (Indeed the degree of panic seems to have been directly correlated to the size of the city – the larger the city the greater the panic.[156]) In most cities the crowds of panicking people were

[153] "Ernste Tage," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 210 (Abend), p. 3.

[154] "Stimmung in Berlin," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 31 July 1914 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe, no. 869), p. 1. Similarly in A. Silvius, "Berliner Brief," *Norddeutsche Völkszeitung* (Vegesack), 2 August 1914, no. 179, p. 1: "Berlin breathes under an awful pressure, an oppressing fear has taken the population prisoner." The mood in Hamburg on Thursday, 30 July 1914, is described in "Die verwandelten Umzüge," *Hamburger Echo*, 31 July 1914; for Cologne see "Die Stimmung in Köln," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 869 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1; for Bremen see "Aus Bremen," *Weser-Zeitung*, 31 July 1914 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe); and for Munich see "Kriegsgefahr und Lebensmittelmarkt," *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, 1 August 1914, no. 389, p. 3.

[155] On the pre-1914 war scares, see "Der Krieg und die Sparkasse," *Sparkasse*, no. 779 (15 August 1914), p. 311. "Aus Stadt und Land," *Solinger Tageblatt*, 28 July 1914, no. 174, reports a run on private banks in Solingen. The best material on the run on the Sparkasse is in H. Reusch, "Monatsstatistik. Die deutschen Sparkassen im Juli 1914," *Sparkassen* (1914), pp. 333 ff.; and H. Reusch, "Die deutschen Sparkassen während des Krieges," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 14 August 1915.

[156] "Sparkassenwesen," *Sparkassen* (1914), pp. 334 ff., notes that in many places a run never occurred. According to the statistics in H. Reusch, "Monatsstatistik. Die deutschen Sparkassen im Juli 1914," *Sparkassen* (1914), pp. 333–334, although 0.80 per cent was

as large as the enthusiastic crowds. In Cologne and Dortmund, for example, several hundred people waited early Monday morning to withdraw their money. As a result most city governments invoked the legal limits on the amount that could be withdrawn. Thus, although the clerks were busy all day, the sums the Sparkasse paid out were always less than 5 per cent of the institution's full deposits.[157]

The people in these panicking crowds came from a different section of the population than those in the "enthusiastic" crowds. According to a *Frankfurter Zeitung* journalist, those taking out their money were small savers, mostly women, who had only a "little over a hundred marks in the bank. Savers who have large sums in the bank . . . have in no case asked to have their money paid out."[158] (But not exclusively: in Berlin, for example, crowds of worried savers also gathered in Berlin's middle-class suburbs – in Charlottenburg and Schöneberg, although there was not a large line at the Sparkasse in upper-class Wilmersdorf.[159])

On Tuesday morning, government officials, business leaders, even SPD journalists attempted to reassure the population that their money was safe. The mayor of Cologne, for example, proclaimed in posters throughout the city and in newspapers: "In these serious times in which we live, our duty is to be calm and quiet . . . I ask the population not to believe the unsubstantiated rumors which are multiplying like rabbits. I ask businesses, too, to remain calm."[160] The reassurances were not too

footnote 156 (*cont.*)
withdrawn from Sparkassen with net deposits over 50 million marks, only 0.24 per cent was withdrawn from those Sparkassen with net deposits of 20 to 50 million marks, and 0.03 per cent from those with net deposits less than 20 million marks during the run. However, in the largest cities between 1 and 2 per cent of the total savings was withdrawn in the last week of July and the first week of August, and sometimes even more. The Sparkasse in Cologne paid back the largest percentage of its total money, 3.4 per cent. Breslau was next with 2.6 per cent, followed by Munich with 2.3 per cent, and Stettin with 1.9 per cent.

157 Cologne is described in "Sturm auf die Sparkasse," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 171, p. 4; "Dortmund," *General-Anzeiger* (Dortmund), 27 July 1914, p. 3. Reusch, "Die deutschen Sparkassen während des Krieges," states that the legal limits were imposed almost everywhere. See also Kaeber, *Berlin im Weltkriege. Fünf Jahre städtischer Kriegsarbeit* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 357 ff.

158 "Die Sparkassen," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 30 July 1914, no. 209 (zweites Morgenblatt), p. 1. Similarly in "Der Andrang zu den Sparkassen," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 380, p. 4; "Die Ansturm auf die Dortmunder Sparkassen," *General-Anzeiger* (Dortmund), no. 205; and "Sturm auf die Sparkassen – Die Furcht der Sparer," *Berliner Abendpost*, no. 174, 28 July 1914, p. 3.

159 "Ein 'Run' auf die Berliner Sparkassen," *Duisburger General-Anzeiger*, 28 July 1914, no. 203. The runs were strongest at the Sparkasse at Mühlendamm, in the Linksstrasse, and in Wedding. Similarly in "Der Andrang bei den Sparkassen," *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, 28 July 1914, no. 174, p. 2.

160 Quoted in "Eine Mahnung zur Besonnenheit," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 31 July 1914 (Abend), p. 1.

effective; the crowds of panic reappeared on Wednesday morning.[161] On Wednesday the Prussian Minister of the Interior posted notices throughout Prussia declaring the Sparkasse's inviolability. This, too, did not work. The run continued into the first week of the war, reaching its height on 31 July and 1 August. Only after war was declared did the panic go away. By 4 August the run was over in most cities.[162]

The hoarding of foodstuffs began in most places a little later than the run on the banks (in working-class districts in the Ruhr, however, it began on Monday, 27 July).[163] On Thursday, 30 July, the hoarding began in earnest. In Munich, some storekeepers closed their stores for a short time in order to avoid a general panic; in many stores in Berlin the police had to be called in to keep order. The run inspired many shopkeepers to increase their prices; the price of potatoes in Munich, for example, doubled, while in Berlin flour went from 25 pfennigs/500 grams to 40 pfennigs/500 grams, and 500 grams of salt went from 12 to 40 pfennigs.[164] The increase was meekly accepted by most customers, although in some places price increases led to "popular justice" (*Volksjustiz*). The *Hamburger Echo*, for example, recorded that in a Hamburg market one afternoon a group of enraged women attacked the seller of overly expensive potatoes with the sausages they had just bought from other vendors.[165] As with the run on the Sparkasse, most accounts state that the hoarding was done "mostly by women from the lower-classes, who wished to arm themselves against the threatening price increase."[166] Yet the *Duisburger General-Anzeiger* directed "the following appeal to the

[161] According to "Die Sparer," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 30 July 1914, no. 209 (erstes Morgenblatt), p. 1, the crowds were about one-third of what they had been the day before. But "Krieg oder Frieden," *Niederbarnimer Kreisblatt*, 30 July 1914, wrote that the run on the banks in Berlin was as strong on Tuesday as on Monday.

[162] Based on the statistics in "Der Ansturm auf die Sparkassen beim Kriegsausbruch," *Sparkassen* (1914), pp. 354 ff. According to Kaeber, *Berlin im Weltkriege*, p. 358, however, the Berlin Sparkasse continued to lose money until 8 August.

[163] Described for Bochum in "Aus Bochum und Umgebung," *Westfälische Volkszeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 170, p. 5.

[164] "Kriegsgefahr und Lebensmittelmarkt," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 1 August 1914, no. 389, p. 3. Similarly described for Frankfurt in "Teuere Kartoffeln," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 210 (Abend), p. 3; and for Berlin in "Die Lebensmittelpreise," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 179 (zweites Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1.

[165] "Nieder mit dem Lebensmittelwucher!," *Hamburger Echo*, 4 August 1914, no. 179.

[166] "Der 31. Juli," *Weser-Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 24357 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1. Similarly for Essen in "Ruhe und Besonnenheit," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), 1 August 1914; and "Essen," *Berliner Abendpost*, 1 August 1914, no. 178, p. 2; and for Gelsenkirchen in "Lokale Nachrichten," *Gelsenkirchener Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 178. There is little evidence on the social composition of these crowds; almost all accounts do not mention the class of the shoppers, although many do speak of the "little people."

better-off: they should not make the daily bread more expensive through a stupid increase in demand."[167] The government and newspapers added their voice as well, asking consumers to refrain from hoarding. In spite of these appeals, the hoarding also lasted a few days.

On Friday, 31 July, these two crowds of panic were joined by a third: a run not only on the Sparkasse but on the Post Office and on private banks as people tried to change their paper money to gold or silver coin. Here, too, there were enormous lines, especially outside the central bank (*Reichsbank*) in Berlin. As a result, beginning at 1.00 p.m. on Friday, 31 July, the central bank and the Post Office refused to exchange paper money for coins and instead even started to distribute newly printed five and ten-mark bills to alleviate the shortage of coins caused by the hoarding.[168] Yet many businesses in Berlin refused to accept paper money, and the shortage of small change worsened.[169]

In most of Germany there were neither crowds of enthusiasm nor crowds of panic. We have little evidence on this silent public opinion. What evidence we have suggests that the mood was serious. In the words of a minister of an "un-Christian working-class community near Frankfurt/Main":

> in the last week in July everyone in the town was full of worries, was depressed, was deathly quiet . . . When mobilization came, when the last thread of hope for peace was cut, it became even quieter, and desperation set in. No enthusiasm, no singing of patriotic songs. Among the men who were waiting to be called up there was only the desire to be done with the saying of good-byes.[170]

The *Bochumer Zeitung* (National Liberal) described the mood in Bochum as an "undertone of stupor . . . a humidity lies in people's souls."[171] In the words of the *Bochumer Zeitung*, describing 30 July in Bochum:

> when people found out that the military had assumed control over important train stations and bridges a small panic was born . . . One awaited every moment

[167] "Die erste Stunde," *Duisburger General-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 207, p. 1.

[168] Ignaz Jastrow, *Im Kriegszustand. Die Umformung des öffentlichen Lebens in den ersten Kriegswochen* (Berlin, 1914), p. 29. The government's refusal to exchange paper money for coin was illegal until approved retroactively by a 4 August 1914 law.

[169] Fedor von Zobelitz, *Chronik der Gesellschaft unter dem letzten Kaiserreich. Zweiter Band: 1902–1914* (Hamburg, 1922), p. 356, described how even in a good restaurant such as the "Rheingold" waiters would only accept paper money at a 20 per cent discount.

[170] "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. III. Das hessische Land und Frankfurt a.M. 3. Aus einer unkirchlichen Arbeitergemeinde bei Frankfurt a.M.," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 1. Kriegsheft (October 1914), p. 22.

[171] Here describing Bochum in "Aus Stadt und Land," *Bochumer Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 173, p. 3. Similarly in "Vor der Entscheidung," *Bochumer Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 173, p. 1.

in the afternoon and evening the news of the German mobilization. Thus it was quite natural that after work . . . the streets were filled with people.[172]

In the countryside, farmers either failed to notice the news – at least until shortly before 1 August when the military began to guard the local bridges – or if they did, they were afraid of what the future might bring. Farmers, after all, could hardly be pleased at the prospect of the loss of men just as harvest was beginning. Thus, in Immenstadt: "a deep unrest such as occurs before a heavy event has overtaken our whole population; from hour to hour the tension grew, and everyone awaited with real impatience the coming events."[173] The *Passauer Zeitung* wrote on 28 July that "the mood in short is the following: we do not want war and we will thank God when the thunder clouds pass by without causing any damage."[174] In the small towns of the Harz, according to Eugen Schiffer, the mood was "horribly serious."[175] A minister in a small town in the Black Forest wrote: "already during the last week of July we were afraid that the long-feared war might actually break out."[176] Especially in the border areas there was fear. In Saarbrücken, journalists wrote of the widespread "fear of war."[177] In Danzig and Königsberg, there was little enthusiasm and many large, nervous, curious crowds.[178]

[172] "Aus Stadt und Land-Schicksalsstunden," *Bochumer Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 177, p. 3.

[173] Kriegskameradschaft Immenstadt in NS Reichskriegerbund (ed.), *Kriegs-Chronik 1914/1918 der Stadt Immenstadt* (Immenstadt, 1939), p. 13.

[174] "Ernste Stunde," *Passauer Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, p. 1. At the same time the author states that Germany will fight if she has to. Similarly for Bamberg in "Aus Stadt und Land," *Bamberger Neueste Nachrichten*, 31 July 1914, no. 176, p. 2; for Dachau in "Dachau, 30 July," *Amperbote* (Dachau), 1 August 1914, p. 2. Most war chronicles for the smaller towns begin with 31 July, noting in a foreword that in the week before there was "fear." For example, Häusler, *Gemeinde-Kriegs-Chronik*, p. 8 (Reinerz is a small town near Breslau, with a population of about 3,200); and Adolf Vogeler, *Kriegschronik der Stadt Hildesheim* (Hildesheim, 1929), pp. 9–10.

[175] Eugen Schiffer was staying with his sons in Bad Harzburg. His diary entry of 31 July 1914 is in BA Koblenz, NL Schiffer, no. 3, p. 21. Similarly for the area around Passau in "Stimmungsbilder aus der Provinz," *Passauer Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 172; and for Egloffstein in Freifrau von Egloffstein, *Unser Dorf im Krieg* (Egloffstein), p. 1.

[176] Pastor D., "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. VII. Nachtrag aus allerlei Gemeinden. 3. Gemeinde im Odenwald mit einem Filial, 2382 Seelen," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 2. Kriegsheft (November 1914), p. 64.

[177] "Kriegsfurcht in der Südwestecke Deutschlands. Ein Stimmungsbild aus Saarbrücken," *General-Anzeiger* (Dortmund), 31 July 1914, no. 208, 2. Blatt; and "Kriegsfieber im Saarrevier," *Hamborner General-Anzeiger*, 31 July 1914, no. 206.

[178] "Die Stimmung in Danzig," *Danziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 1 August 1914 no. 478, in GhStAPK, XIV/180/19358, p. 15. Similarly, Pastor D., "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. VII. Nachtrag aus allerlei Gemeinden. 3. Aus Danzig," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 2. Kriegsheft (November 1914), p. 60; *Zeitung für Hinterpommern. Stolper Wochenblatt*, and K. F. Langenbach, "Königsberg im Zeichen des Krieges," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 3 August 1914, no. 389 (Abend).

Crowds against war

On Saturday evening, 25 July, the SPD leadership published a proclamation, issued in Berlin as a *Vorwärts* extra, calling for anti-war demonstrations in Germany on Tuesday, 28 July.[179] Right-wing newspapers asked the government to forbid the demonstrations, labelling the Social Democratic activity "treasonous."[180] The government, however, rejected this request. Indeed, some Social Democrats had the impression that the government seemed to find the demonstrations useful; at least they seemed to suggest as much in meetings with the SPD leaders Hugo Haase and Otto Braun on 26 July,[181] and in an article published in the semi-official *Kölnische Zeitung*: "when our Social Democrats stage anti-war demonstrations in the next few days they will enjoy to a certain degree the support of the German bourgeoisie."[182] The government did, however, prohibit street demonstrations. On Tuesday, the Berlin police chief, Jagow, published the following directive:

> because of the special conditions of the last three days nothing has been done to stop the patriotic parades on Unter den Linden, the Wilhelmstrasse, etc., although many traffic disturbances were caused by the parades. Beginning tonight, however, the needs of traffic come first; no more parades will be allowed.[183]

[179] "Aufruf," *Vorwärts*, 25 July 1914, no. 200a (Extra). The SPD demonstrations have been discussed in Groh, *Negative Integration*, pp. 637 ff.; Miller, *Burgfrieden*, pp. 35 ff.; Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaft zu Berlin, Institut für Geschichte (ed.), *Deutschland im Ersten Weltkrieg, Band I: Vorbereitung, Entfesselung und Verlauf des Krieges bis Ende 1914* (Berlin, 1968), pp. 210 ff.; and in Wolfgang Kruse, *Krieg und nationale Integration*, pp. 30 ff.

[180] For example, "Die wahre Bedeutung der sozialdemokratischen Kundgebungen," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 346 (Morgen), p. 3.

[181] The right-wing Social Democrat Eduard David noted in his diary on 3 August 1914 that the government "welcomed our peace demonstrations." Eduard David, *Das Kriegstagebuch des Reichstagsabgeordneten Eduard David 1914 bis 1918* (Düsseldorf, 1966), p. 7. See the discussion in Miller, *Burgfrieden und Klassenkampf*, pp. 40 ff.; and Groh, *Negative Integration*, pp. 628 ff.

[182] "Hände weg!," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 26 July 1914, no. 852 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 1. The article was most probably directed to a conservative as much as a Social Democratic audience, for the author goes on to point out that if war came Germany could count on the support of the working class, regardless of these demonstrations. Jürgen Kucysinski, *Der Ausbruch des ersten Weltkrieges und die deutsche Sozialdemokratie. Chronik und Analyse* (Berlin, 1957), p. 56, believes this article came from the Chancellor's office, and, although he offers no proof, there is good reason to believe he is correct. The Kaiser, however, was unhappy with the SPD anti-war demonstrations. In one of his marginal notes (to a telegram from the Russian Czar of 29 July 1914) he wrote, "the Sozis are making anti-miltary demos in the streets, that can not be allowed, not *now*; if this is repeated I will proclaim the state of siege and arrest all the leaders." Quoted in Kautsky (ed.), *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, vol. II, p. 49 (italics in original).

[183] Quoted in "Patriotische Kundgebungen," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 29 July 1914, no. 350 (Morgen), p. 2.

And outside of Berlin the local police often harassed the local SPD as it passed out pamphlets advertising the protests.

The largest demonstrations that Tuesday evening took place in greater Berlin, where the SPD staged thirty-two anti-war demonstrations (thirteen within Berlin itself). Everywhere, especially in the working-class parts of the city in the north and the east, crowds of people filled the halls, in many places overflowing into the streets. Well over 100,000 people attended these demonstrations, significantly more than had participated in the "enthusiastic" patriotic parades of the last three days.[184] At each of the meetings a party leader, in a short speech, blamed Austria for the present trouble, saying "Austria wants war," and Germany should not support her. The speakers also attacked the bourgeois press for working to create a pro-war atmosphere with their support of Austria, and their claim that the patriotic, "enthusiastic" paraders represented Germany. The working class, the speakers asserted, wanted peace. The speakers closed by asking the German government to do all it could to prevent war. After the speech, the floor was opened for discussion, yet in almost all the meetings no one spoke. A long resolution – which many contemporaries felt lacked punch – was then unanimously approved before the speakers asked people to march to the center of the city.[185] The mood at these meetings was quiet, subdued. What followed, however, was not.

At around 9.00 p.m. between ten and thirty "parades" – generally about 1,000 to 3,000 people, but sometimes as many as 10,000 people (that is, as large as the largest parade on Saturday evening) – advanced from the working-class suburbs to the center of Berlin.[186] These Social

[184] The government counted only 30,000. Telegram from the Police President to the Minister of the Interior of 29 July 1914, GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 162, no. 154, p. 11; and "Bericht betr. sozialdemokratische Protestversammlungen," Berlin, 29 July, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, Sec. 6, no. 15805, p. 176. 30,000 has thus been cited in all later historical works. Wolfgang Kruse, in his *Krieg und nationale Integration*, pp. 30 ff., has shown that the police counted only Berlin itself, not greater Berlin; that is, they counted only thirteen of the thirty-two demonstrations. Kruse's figure of over 100,000 is for greater Berlin. Each of the meetings was watched by policemen, and their reports, along with a transcript of the speech, can be found in BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, Sec. 6, no. 15805.

[185] Resolution quoted in full in "Der Kriegsprotest des Proletariats," *Vorwärts*, 29 July 1914, no. 204, p. 1.

[186] "Die sozialdemokratische Kundgebung," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 29 July 1914 (Mittag), writes that over 10,000 people marched in the parade at the Kochstrasse. "Demonstrationen gegen den Krieg in Berlin," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 379 (Morgen), p. 3, likewise writes of "individual parades of many thousands of people." The police reports in BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, Sec. 6, no. 15805, pp. 121 ff., estimate the size of the various parades as 1,000, 3,000, 2,000, 1,500, 800–1,000, 5,000, 4,000–5,000, 600, etc. A high percentage of the people at the anti-war meetings participated in the parades. A police report of the meeting at the Bock brewery, "Bericht über den Verlauf der Versammlung in der Berliner Bock-Brauerei," Berlin, 29 July, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, Sec. 6, no. 15805, pp. 146 ff., states that of the 3,000 people attending the meeting about 1,500 joined the anti-war parade.

Democratic parades aimed to desacralize and provoke; the paraders staged a counter-demonstration at exactly those "national" sites where the pro-war crowds had staged theirs. Along the way, instead of singing patriotic songs and yelling patriotic phrases, the participants sang working-class songs, such as the "Arbeitermarseillaise," and yelled "down with war" and "long live Social Democracy."

The police, out in full force, attempted to prevent the paraders from reaching the city center by setting up blockades. In the course of dispersing the paraders as they approached the blockade the policemen rode into the crowd on horseback, sometimes even drawing their swords and, in at least two cases, using them.[187] Many Social Democrats, however, were able to avoid the police, and at approximately 10.00 p.m. about 1,000 to 2,000 Social Democrats marched up and down the middle of Unter den Linden, while on both sidewalks the bourgeoisie sang patriotic songs.[188]

It was quite a moment. In the words of a *Frankfurter Zeitung* journalist:

> in front of the cafés and restaurants there were masses of people. The "Wacht am Rhein" and "Heil dir im Siegerkranz" sounded out of thousands of throats, but one could also hear the "Arbeitermarseillaise" sung powerfully by closely organized parades . . . It was an incredible confusion of heated calls, of demonstrations for and against, which rose to a raging noise, and which increased ever more the general excitement. The police were completely powerless at 10.00 against this mass of people.[189]

Most accounts state that the Social Democrats were in the majority, although just barely, and only for a short time.[190]

The general mêlée lasted only an hour. Between 10.30 and 11.00 p.m., the police, on horseback, cleared the street. They had to do this

[187] "Die Polizeiattacke an der Kochstraße," *Vorwärts*, 30 July 1914, no. 205, 2. Beilage; "Sozialdemokratische Protestversammlungen," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 550 (Morgen), p. 2; "Sozialdemokratische Demonstrationen in Berlin," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 29 July 1914, no. 384 (Morgen), p. 4. In the police reports in BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, Sec. 6, no. 15805, there are many accounts of police drawing their swords.

[188] The 1,000 is from "Sozialdemokratische Demonstrationen in Berlin," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 29 July 1914, no. 384 (Morgen), p. 4. "Demonstrationen gegen den Krieg in Berlin," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 379 (Morgen), p. 3, however, mentions 2,000, as does the "Bericht über den Verlauf . . ." by the "II. Polizei-Brigade," Berlin, 29 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, Sec. 6, no. 15805, pp. 72 ff. "Berliner Brief," *Rhein und Ruhr Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 390, p. 4, however, writes "about ten thousand."

[189] "Sozialdemokratische Kundgebungen," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, no. 208 (drittes Morgenblatt), p. 2.

[190] "Sozialdemokratische Demonstrationen in Berlin," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 29 July 1914, no. 384 (Morgen), p. 4, states that the SPD group was larger. However, the "Bericht über den Verlauf . . ." by the "II. Polizei-Brigade," Berlin, 29 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, Sec. 6, no. 15805, p. 72, says that the "patriots" were "in the majority."

three times that evening, but by 12.00 p.m. all was quiet. *Vorwärts* noted that the police's actions were accompanied "with stormy applause" from the

> thickly populated balconies of Café Bauer and Café Kranzler . . . It is truly a wonderful picture of that mammoth bourgeois courage, that with a cup of hot chocolate, from a secure balcony, one can preach class hatred.[191]

The police also broke up Social Democratic anti-war demonstrations outside the center of the city, such as a large crowd which gathered at 11.15 p.m. in front of the *Vorwärts* building. And the police arrested twenty-eight people for "public disturbances" such as yelling "down with war," "down with the warmongers" (*Kriegshetzer*), or "hurrah for Social Democracy."[192] In contrast, the police did nothing against a small group of "students and young salesmen," or against "Young Germany," who staged a "counter-demonstration."

There were similar anti-war protests throughout Germany on Tuesday and Wednesday. Almost everywhere the halls rented for the occasion were too small, and the audience spilled out into the streets, in some places enduring the rain. In all over 750,000 people throughout Germany participated.[193] As in Berlin, at these demonstrations a party member spoke for an hour or so, blaming Austria for the present war danger and criticizing the "war party" within Germany.[194] The working class, they claimed, opposed war in general and this war in particular. Their very attendance, in the words of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* journalist, showed "the rulers that this rapture for war is not the opinion of the German people."[195]

In spite of the vast attendance the meetings were generally rather quiet. Rarely did the speakers attack or blame the German government.[196] Nor

[191] "Berliner Nachrichten. Momentbilder vom Dienstagabend," *Vorwärts*, 31 July 1914, no. 206, 2. Beilage.

[192] Described in the report by the "Kommando der Schutzmannschaft," 29 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, Sec. 6, no. 15805, p. 69, and the report by the "V. Polizei-Hauptmannschaft," 29 July 1914, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, Sec. 6, no. 15805, pp. 128 ff.

[193] Kruse, *Krieg und nationale Integration*, pp. 30 ff. Kruse comes to a much higher number than either Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus (ed.), *Deutschland im Ersten Weltkrieg*, vol. I, p. 210 (based on a reading of the accounts in *Vorwärts* and *Leipziger Volkszeitung*); or Miller, *Burgfrieden und Klassenkampf*, p. 40, both of whom saw 500,000 people protesting against war.

[194] See, for example, the speech by Otto May in Braunschweig quoted in "Die braunschweigische Arbeiterschaft zur Kriegsgefahr," *Volksfreund* (Braunschweig), 29 July 1914, no. 174, p. 1; or the speech by Quint in Kassel, quoted in "Die Friedensdemonstration der Casseler Arbeiter," *Volksblatt* (Kassel), 30 July 1914, no. 175, Beilage.

[195] "An die Bevölkerung Leipzigs!," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 170, p. 1.

[196] An exception was the speech in Bremen (Café Flora) by Nierendorf, who said: "Austria has challenged Serbia. Russia will help Serbia. Germany could have ended the conflict, but did not wish to do so." Quoted in the report by the "Kriminal-Abteilung (IV) betr. der Verlauf der Soz. Versammlung in Café Flora-Gröpelingen am 28.7.14," Staatsarchiv Bremen, 4/14/1–XII.A.no. .a.4.

did the speakers mention what could or should be done in case of war (a mass strike, for example, or how the parliamentary faction should vote). Indeed, some speakers, such as Ludwig Frank in Mannheim and Kurt Eisner in Munich, declared that should war come the working class would defend the Fatherland, while others stated that in case of war the working class could do little but obey orders.[197] After the speeches the assembled people approved a locally written resolution which restated the general themes.[198] And then the workers went home quietly. Only in Leipzig, Solingen, Stuttgart, Düsseldorf, and Kassel did local party leaders organize public anti-war demonstrations as in Berlin. In some cities, however, members disobeyed their leaders and formed their own spontaneous demonstrations.[199] In some cities, too, while the membership of the SPD was peacefully dispersing they were attacked by the police.[200]

Where street demonstrations did occur, they had the same provocative and violent nature as in Berlin. In Stuttgart, about 6,000 people attempted to march to the newspaper office buildings. When turned away by the police they marched to the square in front of the palace, and to the Austrian embassy, the sites of the "national" enthusiasm. The ensuing confrontation with the police was so violent that the military had to be called in.[201] In Düsseldorf, a couple of thousand Social Democrats marched to the mayor's house, where they sang the "Internationale" before being dispersed by police on horseback with swords.[202] While

[197] Ludwig Frank's speech is reprinted in Hedwig Wachenheim (ed.), *Ludwig Frank. Ein Vorbild der deutschen Arbeiterjugend. Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe* (Berlin, n.d.), p. 587. For Kurt Eisner, see Franz Schade, *Kurt Eisner und die bayerische Sozialdemokratie* (Hanover, 1961), pp. 33 ff. Similarly, Brühne in Frankfurt, quoted in "Protest gegen den Krieg!," *Volksstimme* (Frankfurt/Main), 29 July 1914, no. 174, 1. Beilage.

[198] The resolution approved in Chemnitz is typical: "We reject the Austrian attack on Serbia as a horrible crime toward Europe and humanity. With a little intelligence and justice it could have been avoided." Quoted in "Wir wollen keinen Krieg!," *Bergische Arbeiterstimme* (Solingen), 29 July 1914, no. 174, p. 2.

[199] The protests in Leipzig are described in "Die Leipziger Arbeiterschaft und der Krieg," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 30 July 1914, no. 173, 3. Beilage; for Solingen see "Kundgebungen," *Solinger Tageblatt*, 30 July 1914; for Kassel see "Die Friedensdemonstration der Casseler Arbeiter," *Volksblatt* (Kassel), 30 July 1914, no. 175, Beilage; for Dresden and Kassel see "Der Protest im Reiche gegen den Krieg," *Hamburger Echo*, 30 July 1914, no. 175. Beilage; and for Düsseldorf see "Der Protest des Volkes gegen den Krieg," *Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf), 30 July 1914, no. 176, p. 1.

[200] Described for Bremen in "Die proletarische Friedensdemonstration," *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 174, 1. Beilage; for Cologne in "Die Polizei demonstriert für den Krieg!," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 173, p. 3; and for Elberfeld-Barmen in "Wir wollen keinen Krieg!," *Bergische Arbeiterstimme* (Solingen), 29 July 1914, no. 174, p. 2.

[201] "Stuttgart," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 862 (Mittag); and "Ausschreitungen in Stuttgart," *Leipziger Abendzeitung*, 30 July 1914, no. 174. The 6,000 is taken from "Kundgebungen im Reiche," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 30 July 1914, no. 350.

[202] "Der Protest des Volkes gegen den Krieg," *Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf), 30 July 1914, no. 176, p. 1.

attacking the Social Democratic protestors the police always overlooked the people singing songs with a patriotic text.

The SPD's anti-war demonstrations enraged right-wing journalists, evoking rhetoric that revealed quite well the reality, breadth, and violence of class differences in Wilhelmine Germany. The *Kreuz-Zeitung* called the SPD leaders "traitors," the participants in the anti-war demonstrations "degenerate," and stated that it was only "natural that those true to the state, the patriotic thinking population" opposed the SPD. The newspaper even asked that the state of siege be declared so that extraordinary actions could be taken (military courts, for example).[203] The *Tägliche Rundschau* labelled the demonstrators a "mob" and the parades "rowdiness" (*Radau*). It commented further: "the Social Democratic demonstrations are artificial as they do not come from the same impulses as the bright joy of enthusiasm of Saturday and Sunday."[204] The *Hamburger Nachrichten* and the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* even accused the SPD of having "falsified the united will of the German people, which stands honorably to its treaties."[205]

Yet for all their color, and in spite of the allergic response of the conservative media, the SPD demonstrations did not impress. The Bavarian ambassador to Prussia, Graf Lerchenfeld, spoke for most conservative observers when he reported that the SPD demonstrations had been "dutiful."[206] Most bourgeois newspapers likewise found little *Schwung* in these demonstrations.[207] Not only were the demonstrations, although quite large, not as large as the Prussian suffrage demonstrations of 1910, the absence of fighting in the streets – excepting Berlin, Stuttgart, Düsseldorf, and a few isolated incidents – suggested that, although there was broad support among the population for the idea of peace, there was likely to be little violent opposition should war be declared; indeed, if war came, that the Social Democratic Party would probably, albeit not with "enthusiasm," support the government.

[203] "Die Geister scheiden sich," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, no. 355, (Abend), p. 2; "Die sozialdemokratischen Hochverräter," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 550, (Morgen), p. 2; and "Wie lange noch?," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 29 July 1914, no. 351, (Abend), p. 1.

[204] "Die sozialdemokratischen Kundgebungen," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 29 July 1914, no. 350 (Morgen), erste Beilage.

[205] The quote is from the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, quoted in "Zeitungsschau," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 30 July 1914, no. 352 (Morgen) 1. Beilage.

[206] The report is dated 31 July 1914, and is quoted in Dieter and Ruth Glazer (eds.), *Berliner Leben 1914–1918. Eine historiale Reportage aus Erinnerungen und Berichten* (Berlin, 1983), p. 35.

[207] "Die sozialdemokratischen Kundgebungen," *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 29 July 1914; "Berliner Brief," *Rhein- und Ruhr Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 390, p. 4.

2 The response to the outbreak of the war

The response to the proclamation of the state of siege, 31 July

On Friday, 31 July, morning newspapers reported the Russian mobilization and the German ultimatum to Russia, due to expire at noon. The specter of a German involvement in a European war was now visible on the horizon. That Friday many people chose not to go to work. In the larger cities large crowds of curious people gathered at the public squares and newspaper houses.[1] In the smaller towns they gathered in front of the city hall or the Post Office, where the important telegrams were posted. And in the countryside many farmers left their farms for the closest town in order to find out the news.[2]

These were mixed crowds, composed of both sexes and of members of all occupations and age. By all accounts, those waiting were tense and worried. In Berlin, according to a *Berliner Abendpost* journalist, in the crowds "there was almost no sound . . . one spoke softly to one's neighbor about the impending decision."[3] In Hamburg, according to the Social Democratic functionary, Wilhelm Heberlein, "most people were depressed, as if waiting to be beheaded on the following day."[4] In Essen, according to the local Social Democratic newspaper, "the mood of the population is purely serious. One did not hear . . . any of the loud playful-

[1] Described for Berlin in "Die Stimmung Unter den Linden," *Vorwärts*, 1 August 1914, no. 207, 2. Beilage; and "In der Reichshauptstadt," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 August 1914, no. 182, p. 1. There is a brief discussion of these events in Gunther Mai, *Das Ende des Kaiserreichs. Politik und Kriegführung im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich, 1987), p. 11; Rürup, "Der 'Geist von 1914' in Deutschland. Kriegsbegeisterung und Ideologisierung des Krieges im Ersten Weltkrieg," p. 2; and Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, pp. 59 ff.

[2] "Stimmungsbilder aus der Provinz," *Passauer Zeitung*, 28 July 1914, no. 172.

[3] "Vor der Entscheidung. Die Stimmung unter den Linden," *Berliner Abendpost*, 2 August 1914, p. 3 [describing the afternoon of 31 July 1914]; and "In ernster Zeit," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 31 July 1914 (erste Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1.

[4] Wilhelm Heberlein's diary entry of 1 August 1914, quoted in Ullrich, *Kriegsalltag*, p. 13. Heberlein worked in the SPD youth organization. Similarly, "Aufnahme der letzten Meldungen in Hamburg," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 31 July 1914, erste Beilage, p. 6.

ness of the past few days."[5] The noon deadline passed and the tension increased. In the colorful words of a *Deutsche Zeitung* journalist, "leaden lies the weight of the hours over the secretly shivering excitement."[6] In the larger cities the tension was kept high by the publication of what seemed to be an incessant stream of extras. Grown men and women literally fought to acquire the latest news.[7]

People dealt with the tension in different ways. Many sought companionship and talked to strangers. Where a military band played as, for example, in the public square in Landshut (Bavaria), many sang along.[8] Even where there was not a band many in the curious crowds passed the time by singing together. Thus in Gelsenkirchen "until late in the evening people waited for news. Although at first the mood was very depressed, it soon improved through the singing of patriotic songs."[9]

The appearance of royalty brought forth "enthusiastic" ovations from the curious crowds. In Berlin when the Kaiser and Kaiserin entered the city at around 3.00 p.m., driving through the Brandenburg Gate down Unter den Linden in an open automobile, they were engulfed by ecstatic crowds. In Theodor Wolff's colorful words:

> the hurrah-yelling crowd heated itself up to a stormy enthusiasm, it overflowed, as if the crowd wanted to show the Kaiser through their proximity how close they felt to him . . . It was a warm, sunny day. In the hot air there was already the sweaty breath of fever and the smell of blood.[10]

After the Kaiser entered the palace, masses headed for the public square nearby (*Lustgarten*). Some youths climbed the lamp posts and decorated them with flags, including the Italian flag. Similar events took place in the residential cities of Stuttgart, Munich, and Karlsruhe.[11]

The hours passed and the tension increased. In the words of a *Kölnische Zeitung* journalist, people began to long for any decision: "no person and no people can long withstand this psychological tension without losing

[5] "Ruhe und Besonnenheit," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), 1 August 1914. A similar description for Kiel is in "Die Grösse der Stunde," *Kieler Zeitung*, 4 August 1914 (Morgen), no. 359, 2. Blatt; for Dresden in "Die Stimmung in Dresden," *Leipziger Abendzeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 176, p. 2.

[6] "Ein schicksalsschwerer Tag," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 385 (Morgen), p. 3.

[7] "Die Stimmung Unter den Linden," *Vorwärts*, 1 August 1914, no. 207, 2. Beilage.

[8] "Der österreich-serbische Krieg," *Passauer Zeitung*, 31 July 1914, p. 3.

[9] "Aus dem Landkreis Gelsenkirchen. Wattenscheid," *Gelsenkirchener Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 178.

[10] Wolff, *Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus*, p. 357. MK, "Der 31. Juli," *Weser-Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 24357 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1, wrote that the Kaiser's arrival saw a "thundering outbreak of ecstasy." Similarly, "Der Kaiserpaar in Berlin," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 179, p. 1.

[11] "Kundgebungen im Reiche," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 1 August 1914, no. 357 (Abend), p. 2; "Stuttgart in Kriegszustand," *Schwäbisches Tageblatt*, 1 August 1914, no. 176.

his patience."[12] Finally, at around 4.00 p.m., the waiting was over. Following an old Prussian tradition, an officer emerged from the Berlin palace, accompanied by twenty-eight soldiers. After marching a short distance across the bridge the men stopped in front of the "*Zeughaus*" on Unter den Linden, the Prussian military museum. They formed a square and the drummers beat their drums in all four directions. Oberleutnant von Viebahn read the proclamation declaring the state of siege. The public cheered and applauded.[13]

Within minutes extras carried the news to the suburbs, and the government posted proclamations throughout the city. Telegraph wires carried the news throughout Germany and within an hour or two similar performances had taken place in most of Germany's larger cities, usually, too, accompanied by cheers. (In Munich, for example, the proclamation of the state of siege came at around 6.00 p.m.) In the smaller towns church bells and sirens brought the country folk to the town square, and often quite late.[14] After hearing the news, silently, the farmers went quietly home.

In the larger cities that Friday evening there were many examples of what contemporaries termed "war enthusiasm." In Berlin paraders, singing patriotic songs, marched to the by now customary patriotic sites, such as the statue of Bismarck, the War Ministry, the palace, and the Austrian and Italian embassies. In the better cafés the orchestras played patriotic songs, and a loud, hoarse audience sang along. At the center of the Berlin enthusiasm was the Kaiser.

After the proclamation of the state of siege an especially large crowd – between 10,000 and 40,000 – gathered around the palace, waiting to see the Kaiser. By all accounts it was a mixed bourgeois crowd, male and female, young and old. Many *Bürger* brought along their families to watch this historic moment. Finally, at 6.30 p.m. the Kaiser appeared and gave a short speech in which he expressed his hopes for peace and his willingness to defend Germany's honor. He then listened to the crowd sing "*Heil dir im Siegerkranz*" before returning inside.[15] After the Kaiser's speech, in the

[12] "In ernster Zeit," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 31 July 1914 (erste Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1.

[13] "Die Proklamierung des Kriegszustandes," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 385 (Morgen), p. 2; and "Der Kriegszustand in Berlin und der Mark Brandenburg," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 179, p. 1.

[14] In Hamborn, according to "Lokale Nachrichten," *Hamborner General-Anzeiger*, 2 August 1914, p. 6, the state of siege was proclaimed at 11.00 p.m.

[15] "Eine Ansprache Kaiser Wilhelms," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 179, p. 1. Similarly described in "Aufnahme des Mobilisierungsbefehls in Berlin. Eine Rede des Kaisers," *Tägliche Rundschau*, no. 358, 2 August 1914 (Morgen), p. 2; "Am Vorabend des Krieges," *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, 9 August 1914, no. 32, p. 608; and many, many others.

words of a *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* journalist, "complete strangers silently shook each others hand; there was a holy mood among the crowd, a mood worthy of the moment."[16] Shortly thereafter the Kaiser left the palace, once again in an open automobile, once again engulfed by enthusiastic crowds. The crowd around the palace remained till between 1.00 a.m. and 2.00 a.m., reading aloud to each other the Kaiser's speech (which had been quickly distributed by extra newspapers), singing patriotic songs, and hoping to see the Kaiser once again. He did not reappear, although his wife did. Accordingly the crowd dispersed to other government buildings. At 11.45 p.m. the Chancellor appeared at his office window to a crowd of approximately 3,000 people. In his vigorously applauded speech the Chancellor warmly thanked the enthusiastic crowd for their support, charging that they were evidence that "all Germans were prepared to fight, regardless of his or her views or beliefs."[17]

There were similar performances in many of Germany's other large cities. In Bamberg (in Bavaria), "after the news the population put on a patriotic demonstration with hurrahs for the King and Kaiser and patriotic songs."[18] In Magdeburg spontaneous cheers developed into an "imposing demonstration."[19] In Munich a couple of thousand people visited the "national" sites, especially the palace, and brought the King to speak.[20] Even in Bochum, a working-class city in the Ruhr which up till now had not seen any evidence of "enthusiasm," some patriots staged a small parade.[21]

The right-wing press boldly interpreted these events both as evidence of the German people being ready to fight and of the "unity" of the German people. The *Tägliche Rundschau* wrote that on Friday evening, 31 July, "the people of Berlin watched over their Kaiser, to whom they

[16] "Vor dem Kaiserschloss und dem Kronprinzenpalais," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 385 (Morgen), pp. 1–2; "Nachts vorm Schloss," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 1 August 1914, no. 356 (Morgen), p. 3; "Eine Ausfahrt des Kaisers," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 386 (Abend), p. 1.

[17] "Eine Ansprache des Kanzlers," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 2 August 1914, no. 358 (Morgen), p. 2, quotes the Chancellor's speech in full. The 3,000 is from "Eine Ansprache des Reichskanzlers," *Leipziger Abendzeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 176, p. 2.

[18] "Im Kriegszustand," *Bamberger Neueste Nachrichten*, 1 August 1914, no. 177, p. 2. There is a similar description for Munich in "Mobilmachungstag," *Münchener Zeitung*, 3 August 1914, no. 178, p. 4; for Hamburg in "Tagesbericht. Die Aufnahme der Mobilmachungsorder in Hamburg," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 2 August 1914 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 2; and in general in "Deutschland in Begeisterungssturm geeinigt," *Weser-Zeitung*, 7 August 1914.

[19] "Kundgebungen im Reiche," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 1 August 1914, no. 357 (Abend), p. 2; and "Begeisterung in Magdeburg," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 386 (Abend).

[20] "Kriegszustand," *Münchner Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, p. 5.

[21] Paul Kuppers, *Der Kriegsarbeit der Stadt Bochum 1914–1918* (Bochum, 1926), p. 25.

were never so close as in this night."[22] The *Leipziger Abendzeitung und Handelsblatt* charged, in an account of the entrance of the Kaiser into Berlin, that "the German people . . . as in July 44 years ago are united and serious in one place . . . the impression that the Kaiser and his people belong together was never more convincing."[23] The *Deutsche Zeitung* wrote: "the Linden are a single, unceasing, flowing river . . . A people of brothers!"[24] The government, too, welcomed the "enthusiasm." The text proclaiming the state of siege stated:

> The patriotism . . . and the patriotic enthusiasm which has been expressed in these serious days are the most secure proof that no one will be lacking in patriotic sentiment in the difficult times we are approaching.[25]

Bourgeois newspapers charged that the crowds had created a feeling of fraternity. In Duisburg on 31 July 1914, after extra editions proclaimed the state of siege, "the often somewhat loud enthusiasm of the last few days was followed by a serious but elevated mood. People who had never seen each other before talked to each other like old friends, like brothers."[26]

Social Democratic journalists disagreed. They pointed out that there were different sorts of crowds. The curious crowds were the largest and the social composition of these crowds resembled that of society as a whole; these crowds were not "enthusiastic." The "enthusiastic" crowds were much smaller and their social composition still did not reflect that of the German population as a whole; there were, for example, few workers. More importantly, Social Democratic journalists charged, the proclamation of the state of siege did not produce outbreaks of enthusiasm. Rather, most Germans were depressed on hearing or reading the proclamation of the state of siege. In Berlin:

> what could have been foreseen has become a reality: the hurrah atmosphere is gone and a leaden presentiment of an approaching and nameless calamity weighs

[22] "Nachts vorm Schloss," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 1 August 1914, no. 356 (Morgen), p. 3. Similarly, "Eine Kaiserrede," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 1 August 1914, no. 356 (Morgen), p. 1; and "Am Vorabend des Krieges," *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, 9 August 1914, no. 32, p. 608.

[23] "Der Empfang des Kaisers," *Leipziger Abendzeitung und Handelsblatt*, 1 August 1914, no. 176, p. 1.

[24] "Die Kriegsbegeisterung in Berlin," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 386 (Abend), p. 3.

[25] Quoted in "Erklärung des Kriegszustandes," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 1 August 1914, no. 356 (Morgen), p. 3.

[26] "Die erste Stunde," *Duisburger General-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 207, p. 1. Similarly for Berlin in Erwin Alexander-Katz, "Weltgeschichte auf der Strasse," *B.Z. am Mittag*, 20 August 1914, no. 196, p. 5; and "Die Berliner Demonstration," *Volksblatt für Hessen und Waldeck*, 27 July 1914, no. 172; for Bremen in MK, "Der 31. Juli," *Weser-Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 24357 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1; and for Passau in "Lokales. Episoden," *Passauer Zeitung*, 6 August 1914, no. 180, p. 5.

upon the great multitude of those who wait for the latest news. The sixteen year olds have completely disappeared, and the streets are dominated by adults. A massive river of people populates the Linden and the area around the palace, however, the basic mood is serious and depressed. A few young people attempt to rouse an ovation, but it peters out sadly. Before the extras appear, a man who was standing on a street corner read aloud the Kaiser's speech from a stenogram. Two timid bravos were heard and then the crowd dispersed. Spirits were depressed by ton weights. And we are only at the start of events.[27]

In Braunschweig, when "the news of the state of siege came, a movement went through the population which revealed clearly the fear and the horror over the consequences."[28] In Leipzig:

the people marched up and down the streets in thick mobs. They gathered in large groups at the places where the papers and the proclamations are hung . . . [With the proclamation of the state of siege] nowhere was there the faintest glimmer of spontaneous enthusiasm, as one might have expected after the experiences of the last few days . . . The seriousness of the situation did not allow any demonstrations. Only a couple of attempts were made to bring enthusiasm into the masses by singing patriotic songs.[29]

In Stuttgart, after the proclamation:

The excitement expressed itself in a couple of yells of hurrah and the like . . . Behind the public square stood crying wives and mothers . . . The horrible seriousness of the moment dominated all souls. No violent party atmosphere (*Radaustimmung*), no yells of hurrah . . . Tears here and there.[30]

In Essen:

The crowds everywhere behaved seriously and gravely. One could see on the tense faces of mature men that they were fully aware of the seriousness of this decisive hour, that they were attempting to come to grips with their worries as to their loved ones and their own uncertain situation.[31]

Many bourgeois journalists and foreign visitors agreed. In Bremen, "heavy hangs the uncertainty over everything . . . The nervousness rises from minute to minute . . . The enthusiasm is not great. Our city is too

[27] "Die Stimmung Unter den Linden," *Vorwärts*, 1 August 1914, no. 207, 2. Beilage. Quoted in Hafkesbrink, *Unknown Germany*, p. 52. "Der Abend unter den Linden," *Berliner Lokalanzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 385 (Morgen), p. 2, writes that it was quiet in the working-class sections of town.

[28] "Die Kriegsgefahr und die Braunschweiger Bevölkerung," *Braunschweiger Volksfreund*, 1 August 1914, no. 177, p. 3.

[29] "Vor dem Kriege," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 175, 2. Beilage.

[30] "Stuttgart in Kriegszustand," *Schwäbisches Tageblatt*, 1 August 1914, no. 176, p. 2.

[31] "In höchster Spannung," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), 31 July 1914 (describing 30 July 1914). Similarly "Ruhe und Besonnenheit," *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Essen), 1 August 1914; and, for Bochum, "Lokales," *Volksblatt* (Bochum), 1 August 1914, no. 177, p. 3.

prosaic."[32] At the Nuremberg train station, according to the American Clare Benedict, "consternation was imprinted on many faces, we saw no elation anywhere, only quiet gloomy resolution. The attitude was that of accepting the inevitable with resignation."[33] Throughout the Ruhr newspapers described a generally "depressed mood."[34] Theodor Wolff's wife, passing through Essen on 31 July noted that "in Essen the working-class population was stunned, and there was none of the mood of sensationalism to be felt, which had pushed itself to the front in Berlin."[35] In Munich, people ran outside to the bulletin boards, and many merchants immediately raised their prices.[36] In Berlin, according to the *Weser-Zeitung*, those who read the posters declaring the state of siege recognized "that is war; these small scraps of paper are the war. Fleeting explosions of joy quiver up. But they are lost under the gravity of the waiting. The twelfth hour has begun."[37]

The response to the proclamation of mobilization, 1 August

The state of siege was not yet war. Germans went to sleep that evening knowing sometime the next day they would find out if they were going to go to war or not. Already at 9.00 a.m. on Saturday morning, 1 August, crowds of curious Germans once again gathered at the customary places, waiting nervously for news. These were enormous crowds – the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* estimated that there were "hundreds of thousands" waiting in front of the Berlin palace – probably the largest unorganized crowds in German history.[38] Once again, the mood was tense. The *Hamburger Echo* wrote that in Hamburg that evening:

> like a awful rush, the loud mood which during the first few days of this week was ignited by a couple of unthinking fools, is gone . . . it is seldom that one hears a joyful laugh on the streets.[39]

[32] *Ibid*. There is a similar description for Frankfurt/Main in a memoir: Werner Wachsmuth, "Wir vertrauten einem intakten Staat," in Rudolf Pörtner (ed.), *Kindheit im Kaiserreich. Erinnerungen an vergangene Zeiten* (Munich, 1989), p. 117: "The poster proclaiming the mobilization on the wooden board of the street-car stop will remain in my mind for the rest of my life. One was filled with horror, but did not know quite what it meant."

[33] Clare Benedict, *Six Months. March–August 1914* (n.p., 1914), p. 44.

[34] "Trübe Stimmung," *General-Anzeiger für Dortmund*, 31 July 1914. Similarly, for Bochum in "Aus Stadt und Land," *Bochumer Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, p. 3.

[35] Wolff, *Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus*, p. 360.

[36] "Münchener Tagesneuigkeiten," *Münchner Neuesten Nachrichten*, 31 July 1914 (*General-Anzeiger*), no. 388, p. 1.

[37] MK, "Der 31. Juli," *Weser-Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 24357 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1.

[38] "Das Unsichtbare," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 386 (Abend), p. 1. The 9.00 a.m. is from "Eine Ausfahrt des Kaisers," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 386 (Abend), p. 1. Described briefly in Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, pp. 59 ff.

[39] "Stunden der Sorge," *Hamburger Echo*, 2 August 1914.

In Berlin, according to a *Berliner Abendpost* journalist, in the waiting crowd, "there was almost no sound . . . One spoke softly to one's neighbor about the decision. With an increasing impatience one awaited the decision . . . If only one finally knew."[40] On Unter den Linden, where "the people are all quite well dressed," there was "a peculiar something that simply can not be expressed, except that this was a moment full of fate."[41]

As the hours passed, as the deadline passed, as the extras kept appearing, the tension grew. To relieve the tension, once again people sang songs, and applauded royalty or government officials.[42] Finally, at 5.30 that afternoon in Berlin "a car rushed out – a General Staff officer inside. He waved his hand and yelled out one word out from the car. It passed from mouth to mouth: mobilization." The crowd cheered, moved closer to the palace and "now the flame of enthusiasm grew powerfully. The Prussian song, the Kaiser song, Deutschland über Alles."[43] At 6.00 p.m., extras spread the news throughout the city. Somewhat later the news passed through Germany.[44] In the smaller towns and the countryside the bells' tolling proclaimed that war had come.

After the news of the mobilization, downtown Berlin streets became sites of ecstatic "enthusiasm." Youths marched in "enthusiastic" parades. In overfilled cafés, men gave speeches which men and women listened to. All repeatedly sang patriotic songs.[45] The Kaiser was once again the center of attention. Around 40,000 to 50,000 people, men, women, and children, mostly from the middle and upper classes, came to the palace because, in the words of a *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* journalist, "one simply has to have experienced this historic moment."[46] Finally, the Kaiser and his wife appeared. The crowd became quiet and the Kaiser said the following, soon to be famous, words:

From the depths of my heart I thank you for the expressions of your love, of your faithfulness. In the battle now lying ahead of us, I see no more parties in my *Volk*. Among us there are only Germans, and if some of the parties in the course of past differences turned against me, I forgive them all. All that now matters is that we

[40] "Vor der Entscheidung. Die Stimmung unter den Linden," *Berliner Abendpost*, 2 August 1914, p. 3.

[41] A. K., "Berliner Plauderbrief," *Königsberger Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 357.

[42] "Eine Ausfahrt des Kaisers," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 386 (Abend), p. 1.

[43] "Der Mobilmachungsbefehl in Berlin," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 387 (Morgen), p. 2; "Vor dem Königlichen Schloss," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 179, p. 1; and "Aufnahme des Mobilisierungsbefehls in Berlin," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 2 August 1914, no. 358, p. 2.

[44] So in the report on the mood in Hamburg of Dr. Schulz, "Bericht an Ereignisse," to the mayor of Hamburg, dated 1 August 1914, Hamburg Staatsarchiv, Senat, Kriegsakten, A.I.b.1., no p.

[45] "Unter den Linden," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 2 August 1914, no. 387.

[46] "In der Umgebung des Schlosses," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 2 August 1914, no. 387 (Morgen), p. 2.

stand together like brothers, and then God will help the German sword to victory.[47]

There were similar outbursts of "war enthusiasm" throughout Germany. In Stuttgart a crowd of 10,000 marched to the palace and sang patriotic songs. In Munich a crowd of about 20,000 gathered in front of the palace, and with its ovations brought the King to speak.[48] (Adolf Hitler was among those in this crowd.) In Frankfurt am Main people sang songs in the streets and a small parade visited the Regional Deputy Commander General's house before marching to Bismarck's statue.[49] There was even some enthusiasm in some of the working-class cities in the Ruhr. In Oberhausen after the news of mobilization "cleared the depressing tension, a powerful enthusiasm appeared, a powerful expression of love for the Kaiser and the empire; everywhere patriotic songs were sung."[50]

Bourgeois journalists interpreted these examples of "war enthusiasm" as evidence of a "Germany united in a storm of enthusiasm."[51] The *Kieler Zeitung* wrote "the people have arisen. In a unity without comparison."[52] The *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, describing the patriotic demonstrations in Stuttgart on 1 August 1914, wrote: "the mood in the whole population is one of enthusiasm."[53] The *Magdeburgische Zeitung* saw "enthusiasm in all sections of the population."[54] The *Darmstädter Zeitung* wrote that, "with one blow all our internal differences, all the struggles of the party, all the many, often painfully stupid everyday differences have vanished. A united *Volk* in arms – so Germany goes to war."[55] A *Deutsche Zeitung* journalist wrote of the public reception of the proclamation of the mobilization:

how the joy glowed through the streets of the capital after the wonderful decision. Now the enthusiasm of the youths has become the joy of men . . . Total strangers

[47] "Eine Ansprache des Kaisers," *Vorwärts*, 2 August 1914, no. 208. The article appeared, in contrast to other newspapers, in the back pages. The best description of this event can be found in "Eine neue Rede des Kaisers," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 358 (Morgen), p. 1; "Kriegsbegeisterung im ganzen Reich," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 4 August 1914, no. 186, p. 2; and Wolff, *Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus*, p. 364.

[48] "München am 1. Mobilmachungstag," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 3 August 1914, no. 398 (Morgen), p. 3. Similarly described in "Mobilmachung," *Münchner Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 177, p. 7.

[49] Drüner, *Im Schatten des Weltkrieges*, p. 60; and "Begeisterung im Reiche," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 358 (Morgen), p. 1.

[50] "Stimmungsbericht zur Mobilmachung," from the mayor of Oberhausen, dated 20 August 1914, HStA Düsseldorf, Regierung Düsseldorf, Politische Akten, no. 14911, p. 272. Almost all of the reports Ruhr mayors prepared on the mood of the population state that there was "enthusiasm" on 1 August.

[51] "Deutschland im Begeisterungssturm geeinigt," *Weser-Zeitung*, 7 August 1914, no. 24362 (zweite Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1.

[52] "Das Volk steht auf," *Kieler Zeitung*, 3 August 1914, no. 358 (Abend), p. 3.

[53] *B.Z. am Mittag*, 2 August 1914, quoted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, p. 71.

[54] "Begeisterung in Deutschland," 1 August 1914, no. 564 (Abend), p. 1.

[55] "Politische Wochenschau," *Darmstädter Zeitung*, 8 August 1914.

shook hands. The deeper bond of all that is German broke through all the layers of class, ideological, and party differences. Kaiser and people, government and citizens – all were one.[56]

The *Tägliche Rundschau* claimed with satisfaction that the enthusiasm had not just united the classes, it had ended all divisions within Germany: Bavarians, Prussians, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, all were now one.[57]

In the next few weeks and months conservative journalists, academics, and authors would develop a myth of the "spirit of 1914," an account of what these crowd experiences had accomplished. On 6 August the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote, looking back at the week that had just passed:

what has happened from 30 July to today is the revelation of a strong national feeling living in our people . . . Whoever saw the masses in the streets of Berlin, whoever was carried away and marched with them, he has impressions he will carry with him for the rest of his life. What power, what glory lives in [the people], what magnificent beauty they possess, when a choir of thousands sings under the free skies, moved by elementary emotions . . . What a great day that was: the excitement grew up to an indescribable level. The worry of the stormy afternoon passed into the evening, and into the night, but there was no letting up of the common heart beat, of the feeling that had been awakened: that we are a people of brothers (*ein Volk von Brüdern*). One was brotherly: the worker, who in his open shirt proudly carried the flag, the academic who walked next to him, soldiers, some of whom were already in uniform, singing in the rows of those marching. Often one walked arm in arm, in rows of thirty to forty men.[58]

In their descriptions of their own crowd experiences many journalists, academics, and authors explained the unity as the experience of a mass soul. Professor Martin Schian wrote in October 1914:

The rule of the masses began at the moment the mobilization order was posted. We felt as the masses, feared as the masses, hoped as the masses. We all wanted only to be Germans. Only integrated parts of a large, beloved, beautiful people – the masses.[59]

The conservative Berlin historian Otto von Gierke wrote:

For a time I seemed to lose my individual personality. A higher patriotic individuality had taken full possession of the consciousness of all of its members. I had seen the "spirit of the people" (*Volksgeist*).[60]

[56] "Mobilmachung," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 387.
[57] For example, "Kundgebungen im Reiche," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 1 August 1914, no. 257, p. 2 (Abend).
[58] "In der Reichshauptstadt," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 August 1914, no. 182, p. 1.
[59] Martin Schian, "Krieg und Persönlichkeit," *Akademische Rundschau* 3, no. 1/4 (October, 1914/January, 1915), pp. 59–60.
[60] Otto von Gierke, "Volksgeist," *Der Tag*, 30 August 1914, no. 203, p. 1.

In the words of Hermann Bahr, "the enthusiasm of groups, or organizations, in which the individual is torn away from his own person . . . is overwhelming."[61]

Certainly many people were carried away by the crowds, experienced the power of the crowds. That this was a transformation experience in which all Germans became fraternal, "that we are a people of brothers," was, however, simply not the case. Social Democratic and left-liberal newspapers, under censorship, were unable to reply directly. They were unable to point out that most participants in the enthusiasm were still youths, especially students, fraternity members, and members of youth organizations. Nowhere was there any evidence of working-class war "enthusiasm," of the worker in his open shirt marching next to the academic and the soldier. All photographs of the enthusiastic crowds on 2 August 1914 show well-dressed men and women: many are wearing straw hats; no one is wearing a working-class hat; there are no workers in open shirts. It is only in the memory of this event, in this case a memory produced only one week after the event, that one finds such descriptions of fraternity. (As Michael Stöcker has pointed out, these historic inventions went so far that in Darmstadt newspapers the captions often rarely fit the picture they are supposed to describe.[62])

"War enthusiasm" continued to be an urban phenomenon. As one observer explained, the people in the countryside lacked the national sites, as well as the "excitement and the infection of common parades of enthusiasm."[63] In Minden, a small city in western Germany, there were "no rages of enthusiasm, no hay fire of overly loud cheering, only the expression of serious and self-confident seriousness."[64] In Plön, a town in northern Germany:

> late in the evening the citizens of Plön gathered in groups at the market place, in front of the government building, and in front of the Post Office. They talked very nervously about the day's news. At 9.00 p.m. the news came. The church bells sounded gloomily. Shining eyes filled with tears could be seen in the light of the street lamps.[65]

In Ebingen, a town in the middle of Germany: "'now the war is there, the world war!' one yelled fearfully in the streets, in the stores, in the kitchen.

[61] *Kriegssegen* (Munich, 1915), p. 21.
[62] See, for example, the photograph captioned "Die Kundgebungen für Oesterreich in Berlin und München," *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, 2 August 1914, no. 31, p. 586. Stöcker, *Augusterlebnis 1914 in Darmstadt*, pp. 153 ff.
[63] Agnes Harder, "Die ersten Kriegstage in Ostpreussen," *Unterhaltungsbeilage der Täglichen Rundschau*, 13 August 1914, no. 188 (Diary entry of 2 August 1914).
[64] Franz, *Kriegs-Chronik 1914–1916 Stadt Minden*, p. 6.
[65] J. Helm, *Plön. Geschichte der Stadt von der Gründung bis zur Gegenwart* (Plön am See, 1931), p. 81.

Everybody became quite active . . . One suspected what the words meant. Horror filled the souls."[66] In Wenzenau, in Alsace, after the proclamation of the state of siege:

> The mood is depressed. Everywhere there are groups of men who speak of war. Crying women sometimes mix in these groups. At the same time a couple of fifteen to seventeen-year-olds march, more yelling than singing, through the streets. What a contrast.[67]

In the countryside, after the church bells rang, farmers hurried to the nearest town square where the pastor or the mayor told them the news. In Fürth, "everywhere a depressed mood took over . . . One looked with fear into the near future . . . Many tears have already flown, and scenes which break your heart are occurring as loved ones leave."[68]

In the large cities, too, the dominant mood seems not to have been enthusiasm but sadness and fear. In Solingen, after the church bells rang, "the men looked at the future, the women cried, and the children looked scared." There was "quiet emotion on all faces. Soon however the tension was realized." Someone yelled hurrah, others joined in, and an anonymous bank official gave a speech.[69] Eugen Schiffer, a National Liberal lawyer, walking the streets of Berlin that evening, wrote in his diary:

> I go with my sons into the middle of the city. Under the Linden there are great crowds of people. They do not, however, provide a pleasant sight. Mostly it is young boys with their girls, who walk up and down the middle of the street – yelling and shouting. However, as soon as one comes to a side street one notices the deadening seriousness which has settled down upon the people.[70]

S. Jobs wrote in 1924 that:

[66] Gottlob Freiherr Hummel, *Kriegs-Chronik der Stadtgemeinde Ebingen* (Stuttgart, 1919), p. 56. A similar description for Fürth in "Lokales," *Fürther Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, p. 3; for Frankenthal in "Der große Tag der Entscheidung," *Frankenthaler Tageblatt*, 3 August 1914, p. 3; and for Immenstadt in *Kriegs-Chronik 1914/1918 der Stadt Immenstadt*, pp. 13–14. For a superb discussion of the mood of the population in the countryside in Bavaria, see Ziemann, *Front und Heimat*, pp. 39–54.

[67] Alois Postina, *Wanzenauer Kriegschronik: ein Gedenkblatt aus dem Weltkrieg 1914–1918* (Strasburg, 1930), p. 7. It certainly would be worth examining in greater detail the reactions of the population in Alsace to the proclamation of war. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find the materials to do so and have been forced to rely on materials that discuss the "August experiences." This will be addressed in the next chapter.

[68] "Lokales. Bange Stunden," *Fürther Zeitung*, 3 August 1914, p. 3. All of the reports of local pastors on the mood in their community, collected by the *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* and published in October and November 1914, are similar. Nowhere have I found any descriptions of "enthusiasm" in the countryside.

[69] "Das Volk steht auf, der Sturm bricht los," *Solinger Tageblatt*, quoted in Johannes Motz (ed.), *Solingen im 1. Weltkrieg* (Solingen, 1984), p. 19.

[70] BA Koblenz, NL Schiffer, no. 3, p. 21. Similarly, "Der große Tag der Entscheidung," *Augsburger Neueste Nachrichten*, 3 August 1914, p. 4; and "Der Beginn des Krieges und der Mobilmachung," *Volksfreund* (Braunschweig), 3 August 1914, no. 178, p. 1.

it is simply not true that the proclamation of war brought forth a rush of enthusiasm among the Berlin population. Whoever was out on that evening of 1 August, walking the most crowded streets of Berlin in order to study seriously the mood of the population, forced his way . . . through a quiet, serious, even shaken group of people. To be sure every now and then a parade of youthful throats sang the ideas of the Pan-German league along the streets, but the quiet pedestrians on the sidewalk were unmoved by this spectacle.[71]

In Duisburg, "the city made, in spite of the crowds in the streets, already at 10.00 this evening a rather depressed impression. The patriotic songs, which could usually be heard from the cafés well after midnight, were gone quite early."[72] In Hamburg:

like an awful rush, the loud mood which during the first few days of this week was ignited by a couple of people who were unable to think, is gone . . . seldom that one still hears a joyful laugh on the streets.[73]

In Nuremberg:

the feverish noise which echoed through the streets in the days before the mobilization has gradually become silent. Most of the people walk by each other serious and depressed . . . Yes, there are many tears – in spite of all the love of the Fatherland, in spite of all the willingness to make sacrifices.[74]

In Hamborn, after the church bells and sirens, one saw:

sad female faces, serious male faces, children looking around, not understanding what is going on. The married men and women all hurry home; the youths stand in the streets . . . In spite of the large crowds there is an enormous silence – one could hear a pin drop – at least after all the hurrahs, with which the proclamation was greeted, have echoed away.[75]

[71] S. Jobs, "Vor zehn Jahren," *Die Welt am Montag* 30, no. 31 (4 August 1924), p. 2.
[72] "Die erste Stunde," *Duisburger General-Anzeiger*, 1 August 1914, no. 207, p. 1.
[73] "Stunden der Sorge," *Hamburger Echo*, 2 August 1914, describing 1 August 1914.
[74] "Die Großstadt – und der Krieg," *Nürnberger Stadtzeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 180, p. 2.
[75] "Lokale Nachrichten. Aufgeregte Stunden," *Hamborner General-Anzeiger*, 2 August 1914, p. 6. As an example of how two different observers could interpret public opinion quite differently, see the report by the mayor of Hamborn, "Verlauf der Mobilmachung," 15 August 1914, HStA Düsseldorf, Regierung Düsseldorf, Politische Akten, no. 14911, p. 262. The mayor writes that at first there was a "great tension." At the end of the week "in the streets in the cafés, and especially in front of the newspaper houses large crowds congregated till late in the evening. A portion of the press engaged in a competition to see who could tell the most sensational news, who could keep the crowds most aroused. When on 31 July the state of siege and on 1 August mobilization was declared, it came as a relief. A storm of patriotic enthusiasm went through the city, the like of which had never been seen here before. Large crowds of people marched through the streets singing patriotic songs; young and old participated in enthusiastic demonstrations."

There are similar accounts for Bremen, Munich, Frankfurt/Main, Regensburg, Augsburg, Karlsruhe, indeed, for most large German cities.[76]

Not only did the enthusiasm fail to unite Germany, much of the excitement remained hard to characterize as "enthusiasm." Many observers saw the ecstatic display of emotions simply as an expression of relief. Theodor Wolff wrote that "what one calls mass enthusiasm is most often simply the release of an enormous inner tension."[77] The *Frankfurter Zeitung* likewise wrote,

> those not always clearly definable emotions expressing themselves in the yelling of hurrah and the singing of patriotic songs have given vent to the general excitement of these last weeks. This sort of excitement asks little and weighs nothing: its representatives usually act under the influence of an almost purely physical pressure.[78]

[76] For Bremen see Enrique Dominguez Rodino, "Die Mobilisierung ist der Krieg," written for *La Vanguardia* (Spanish newspaper), Bremen Staatsarchiv, 4, 14/1–Kr.A.2.A. [I thank Mr. Donat for this reference.]: "From the moment in which the proclamation was published the theater on the streets, as if through magic, suddenly changed. One half hour after the proclamation the streets were empty and quiet." For Munich see "München am 1. Mobilmachungstag," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 3 August 1914, no. 398 (Morgen), p. 3. For Frankfurt/Main see "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. III. Das hessische Land und Frankfurt a.M. 2. Aus Frankfurt a.M.," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 1. Kriegsheft (October 1914), p. 18; for Regensburg see "Die Stimmung in Regensburg," *Regensburger Neueste Nachrichten*, 3 August 1914, no. 210, p. 7; for Augsburg, see "Nach der Mobilmachung," *Augsburger Neueste Nachrichten*, 2 August 1914, (Sonderausgabe), p. 4. For Karlsruhe see "Die Provokation," *Badischer Beobachter* 1 August 1914 (no. 209).

[77] Theodor Wolff, "Der 1. August, 1914," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 1 August 1919, no. 352 (Morgen), p. 1.

[78] The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, quoted in Hafkebrink, *Unknown Germany*, p. 32. Similarly, K. Schr., "Die Grösse der Stunde," *Kieler Zeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 359 (Morgen), 2. Blatt; and Paul Lindenberg, "Berliner Stimmungbilder," *Niederbarnimer Kreisblatt*, 2 August 1914.

3 The "August experiences"

If war had not come, it is likely that the "enthusiasm" of the last week of July would have been remembered differently. Perhaps one would have remembered it like that provincial journalist who warned that "one should not exaggerate all this too much." It was, after all, Saturday night in Berlin.[1] But war did come, and the memories of July were overlaid with the memories of what contemporaries called the "August experiences." It was an unusual time. Klaus Mann remembered the "August experiences" in his memoirs as an "atmosphere," a collage of powerful emotions and sensations:

> When I attempt to recapture the atmosphere of 1914 I see flying flags, grey helmets bejeweled with wonderful flowers, women knitting, loud posters, and once again flags – an ocean, a cataract in black, white and red [the colors of Prussia/Germany]. The air is filled with noise and the refrains of patriotic songs: "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles," and "Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall . . ." The noise never stops. Every second day a new victory is celebrated . . . The final victory seems certain: the boys will be home at Christmas.[2]

It is impossible to recreate this atmosphere in all its richness. In the following, organizing the "August experiences" around a topology of the crowd experiences, I will explore the various strands of emotions, recognizing that they do not necessarily equate with social topologies, recognizing that the same person may have felt many of these, often contradictory, emotions.

Curious crowds, audience crowds

On 2 August 1914, a Sunday, and the first day of mobilization, the Berlin police cordoned off the public spaces around the palace. They also put up a poster throughout the city reminding people to keep their physical distance from the monarch, complaining that "an unacceptable situation had developed during his Majesty's automobile trips in the days of patriotic enthusiasm: citizens not only cheered the Kaiser, as customary, from

[1] "Die Stimmung in Berlin," *Ohligser Zeitung*, 27 July 1914, no. 173, p. 2.
[2] Klaus Mann, *Der Wendepunkt. Ein Lebensbericht* (Hamburg, 1981), p. 50.

the sidewalks, but surged up to the Kaiser's car."[3] The Kaiser himself, in a letter to the Berlin mayor thanking the Berliners for their support, in which he stated that the patriotic demonstrations showed that he could rely upon "the unity of the complete German Fatherland even in more serious times," asked that the exuberant demonstrations around the palace stop; he needed his sleep.[4]

Government officials need not have worried. Although the center of Berlin was crowded that Sunday, as tens of thousands came downtown to read the latest extras, catch a glimpse of the Kaiser, or to watch the changing of the guard (the grey field uniforms being worn for the first time), where on Saturday bourgeois journalists perceived "joy" on Sunday they saw "exemplary order."[5] Although one could still hear the proud singing of patriotic songs in the better beer halls and cafés, although anonymous speakers decanting on politics – usually at patriotic sites – could still find a couple of hundred people willing to listen, and although hundreds of enthusiastic people gathered in front of the Japanese embassy, even hugging the few Japanese found in the streets after reading in newspapers that Japan would support Germany, unlike the day before, few in the curious crowds joined in the "enthusiastic" parades staged by students or youthful teenagers.[6]

The prevailing mood was not enthusiasm, but curious suspense. Curious crowds continued to gather in the public squares or in front of the newspaper offices, especially in the afternoon and evening, waiting for the latest news. As in July the curious crowds were composed of the sort of people who could take the time to wait for news: youths and members of the middle and upper classes. The curious crowds were quiet, "everywhere a deep, deep seriousness."[7] The *Tägliche Rundschau* asked of one of these crowds on Unter den Linden of 8 August 1914:

> quietly the crowd flows back and forth; has it lost interest? No, its peace is suppressed nervousness. New reports come. The shrill screams of the newspaper sellers pierce the quiet air. The newspapers are torn away from the vendors. Feverishly one reads them.[8]

[3] Quoted in *Niederbarnimer Kreisblatt*, 8 August 1914, no. 184.

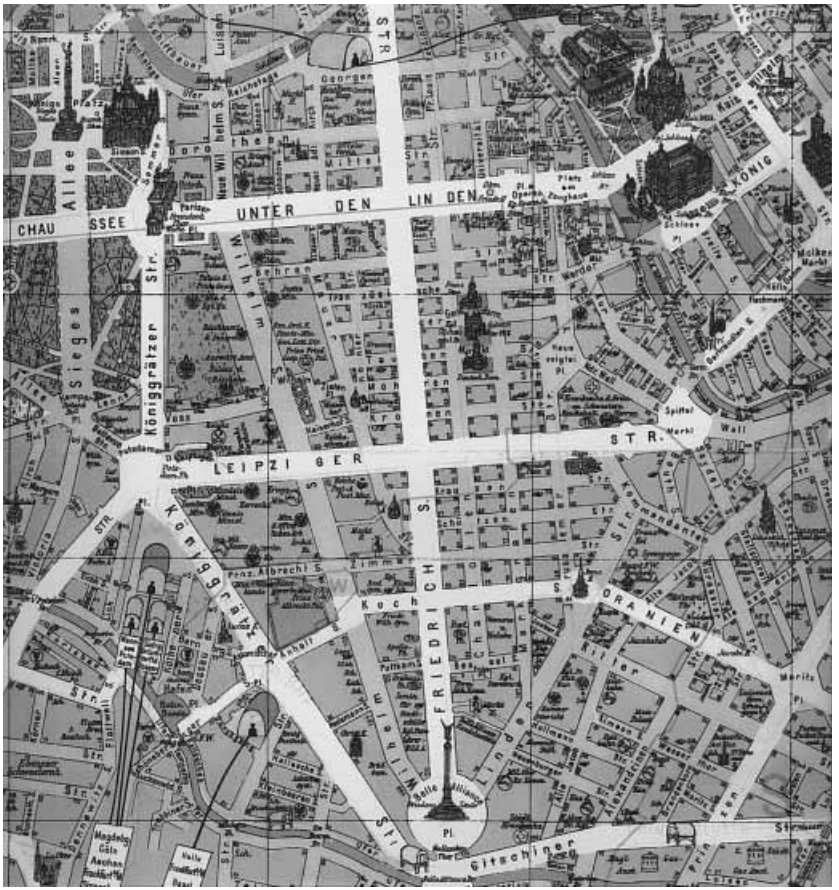
[4] The Kaiser's 2 August 1914 letter is reprinted in "Der Dank des Kaisers," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 3 August 1914, no. 359 (Morgen), p. 4.

[5] My description of these curious crowds is based on "Eröffnung des europäischen Krieges," *Niederbarnimer Kreisblatt*, 4 August 1914 (from which the quote is taken); among others.

[6] "Der Geist der Berliner Volksmassen," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 3 August 1914, no. 360, p. 3; Hellmut von Gerlach, *Die große Zeit der Lüge* (Berlin, 1926), p. 73.

[7] "München am 1. Mobilmachungstag," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 3 August 1914, no. 398 (Morgen), p. 3.

[8] "Der zweite Kriegssonntag. Unter den Linden," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 10 August 1914, no. 372 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 4.



1. Downtown Berlin in 1914

Cafés, too, remained packed; people went there hoping "to hear the latest news."[9] "No one could remain in his four walls," wrote a contemporary about 2 August in Minden (a town in the west of Germany), "some were driven out by the understandable desire to find out what is new in this world theater, others by the desire to watch, others out of fear. Soon all were one with the many thousands walking back and forth."[10]

Although there was little "enthusiasm" in these curious crowds, there was a sense of "community," of a shared fate. Journalists noted that complete strangers talked to one another, asking for the latest news. A

[9] BAL, diary of Pastor Falck, p. 13.
[10] Franz, *Kriegs-Chronik 1914–1916 Stadt Minden*, p. 7.

Protestant minister in a Catholic community in the Black Forest remarked that in August 1914 "I found that even Catholics, who previously had only greeted me with my last name, now said 'hello pastor,' and were friendlier than normal."[11] And yet outside of these curious crowds uninhibited social interaction between the classes remained rare.

The people in the curious crowds were interested in news; newspapers were "devoured."[12] To meet the increased demand editors increased supply, publishing many extra editions daily. As there was little news yet – major battles were weeks away – journalists blew up any small skirmish into a battle of major proportions. Already at 7.00 a.m. on 2 August extra newspapers in Berlin reported a major battle on the German–Russian border. Such news did not bring forth cries of enthusiasm. Rather, it was consumed silently. According to *Vorwärts*:

> Now it is there. That is war. But one hears no hurrahs. The masses are too serious, much too serious. They feel the power of events, feel that they are truly standing at the door to something terrible and bloody: war. No cries of hurrah, but also no alarm.[13]

Even so the supply of news was insufficient to meet the demand. Newspapers turned to sensationalism. A spy fever began on 3 August when newspapers published an official report which claimed that Germany was being overrun by Russian spies.[14] Thereafter newspapers told of spies bombing bridges, of spies spreading germs and poisons in the water of major German cities, of poisoned fruits, of Russian spies dressed up as nurses or officers, of spies caught and summarily executed while trying to cut telephone wires, bomb bridges, or spread germs, of enemy airplanes flying over German airspace.[15] Almost all such stories were false. Many were also implausible. But the stories were readily believed (and newspapers seldom printed retractions). In Munich, the city government was forced to send police throughout the city proclaiming that the

[11] "Unsere Kirchengemeinde während der Kriegszeit. II. Von der Westgrenze. 2. Aus dem badischen Schwarzwald (Waldkirch)," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 1. Kriegsheft (October 1914), p. 6.

[12] So the description of a local minister in his diary, W. Franzmathes, *Tagebuch vom Weltkrieg. Erster Teil (1. August–1. Oktober 1914)* (Worms, 1914), pp. 12, 25.

[13] "Mobilmachungs-Sonntag," *Vorwärts*, 4 August 1914, no. 210, Beilage.

[14] The report, first published in the *Kölnische Zeitung* on 2 August, and picked up by the rest of Germany's newspapers on 3 August, is reprinted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, p. 83.

[15] Gerlach, *Die große Zeit der Lüge*, p. 17, reported that in Cologne the Red Cross warned the soldiers against eating poisoned fruits; "Der Französische Überfall. Sie vergiften die Brunnen," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 3 August 1914, no. 360 (Abend), warned of the poisoning of wells with cholera; "Spionenjagd in Berlin," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 391 (Abend), p. 2, claimed that Russian officers had dressed themselves in "German uniforms" or as women. See further the excerpts in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, pp. 82 ff.

water supply was not poisoned. In Frankfurt/Main, civilian militia guarding the bridges spent part of one evening shooting at clouds (which they mistook for French airplanes).[16]

Atrocity stories soon superseded the spy stories. On 5 August 1914 newspapers reported that mobs of Belgian civilians had murdered Germans living in Belgium (according to one popular report six Germans had been killed). On 8 August newspapers reported atrocities committed by Belgian "franc-tireurs." Such articles would continue for the next few weeks and would often take macabre forms. Newspapers reported how "civilians cut off the heads of the wounded and put them on sticks," how "a Wurttemberg cavalry man was found with his hands cut off," or how the German army had captured a Belgian soldier who "had his pockets full of fingers cut off of those hands where the rings did not come off easily."[17]

It is understandable that some contemporaries employed terms like "war psychosis," "mass psychosis," or "mass hypnosis" to explain the spy scare or similar aspects of public opinion.[18] Public opinion seemed to have all the excitable, suggestible characteristics of an "irrational" mass soul. Yet the "psychosis" had its catalysts. The press worked hard to sustain a high level of suspense, publishing many extras a day, although there was little news. To fill their pages journalists not only turned to sensationalism, they also invented stories: sea battles between ships that had not yet left port, battles between armies that had not yet mobilized. *Vorwärts* complained:

> It was as if a general suggestion caught hold of the souls of people, and all human passions were caught up in this whirlpool. Whenever this sea of people seemed to subside for a bit, the fire was lit again, and extras covered the streets with alarming news . . . Even the stupidest among the pedestrians had to feel that the press is using these difficult events as a suitable advertisement for its capitalistic purposes.[19]

[16] Munich is described in "Die Stimmung in München," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 4 August 1914, no. 394 (Vorabend), p. 3; Frankfurt is described in "Stimmungsbilder," *Frankfurter Volksstimme*, 5 August 1914, no. 180, Beilage.

[17] "Soldatenbriefe," *8–Uhr Abendblatt*, 22 August 1914; "Schlachtfeldhyänen," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 21 August 1914, no. 393 (Morgen), p. 3. Lothar Wieland's *Belgium 1914. Die Frage des belgischen 'Franktireurkrieges' und die deutsche öffentliche Meinung von 1914 bis 1936* (Frankfurt/Main, 1984), pp. 19 ff., is the best introduction to German atrocity "propaganda." See also the excerpts in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, pp. 166 ff., 201 ff., vol. II, pp. 4 ff.; as well as the collection of atrocity "myths" in Bernhard Duhr, *Der Lügengeist im Völkerkrieg. Kriegs-Märchen* (Munich and Regensburg, 1915).

[18] Siegfried Jacobsohn, "Kriegstagebuch III," *Die Schaubühne* 10, vol. 2 (1914), p. 183; Professor Johannes Dück, "Die Massensuggestion in Kriegszeiten," *Illustrierte Zeitung* (Leipzig), no. 3713 (27 August 1914), pp. 350 ff.

[19] "Kriegsstimmung – gesteigerte Lebensmittelpreise," *Vorwärts*, 3 August 1914, no. 209.

If the press was one catalyst the government was another, for the government supplied the press with most of the news. On 3 August newspapers published a government report that French airplanes had bombed a railway line between Karlsruhe and Nuremberg. The government included this rumor in the German letter to France declaring war, and in the Chancellor's 4 August speech.[20] Ernst Toller recorded in his memoirs that upon reading this news he believed that Germany had been attacked. In order to sustain a climate of patriotic excitement the government required all newspapers to bring such stories. The Oberkommando in den Marken (Berlin), for example, demanded that *Vorwärts* run articles on the franc-tireur war and on Belgian and Russian atrocities on 15 August and on 19 August 1914, although SPD journalists had argued that such articles were almost certainly fabrications.[21] Eventually the government, however, had to admit that things were getting out of hand. On 11 August 1914 the government asked people not to believe everything they heard or read. In late 1914 and early 1915 the government forbade the publication of unauthorized extra newspapers, recognizing that there were a lot of lies and fabricated stories in these extras.[22]

If news was one pole of interest, "novelty . . . something unexpected" was the other.[23] The greatest novelty was the mobilization itself. On Sunday, 2 August, thousands watched the changing of the guard in cities with royal residences, and afterwards sang patriotic songs. Thousands also gathered at the train stations on this, the first day of mobilization, to watch those drafted leave for barracks in other towns or cities. The social composition of these curious crowds, of those who came to watch "history," resembled the curious crowds of July: it was largely middle- and upper-middle class. The curious crowds saw little enthusiasm among the people; rather "the bitter necessity of the moment can be seen in the expressions of all, although more so among those accompanying the

[20] "Krieg nach zwei Fronten," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 3 August 1914, no. 359 (Morgen), p. 1; and "Augenblicksbilder," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 3 August 1914, no. 360 (Abend), p. 4. Ernst Toller, *Eine Jugend in Deutschland* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 1963), p. 38; Klaus-Dieter Schwarz, *Weltkrieg und Revolution in Nürnberg. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Stuttgart, 1971), p. 108; and E. J. Gumbel, *Vier Jahre Lüge* (Berlin, 1919), pp. 5 ff.

[21] Curt Schoen, *Der Vorwärts und die Kriegserklärung* (Berlin, 1929), p. 83.

[22] The 11 August proclamation is reprinted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, p. 240. A 21 September 1914 proclamation from the Regional Deputy Commander General in Münster, signed by Bissing, is in HStA Düsseldorf, Regierung Düsseldorf, Politische Akten, no. 14942, p. 50. See "Extrablätter," *Zensurbuch der deutschen Presse, 1917*, reprinted in Heinz-Dietrich Fischer (ed.), *Pressekonzentration und Zensurpraxis im Ersten Weltkrieg. Texte und Quellen* (Berlin, 1973), pp. 215–216.

[23] "Der erste Sieg," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 8 August 1914 (Morgen), no. 348, p. 1.

soldiers than among the soldiers themselves."[24] Tears flowed freely on the "crying faces of women and young girls who had brought their loved ones to the train station."[25] In front of the barracks the curious crowds mixed with the family and friends of the soldiers inside. Here, too, tears were shed. In Ebingen on 5 August, "family fathers were called up. There were scenes of good-bye which shook the heart . . . there were tears in probably everyone's eyes." Even the King of Wurttemberg cried when he said good-bye to his troops.[26]

Curious crowds also gathered on the sidewalks to watch troops march from their barracks to the train stations on their way to the front. In the first weeks of the war these were usually somber audiences. The Danish member of parliament, Hans Peter Hanssen, described in his diary that the cavalry leaving Berlin on 4 August were well groomed, the lances were decorated with flowers, "but there is no enthusiasm."[27] The *Tägliche Rundschau* described the parade of one regiment marching down Unter den Linden on 8 August 1914: "there the Alexander [regiment] comes with a clinging sound. A couple of hurrahs accompany them; otherwise one quietly takes off one's hat."[28] In Magdeburg on 2 August quiet large crowds waved their handkerchiefs to the departing troops.[29]

Many journalists watching the troops depart in the first week of August compared the lack of enthusiasm in 1914 with the enthusiasm of 1870. The *Kösliner Zeitung* wrote that the Germany of 1870 "went to war with a lighter pack, an easier heart."[30] A Darmstadt journalist wrote that in 1870 there had been true enthusiasm, "it was a birth back then, a happy birth. A completely different feeling accompanied that event. Today it is

[24] "Die Weltstadt rüstet. Berlin am ersten Mobilmachungstag," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 3 August 1914, no. 210, pp. 3–4. Described for Berlin in "Die Stimmung in Berlin," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 August 1914, no. 181; for Munich in "München am 1. Mobilmachungstag," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 3 August 1914, no. 398 (Morgen), p. 3; and for Karlsruhe in "Aus dem Großherzogtum Baden," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 August 1914, no. 195, p. 2.

[25] "Die Stimmung in Berlin," *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 3 August 1914, no. 213.

[26] Heinrich Fausel, *Im Jahre 1914* (Munich, 1965), p. 29. The quote is from Hummel, *Kriegs-Chronik der Stadtgemeinde Ebingen*, p. 65. Of course, it is possible to interpret these tears differently, as is done by "Lokales. Memmingen. Vom Bahnhof," *Memminger Volksblatt. Schwäbischer General-Anzeiger*, 3 August 1914: "The good-byes were extraordinarily touching. Those leaving took their departure from their families in deeply moving scenes . . . Those defending the German honor left for the front with pure enthusiasm . . . the present war is extremely popular."

[27] Hans Peter Hanssen, *Diary of a Dying Empire* (Bloomington, 1955), p. 25.

[28] "Der zweite Kriegssonntag," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 10 August 1914, no. 372 (Sonderausgabe), p. 4. "Der Geist der Berliner Volksmassen," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 3 August 1914, no. 360, p. 3, however, describes a parade with cheering crowds on 2 August 1914. I have found no corroboration.

[29] "Die Stimmung in Magdeburg. Ausmarsch," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 3 August 1914, no. 566, p. 1. Similarly described for Frankfurt in Drüner, *Im Schatten des Weltkrieges*, pp. 63 ff.

[30] "Mobilmachung," *Kösliner Zeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 180, p. 1.

nothing other than a defence of our existence."[31] The *Ingolstädter Zeitung* wrote that, whereas in 1870 there was enthusiasm, in 1914 "there is no empty giddiness or joy among the masses in the cities . . . our soldiers are marching to war seriously, as is the German nature."[32] According to the *Karlsruher Zeitung*:

> Whoever can remember 1870 knows that the regiments marched out to the front accompanied by music, accompanied by the enthusiastic support of the whole population. Today one sees and hears little of this . . . To be sure the streets of the larger cities are filled with lively crowds . . . but the seriousness of the hour always comes forward.[33]

The rector of Kiel, looking back in 1916 at the 1914 events, wrote:

> In 1870 it was a light, an overwhelming enthusiasm which overwhelmed all Germans . . . All was different in 1914. The heaviness of the task, the size of the battles, the realization that this time it was about our very existence, all this was foremost in our minds. It was a terrible seriousness which all felt, those who went to the front, those who stayed home.[34]

After the news of the first victory at Liège on 7 August people became more confident that Germany would once again be victorious. This confidence inspired the curious audience crowds to become enthusiastic audience crowds, crowds cheering the departure of troops, crowds captured in many famous drawings and pictures. A *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* journalist noted, as he described the crowds watching the troops march out on 11 August 1914, "one did not see any more tears, only hope, trust, and courage."[35] This would become one of the most famous images of 1914. Yet this image, too, would be modified as it was reproduced. Although there are many photographs of crowds watching the troops departing, there are very few photographs of cheering, enthusiastic crowds watching the troops departing. It is only in the contemporary drawings of these events, often sold as postcards, that we see these youthful, smiling, relaxed faces (see illustrations 2 and 3).

[31] "Die Stimmung in Darmstadt," *Därmstädter Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, p. 4.
[32] "Kriegsbeginn," *Ingolstädter Zeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 179, p. 1.
[33] "Die Stimmung in Baden," *Karlsruher Zeitung*, 8 August 1914, no. 214, p. 3.
[34] Rektor G. Martius, "Die Universität Kiel im Kriege," *Gruss der Universität Kiel an ihre Kommilitonen im Felde* (Kiel, 1916), p. 7.
[35] "Siegesstimmung," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12 August 1914, no. 188. According to an article in the *Tägliche Rundschau*, in the second week of August the Gardekorps marched out with oak leaves in the barrels of their guns. It was supplied by an old veteran of the 1866 and 1870 wars who asked the Tiergarten gardeners if he could cut down some oak branches for this. He hired a number of workers to do this. The *Tägliche Rundschau* article of 13 August 1914 is reprinted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, p. 268.

2. Troops marching through Düsseldorf in August 1914 on their way to the front

Toward the end of the month the curious people turned their attention to the wounded. Around 15 August the first trains with wounded pulled into Berlin. As one *Tägliche Rundschau* journalist noted, "that pulls. One wants to see that. Chocolate and books are packed, roses are bought, bottles of wine put in paper bags."[36] Crowds of thousands showed up at the train stations. A *Münchener Zeitung* journalist found all this undignified, complaining that the audience was looking down upon the injured "as if it were all simply a pleasant theater piece."[37] Eventually the government took measures to shield the wounded from the curious, to keep the public out of the train stations where there were wounded.

Prisoners of war were the next main attraction. In late August and September thousands of curious people, mostly bourgeois women, came to the train stations to catch a glimpse of the incoming prisoners of war. In Frankfurt/Main, Elberfeld, Stuttgart, Paderborn, Duisburg,

[36] "Sonntag auf dem Kreuzberg," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 17 August 1914, no. 385 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 4.

[37] "Die Pflege der Verwundeten," *Münchner Zeitung*, 20 August 1914, p. 5. "Teilnahme und Neugierde," *Münchner Zeitung*, 31 August 1914, no. 201, complained that it was stupid to throw cigars and chocolate at the wounded; "Abscheulich," *Münchner Post*, 12 September 1914, no. 2118, describes a crowd of thousands.

3. Drawing of troops marching to the front by R. Vogts for the *Berliner illustrierte Zeitung*, 6 September 1914, p. 651

Kaiserslautern, Zweibrücken, Worms, Homburg, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Strasburg, and elsewhere crowds of curious women greeted the first trains filled with prisoners of war just as they had the departing soldiers, giving flowers and *Liebesgaben* to the vanquished warriors. In Stuttgart some women even called up the government to ask where they could find prisoners to bring flowers.[38] This positive attitude towards prisoners of war took place only in western Germany, and largely toward French

[38] On Stuttgart and Frankfurt, see "Würdelos," *Fränkische Nachrichten*, 17 August 1914, no. 192, p. 3; and "Keine weiblichen Würdelosigkeiten!," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18 August 1914, no. 194, p. 2; on Stuttgart and Elberfeld, see "Kleine Mitteilungen," *Fränkische Nachrichten*, 18 August 1914, p. 3; on Paderborn, see "Ein Sturm der Entrüstung," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 19 August 1914, no. 419, p. 2; on Kaiserslautern, Zweibrücken, Worms, Homburg, and Düsseldorf, see "Würdelos," *Fränkische Nachrichten*, 19 August 1914, p. 2; on Cologne and Düsseldorf, see "Keine Würdelosigkeiten!," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 August 1914, no. 195, p. 2; on Strasburg, see "Keine weiblichen Würdelosigkeiten," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18 August 1914, no. 194, p. 2 and "Würdelos," *Fränkische Nachrichten*, 20 August 1914, p. 3. These events have been discussed in a different context in Ute Daniel, *Arbeiterfrauen in der Kriegsgesellschaft. Beruf, Familie und Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen, 1989), pp. 26 ff.

prisoners of war, evidence of the differing mood in the population towards the different enemies.

Bourgeois journalists had little sympathy for such chivalry. One journalist typically wrote:

> German women, protect your honor and the honor of our people . . . One should have thought that with the deep national movement it would no longer be possible for some women to find it piquant and honorable to receive a trinket as a memento from a foreigner who has shot at a fellow countryman.[39]

Another accused the women of giving in to a "degenerate desire for erotic adventure."[40] The government, too, responded angrily. The commander of the Wurttemberg army proclaimed that women who rush to the prisoners in an unworthy manner are to be arrested and their names published in the local newspaper. In December 1914 the commander of the Diedenhofen (i.e., Thionville) garrison was so enraged that four of his nurses had become engaged to wounded French prisoners of war that the German Red Cross had to promise that its volunteers would no longer care for prisoners of war.[41]

"Carnivalesque" crowds

The August "experiences" were characterized not only by the curious; they were also characterized by the carnivalesque. In August 1914 citizens could do things normally forbidden; they could give in to emotions, express these emotions publicly, even violently, without fear of public censure. Moreover, as in carnival, groups of citizens could act as "public opinion," as law. The "spirit of 1914" marked the suspension of certain norms and prohibitions and allowed the group to set forth its own rules of behavior.

Not surprisingly, such carnivalesque behavior was found mostly in the larger cities, where the "enthusiasm" was greatest. The same social classes and generations participated in the carnivalesque "enthusiasm" in August that had done so in the last week of July. The better cafés in the larger cities remained for the first month of the war a curious mixture of

[39] "Ein Sturm der Entrüstung," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 19 August 1914, no. 419, p. 2. Similarly, "Eine bitterernste Mahnung an die deutschen Frauen," *Kriegsausgabe der Leipziger Neuesten Nachrichten*, 28 August 1914, no. 19, p. 3; and the articles excerpted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, pp. 319 ff.

[40] A.G.H., "Die Frauen und die Kriegsgefangenen, *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 19 August 1914, no. 418.

[41] From *Regensburger Anzeiger* of 17 December 1914, p. 1. HStA München, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, MKr no. 14007. Given the location of Diedenhofen it is not surprising that the relationship to wounded French prisoners might have been especially close. Similar proclamations are quoted in "Würdelos," *Fränkische Nachrichten*, 19 August 1914, p. 2.

boisterous song, mirth, and social control. Patriots waited for the latest extras, and sang, standing, with all the power they could render, the nationalistic and militaristic songs that the bands played. Anyone who dared to remain seated during the playing of such patriotic songs was likely to be picked up and thrown out.[42]

Those café owners who attempted to show some consideration for their less enthusiastic patrons experienced the wrath of the patriotic crowd. In Hamburg on the evening of 3 August, when the director of the *Alsterpavillion*, one of the better cafés, his patience obviously tried by the events of the last few days, forbade a patron to read aloud the latest extras – he somewhat brashly even threw the man out – the patrons became enraged, overturning tables and breaking glasses. In the midst of this, someone yelled "there is a bomb in the room," and well-dressed men and women began jumping out windows. Once outside, the enraged mob destroyed the garden tables and glasses. The police were only able to save the café's director from bodily harm by drawing their swords. In Berlin and Cologne, cafés – also in the best parts of town – were destroyed under similar conditions.[43]

Everything which in the smallest way could remind one of France or Russia caused the anger of certain circles to boil over. Perhaps the least surprising result of this emotion was the violent demonstrations in front of the enemy embassies.[44] More unusual was a spy fever which, as noted, began on 3 August when newspapers published an official report claiming that Germany was being overrun by Russian spies. Whether or not the government truly believed this, zealous patriots now had the licence to act out their detective phantasies and did. Throughout Germany citizens searched for spies. On 3 August in one Berlin train station patriots turned in over sixty-four "spies" to the police. Not a single one was a spy. The

[42] "Konjunktur der Roheit?," *Die Welt am Montag* 20, no. 43 (26 October 1914), Beilage, describes a recent violent, physical attack against a number of either courageous or deaf patrons of a better Berlin café. On the carnivalesque aspects of 1914 see Margit Stickelberger-Eder, *Aufbruch 1914. Kriegsromane der späten Weimarer Republik* (Zurich, 1983), pp. 80 ff.

[43] Described in "Mehr Ruhe und Würde," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 4 August 1914 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 3, "Eine 'Schlacht' am Jungfernstieg," *Hamburger Echo*, 4 August 1914, no. 179; and the "Bericht" to the Mayor by Dr. Predöhl of 4 August 1914, Hamburg Staatsarchiv, Senat, Kriegsakten, A.I.b.1. For Cologne see "Sturmszenen vor dem Café Palant," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 6 August 1914, no. 180, p. 3. For Berlin see "Ein Kaffeehaustumult in Berlin," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 4 August 1914, no. 180, p. 2.

[44] Violent demonstrations in front of the Russian embassy are described in "Ausschreitungen vor der Botschaft," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 3 August 1914, no. 389; in front of the English embassy in "Die Szenen vor der englischen Botschaft," *Berliner Volkszeitung*, 6 August 1914, no. 368; and in front of the English consulate in Magdeburg in "Die Aufnahme der englischen Kriegserklärung in Magdeburg," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 5 August 1914, no. 573, p. 3.

group did include, however, a Prussian major, a court official, and a Bavarian officer.[45] Even the famous actress Asta Nielsen, walking down Unter den Linden, was mistaken for a spy, as she described in her memoirs:

> suddenly my hat was thrown down so that my black hair appeared. "A Russian," I heard someone yell behind me, and a hand grabbed my hair. I yelled, full of fear and pain. In front of me a man turned around and recognized me. He yelled my name to the excited people behind me; they let me go and began to curse each other. One of them started flailing his arms as if he was crazy, and hit one of the others in the face. Blood flowed. "You can not stay here," my savior explained. "The people have completely lost their senses. They no longer know what they are doing."[46]

In Bremen:

> At the train station, among the thickly crowded masses, one heard the call: a spy, hold him. And someone pointed at someone. The masses worked their way towards him; one grabbed him, one knocked him to the ground, one kicked him; hundreds of fists rained down upon his body, hundreds of boots tried to kick the life out of him. The police, wanting to grab this man, were powerless. When the animal, rolling mob finally released its victim, when this victim, barely still alive, brought himself to his feet, he did what he could have done at the very beginning, if the mob had let him: he proved with his enlistment order that he was a German reservist on the way to join his division.[47]

In Ohrdurf (a town in Thuringia), a mob provoked the death by "natural causes" of a French Catholic priest they suspected of having assisted the Belgian army.[48]

Throughout Germany crowds looked not only for spies, they also pursued automobiles suspected of carrying French gold. On 3 August the government reported that twenty-five French automobiles with

[45] "Die Gefahren der Spionenjagd," *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, 5 August 1914, no. 182, p. 7. According to Heinrich Binder, *Was wir als Kriegsberichterstatter nicht sagen durften* (Munich, 1919), p. 7, between 1 and 10 August over three hundred "suspicious foreigners" were arrested in all of Germany. The true number was undoubtedly much higher. There is an especially interesting account of the spy fever in Hanssen, *Diary of a Dying Empire*, pp. 22 ff.

[46] Asta Nielsen, *Die schweigende Muse*, quoted in Dieter and Ruth Glazer (eds.), *Berliner Leben 1914–1918. Eine historische Reportage aus Erinnerungen und Berichten* (Berlin, 1983), p. 50.

[47] "Spion und Pöbel," *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 179, 1. Beilage.

[48] The priest had been arrested in Belgium on 28 August 1914 for possession of a pistol. He was transported to the German prisoner-of-war camp near Ohrdurf, where franc-tireurs were held. He was tried by a military court and found to be innocent. After being set free, a mob attacked him. He died soon thereafter, of "natural causes," the government report stated. Yet in a poster in an Ohrdurf bookstore a picture of the poor chap was accompanied by a text underneath which explained that he had been executed by the population. See the account of the case in HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, MKr no. 2330.

80 million gold francs were in Germany on their way from France to Russia. Almost every town and city throughout Germany, east and west, north and south, set up a roadblock on the roads leading in and departing from it. As almost all roads went from town to town – this was in the days before freeways bypassed towns – automobile traffic in Germany came to a virtual standstill; automobiles could travel only a short distance before once again being stopped.[49] Contemporary accounts pointed out that it was not only very exhausting to travel by car these days but also very dangerous. Civilian guards were not always so easily persuaded that the official papers or uniforms were genuine. One might accidentally pass by one of these guards without stopping, and the guard, doing his patriotic duty, would shoot. All in all, twenty-eight people in automobiles were killed by over-zealous guards looking for French gold in the first week of the war. None of the casualties was a spy (or even a foreigner); the casualties did, however, include officers, nobility, and government officials, the sort of people who would have owned an automobile in 1914.[50] Although the story was false some newspapers, including the governmental *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, reported the capture of some autos with gold.[51]

To their credit most Social Democratic newspapers, such as the *Bremer Bürger-Zeitun*g, criticized the spy fever as "a scandal," and called on the bourgeois press to stop "the excitement . . . which is being increased by these sensationalist stories," and on the military authorities to put an end to the spy scare.[52] The day after a crowd attacked the English embassy, 5 August, the government did finally publish the following proclamation:

> The bitterness, which found its expression yesterday in various demonstrations, is understandable. We must however – in the interest of those millions of Germans living in foreign countries – warn against giving this bitterness expression in a way which serves neither our prestige in the neutral countries nor the good cause for which we are fighting.[53]

[49] The "hunt for automobiles" is described in the newspaper accounts reprinted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, pp. 112 ff.

[50] Binder, *Was wir als Kriegsberichterstatter*, p. 6. "Drei Gold-Automobile abgefangen," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 9 August 1914, no. 371, p. 3, reports that a *Rittmeister* and the *Landrat* of Schubin (Posen) had died. There are government reports on some of these shootings in BAL, Reichskanzlei, no. 2401/2, pp. 37 ff.

[51] "Drei Gold-Automobile abgefangen," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 August 1914, no. 185, p. 1.

[52] "Spione und Pöbel," *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 179, 1. Beilage. *Vorwärts* on 8 August likewise wrote that the military authorities should put an end to the spy-fever. Among bourgeois newspapers, the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and the *Berliner Tageblatt* warned the public against too much zealousness.

[53] "Warnung vor Auschreitungen," *Berliner Zeitung am Mitta*g, no. 182, 5 August 1914, p. 7.

Yet the Berlin government also wrote in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on 5 August:

> numerous attempts have already been undertaken to blow up important architectural buildings, train bridges, tunnels and the like . . . the perpetrators were immediately shot . . . everyone has the holy duty to contribute what he can so that in the future such criminal acts remain without effect.[54]

The government did not want to stop the spy fever because it believed, as Hellmut von Gerlach noted, that it "heated up the patriotic mood,"[55] or, in the government's own words, that it contributed to the "unity of enthusiasm."[56]

And yet the government itself seems to have believed many of the rumors. Because the story about the automobiles carrying gold stated that they had entered Germany via the Dutch border, that is, that the Dutch had not been neutral, the Dutch government lodged a formal complaint, and the Prussian government began an investigation. The investigation revealed that the Landrat in Geldern, Kesseler, had been told about the gold by the Regierungs-Assesor Freiherr von Funck, who himself had heard the story from Major von Steindorff, who could not be asked where he had heard the story because he had fallen on the western front in September 1914. The Landrat in Geldern had telegraphed his superior, the Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf, who immediately telegraphed the Prussian Minister of the Interior, who immediately told all government agencies and the press. A couple of days later, not surprisingly, some government officials, such as the Landrat of Sangerhausen, reported having seen the autos.[57]

Eventually, recognizing that the spy scare, especially the search for the gold automobiles, got in the way of an efficient mobilization, on 7 August 1914 the General Staff ordered local governments to end the "hunt for automobiles." On 8 August the Minister of the Interior proclaimed that there could be no more road blocks and especially no more shooting at cars.[58] Only around 14 August, after the initial excitement had died down, however, did the attacks end.

One of the more peculiar aspects of this sort of "carnivalesque" mood was the efforts of gangs of German youth in pursuit of foreign words. In the first days of the war these groups of youths, by most accounts between

[54] "Achtet auf Spione," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 August 1914, no. 181, p. 1.
[55] Gerlach, *Die große Zeit der Lüge*, p. 18.
[56] Viktor Stadthagen, the editor of *Vorwärts* in 1914, claimed in a speech in parliament on 20 March 1915 that this was the justification given by the military authorities in the first week of the war when they censored all criticism by *Vorwärts* of the spy scare. *Stenographischer Bericht des Reichstages*, volume 306, pp. 98 ff.
[57] See the documents in GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 332bb, no. 33, Bd. 1.
[58] BAL, Reichskanzlei, no. 2401/2, p. 58. See also I. Jastrow, *Im Kriegszustand*, pp. 48–49.

twelve and twenty years old, and largely from the middle class, roamed through the streets of German cities, searching for foreign words. When they found foreign words – in a shop poster, for example – they gave the owner an ultimatum. If he did not immediately remove the foreign phrase the youths threw stones at his shop window. It is unlikely that these active youthful gangs cared much about the German language; they were more interested in having some fun. Yet not only were none of these youths arrested, these youths accomplished in a matter of days what decades of work by the honorable German Language Association, founded in 1885 by learned professors, had been unable to achieve. In Frankfurt/Main:

> Where the heroic German youth . . . [saw foreign words] they marched to the store. The owner was given an ultimatum which the scared person immediately met. And thus today the streets of Frankfurt/Main have an extraordinary appearance. Thousands of signs are covered up, written over . . . Our city has seldom looked more ridiculous.[59]

In Berlin, "*Café Piccadilly*" became "*Deutsches Café*"; in Hamburg "*Café Belvedere*" became "*Kaffeehaus Vaterland*"; "*Moulin Rouge*" became "*Jungmühle*."[60] (In some form this happened everywhere. In the United States, sauerkraut became liberty cabbage; in England the Royal Family changed its name from Hanover to Windsor.)

Schools developed a patriotic system whereby classmates who used foreign words were required to pay a small fine. The Social Democratic youth magazine, *Arbeiter-Jugend*, had a section entitled "Foreign Words" and offering German improvements. Civil servants and policemen turned their attention to this pressing problem. In late 1914 the Bavarian Minister of the Interior proclaimed that all government officials should work to remove all foreign names and words. In June 1915, the Munich police collected the names of all the firms who still employed "non-German" words in their signs or advertising. The police in Berlin and Stuttgart did likewise, and posted "Germanification" posters in the train stations and on public bulletin boards. Schools, too, were ordered to address this problem.[61] And when such cajoling did not work, the

[59] "Stimmungsbilder," *Frankfurter Volksstimme*, 5 August 1914, no. 180, Beilage.

[60] "Der Zwang der öffentlichen Meinung," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 5 August 1914, no. 364 (Abend), p. 4; Ullrich, *Kriegsalltag*, p. 16; and Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, pp. 241 ff.

[61] A. Sachse, "Die Kriegsmaßnahmen der Preußischen Unterrichtsverwaltung," *Internationale Monatsschrift für Kunst, Wissenschaft und Technik* 11 (1917), pp. 1175 ff. Gertrud Bäumer, 26 March 1915, *Heimatchronik während des Weltkrieges* (Berlin, 1930), p. 236, describes the actions of the Berlin police. The actions of the Stuttgart police are described in Kohlhaas, *Chronik der Stadt Stuttgart*, p. 124. Two examples of "Germanification" train station posters are in GhStAPK, XIV/180/13201. The "Jahresbericht von Juli 1914 bis Juli 1915" of the Allgemeine Deutsche Sprachverein, GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 662, no. 133, pp. 204 ff., has an interesting account of their cajoling efforts. See also the vast collection of press articles on Germanification in BAL, RLB Pressearchiv, no. 8439. HStA Munich, Abt. II, Polizei Direktion Munich, no. 4557.

government simply forbade foreign words. In Kassel and Stettin, for example, hotels were forbidden to call themselves hotels; the only term allowed was *Gasthäuser*.[62] Some intellectuals took a stand against this idiocy, yet they were vastly outnumbered by those who lent their authority. (The "Germanification" was not without its humorous side. Many of the proposed "German" replacements were ludicrous. In some restaurants, because many dishes had obtained a new name, patrons often did not know what to order. Popular dishes which were impossible to translate into German, such as Welsh rarebit, Eccles cakes, or Chateaubriand, were simply no longer served. But it is unlikely that many contemporaries saw this humorous side.)

What one newspaper termed "The Power of Public Opinion" could be a tangibly dangerous thing. In Leipzig police were forced to draw their swords to prevent rowdy children from attacking shop windows with foreign signs (of shopkeepers who had promised to remove the foreign words but had not yet done so).[63] SPD newspapers repeatedly pointed out that such "enthusiasm" had little to do with the war, and more closely resembled the "enthusiasm" of a drunken mob. Right-wing newspapers denied that this sort of patriotism had anything other than noble motives, yet they admitted that "the city mob always gladly takes part when 'something is going on.'"[64]

Eventually, much of the bourgeois press agreed with the Social Democratic Press. The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* (National Liberal) complained on 4 August that "whoever has the time and money to visit a café, let him do it, it is his right, and the owner's right. But let him not demand from all the other guests that they are in the same mood."[65] The radical nationalist *Tägliche Rundschau* regretted the "riot-like patriotism" (*Radaupatriotismus*), and complained that "if unclear rumors come up, such as are inevitable in such times . . . they are too readily believed and serve as the basis for more stupid yelling of hurrah, and more drinking."[66]

Slowly, the government, too, agreed. The police chief in Stuttgart proclaimed toward the end of the first week of the war:

[62] Noted by Gerlach, *Die große Zeit der Lüge*, p. 19; and by A. Ebner, "Die Presse unter der vollziehenden Gewalt des Militärbefehlshabers," *Zeitungs-Verlag* 16, no. 36 (3 September 1915), p. 790.

[63] "Bilder vom gestrigen Tage," *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 177, Beilage; and "Schwere Ausschreitungen in Leipzig," *Weser-Zeitung*, 7 August 1914 (Mittag), last page. "Der Zwang der öffentlichen Meinung," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 5 August 1914, no. 364 (Abend), p. 4.

[64] "Rückblick auf die Woche," *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 2 August 1914, Hamburg Staatsarchiv, Politische Polizei, S 20132, volume 20.

[65] "Mehr Ruhe und Würde," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 4 August 1914 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 3. Similarly, "Mehr Würde!," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 178, p. 2.

[66] "Mehr Ernst und Würde," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 12 August 1914, no. 376 (Morgen), p. 2.

Policemen! The population is beginning to become crazy. The streets are filled with old witches, both male and female, who are playing an unworthy game. Each sees in his neighbor a Russian or a French spy, and believes that he has the duty to beat the spy and the policemen who protects the spy, until they are bloody, at the very least to make a big scene. Clouds are mistaken for airplanes, stars for blimps . . . It is hard to say when times were more difficult.[67]

On 8 August the Munich Police began a series of proclamations stating that the population should show "more seriousness" in these troubled times. Around 11 August, the Berlin government likewise proclaimed that the people of Berlin should take on "an attitude more in touch with the seriousness of the time."[68]

Crowds of panic and depression

If the dominant emotion in August was excitement, panic remained for many Germans the form of expressing this excitement. Such panic was not necessarily evidence of a lack of "enthusiasm"; it was possible that many people felt both panic and enthusiasm. Still, it is telling that the "enthusiastic" crowds were almost always found in the better parts of town, whereas crowds of panic were found in the lower-middle and working-class sections. It is telling as well that enthusiasm was found in the center and the west of Germany, whereas crowds of panic were found in greater intensity near the border, in Alsace-Lorraine, in the Saar, and in the cities and towns in the east.[69]

On Monday, 3 August, there were long queues in front of the banks throughout Germany, as people attempted to withdraw their money, or

[67] Quoted in Richard Müller, *Vom Kaiserreich zur Republik: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der revolutionären Arbeiterbewegung während des Weltkrieges* (Berlin, 1924), p. 22.

[68] "Berlin und der Krieg," *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, 12 August 1914, no. 189, p. 2. The Munich proclamations are reprinted in "Mehr Ernst," *Münchner Post*, 8 August 1914; and in "Spionage und Verdächtige," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 5 August 1914, no. 396 (Vorabend), p. 3. "Maulwurfsarbeit," *Frankenthaler Tageblatt*, 6 August 1914, no. 181, p. 2, cites the proclamation of the Kgl. Bezirkskommando Ludwigshafen in full.

[69] Crowds of panic are described for Strasburg in "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. II. Von der Westgrenze. 1. Die evangelische Kirche Straßburgs in der beginnenden Kriegszeit," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 1. Kriegsheft (October 1914), pp. 9 ff.; for Wenzau, a small town in Alsace, in Postina, *Wenzenau Kriegschronik*; for the Saar in "Kriegsfurcht in der Südwestecke Deutschlands. Ein Stimmungsbild aus Saarbrücken," *General-Anzeiger* (Dortmund), 31 July 1914, no. 208, 2. Blatt; and "Kriegsfieber im Saarrevier," *Hamborner General-Anzeiger*, 31 July 1914, no. 206; for eastern Germany in "Die Stimmung in Danzig," *Danziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 1 August 1914 no. 478, GhStAPK, XIV/180/19358 (346Z), p. 15; Pastor D., "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. VII. Nachtrag aus allerlei Gemeinden. 3. Aus Danzig," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 2. Kriegsheft (November 1914), p. 60; *Zeitung für Hinterpommern. Stolper Wochenblatt*; and "Ostpreußen im Kriegszustand," *Leipziger Abendzeitung*, 7 August 1914, no. 217, p. 3.

change their paper money into coin. Often police had to be called in to keep order.[70] Many businesses refused to accept paper money, and clever businessmen used the occasion to exchange paper into coin at a 10 per cent discount. There were also long queues in front of food stores, as people attempted to hoard foodstuffs. Prices rose dramatically. Many local military commanders responded by setting price limits (for example, 30 pfennigs/pound for flour – still a 50 per cent increase), and demanding that paper money be accepted as payment. "Unpatriotic" stores, the authorities threatened, would be closed.[71] By 7 August the panic had subsided. Prices returned to normal and paper money was once again accepted. Yet as late as 24 August the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* reminded people that they must accept paper money, and that they should not hoard their change.[72]

One of the most striking examples of crowds of panic was the refugees fleeing the war in the east. Already before the declaration of war some, "mostly well-to-do residents" in the areas bordering Russia, had fled their homes and moved west. With the declaration of war, the number of people leaving the border areas increased.[73] In the middle of August, after the Russian troops began their invasion of East Prussia, more people left, often literally with their possessions on their backs. These refugees were joined by those who were simply afraid, such as those citizens from Königsberg who decided to go and visit relatives living in western Germany. One government official estimated that all told over 870,000 people left their homes in August.[74] (That is to say, upwards of 20 to 30 per cent of the population in the eastern provinces.)

These refugees had a strong impact upon morale. A pastor living in

[70] "Der Andrang auf die Sparkassen und Banken," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 1 August 1914, no. 357 (Abend), p. 4. There is statistical information on the run on the *Sparkasse* in "Der Ansturm auf die Sparkassen beim Kriegsausbruch," *Sparkassen* (1914), pp. 354 ff. The information shows that in eastern Germany the money taken out of the Sparkasse was, as a percentage, higher than anywhere else in Germany.

[71] The cajoling proclamations for Munich, Nuremberg, and Bavaria are reprinted in "Kriegsgefahr und Lebensmittelmarkt," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 1 August 1914, no. 389, p. 3; for Cologne in "Das Papiergeld," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 176, p. 3; for Hamburg in "An die Bevölkerung im Bezirk des 9. Armeekorps," *Hamburger Echo*, 4 August 1914, no. 179; and for Berlin in "Gegen die Preistreiberei für Lebensmittel," *Vorwärts*, 3 August 1914.

[72] "Bargeld nicht verbergen," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24 August 1914, no. 197. For complaints by businessmen about people buying small amounts of goods with large bills, see Staatsarchiv München, Polizeidirektion, no. 4547.

[73] A. Brackmann, "Aus der Fluchtbewegung," in A. Brackmann (ed.), *Ostpreussische Kriegshefte auf Grund amtlicher und privater Berichte. Zweites Heft: Fluchtbewegung und Flüchtlingsfürsorge* (Berlin, 1915), p. 7.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 28. See, too, Dieter Stüttgen, *Die Preussische Verwaltung des Regierungsbezirks Gumbinnen 1871–1920* (Cologne and Berlin, 1980), p. 352.

Danzig, D. Kalweit, has well described the mood of the Danzig population in August:

> From the west came news of great victories, and the houses were decorated with flags. Still, as the population waited for the news of the victory in the east the colorful decorations in the streets upset many people; they could not be happy over the victories in France. Soon refugees started arriving from the east, carrying their possessions on their back.[75]

On 23 August a couple of thousand refugees arrived in Berlin. They brought with them stories of Russian barbarism, of "heads being cut off, children being burned, women raped." Yet, as one journalist noted, these stories had been passed on; no one had first-hand experience of Russian atrocities.[76]

The crowds of panic speak of a certain depression; so, too, does the absence of enthusiastic or even curious crowds, and so, too, in a different way do the crowds in the churches. On the first Sunday in wartime, 2 August (and on the *Buss- und Bettag* proclaimed by the Kaiser for 5 August 1914), churches were filled to overflowing. Conservative newspapers interpreted the attendance as a rebirth of conservative values, but the truth was that most people probably came in order to assuage their fears, for many tears were shed here. A *Berliner Morgenpost* journalist wrote that the scenes in the church were "sections of life – they could not have been imagined to have been any sadder."[77]

There were three areas in Germany where there were almost no accounts of any enthusiastic or even curious crowds in the first two weeks of the war: in the countryside, in the working-class areas of large cities, and in the areas near the border. We have little evidence on the mood in the countryside. Yet it is telling that there are no accounts anywhere of enthusiasm: the local correspondents for the larger newspapers simply chose not to report on the mood of the population in the countryside. It is likely that if there had been any enthusiasm they would have written about it.

[75] Pastor D., "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. VII. Nachtrag aus allerlei Gemeinden. 3. Aus Danzig," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 2. Kriegsheft (November 1914), p. 60.

[76] "Warnung vor der Kriegsangst," *Heimsdorff-Weidmannsluster Zeitung*, 27 August 1914, no. 101. See the newspaper articles describing this, excerpted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. II, pp. 69 ff.; and the report of the local government official (signed Regierungspräsident Graf Keyserlinck) in GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 1310, no. 1, Bd. 1, no p.

[77] E.A., "Die Weltstadt in der Schicksalsstunde," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 2 August 1914, Beilage. For a conservative interpretation, see W. St., "In der Reichshauptstadt. Siegestage am 4. und 5. August," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 August 1914, no. 183, p. 1. The proclamation of the *Buss- und Bettag* is quoted in "Kaiserlicher Bet-Tagserlass," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 4 August 1914, no. 180, p. 2.

What evidence there is does not speak of enthusiasm. Benjamin Ziemann could not find any enthusiasm in the rural areas of southern Bavaria.[78] The representative of parliament from a country area east of the Elbe, Georg Gothein, told the Danish representative, Hans Peter Hanssen, that there was no enthusiasm in the rural east.[79]

Even after the victory at Tannenberg removed the threat of invasion the mood in the eastern provinces was more subdued than in the west. For one, the area was much more rural than in the west, and the rural population was everywhere less enthusiastic than the urban population. For another, the population remained afraid of being invaded. As one government official noted, "the mood of the population [in West Prussia, i.e., the area around Danzig] is different from that of the Berlin population, which sees little of the horror of war, and is only under the impression of the proclamations of victory from the battlefields in the west."[80]

The war had a more immediate impact upon the farmer than upon the urban dweller. Not only were many men drafted, but many of the horses were requisitioned in the first few days of the war in order to assist in the movement of men and materials. In the countryside around Halle, according to one local minister, "a deeper impression was made upon the small land owners by the taking of their horses than by the marching out of the reserves."[81] In the countryside in Bavaria, "a deep concern has overtaken the families of most of our peasant families . . . The sons, horses and wagons have been requisitioned by the military authorities, and the harvest is waiting."[82]

Among the working classes there was little "enthusiasm" and much depression. The economic situation alone was a good reason not to be enthusiastic. Not only had many men gone – leaving their wives to an economically difficult and uncertain future (soldiers were poorly paid and the family assistance the state paid to their wives was scarcely sufficient), many of those who remained behind found themselves unemployed. At the beginning of the war many employers (especially in non-war-related industries such as publishing, fashion, woodworking, and the like),

[78] Ziemann, *Front und Heimat*, pp. 39–47.

[79] Hanssen, *Diary of a Dying Empire*, p. 24.

[80] The report, by Regierungsrat Schicht, is dated 29 August 1914, and is in GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 1310, no. 1, Bd. 1, no p.

[81] Pastor v. Rohden in "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. V. Aus zwei verschiedenen norddeutschen Dörfern. 1. Aus der Umgebung von Halle," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 1. Kriegsheft (October 1914), p. 28.

[82] "Der zweite Mobilmachungstag," *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, 4 August 1914, no. 395 (Morgen), p. 3. A similar description for the East Prussian countryside in Agnes Harder, "Die ersten Kriegstage in Ostpreussen," *Unterhaltungsbeilage der Täglichen Rundschau*, 13 August 1914, no. 188.

expecting the war both to be short and to lead to a recession, laid off workers. Many other factories had their supply of raw materials cut by the war, and were forced to lay off workers. Unemployment in Germany thus rose from 2.7 per cent in July to 22.7 per cent in August. (In export industries unemployment was even higher, often 40 to 50 per cent.[83]) Many of those able to keep their jobs, including many salesmen, saw their salaries drastically cut – in some cases up to 50 per cent. Accordingly, many families found it increasingly difficult to pay the rent. Some families were forced to move in with their parents or in-laws. Those less fortunate were forced to rely on charity: crowds of people began to form in front of the social welfare and unemployment offices in the working-class suburbs.[84]

Working women were especially hard hit; many domestic servants lost their jobs.[85] The labor market would improve, and women would find work in industry, but in August 1914 this was still months off. Unemployment was so bad that in late 1914 the government set up special institutions to assist unemployed women. In Wiesbaden "an uncountable number of female servants went to the Red Cross in their need. There at least they were given a roof over their head."[86] In Berlin, in early September a crowd of 7,000 to 8,000 women congregated regularly outside the unemployment office looking for work. These abject conditions forced cities to open soup kitchens. Although the public at these soup kitchens was largely working class, as Karl Hildebrand (a member of the Swedish Social Democratic Party visiting Germany) noted, there were also quite a few members of the middle class here.[87]

According to reports prepared for the Berlin Police Chief, unemployment was the most important factor behind the widespread depression among the Berlin working classes.[88] A minister in Moabit, a working-class suburb in Berlin, likewise wrote:

[83] Richard Müller, *Vom Kaisserreich zur Republik*, p. 40. A good account of the economic problems in the first few months of the war can be found in Bieber, *Gewerkschaften in Krieg und Revolution*; Jürgen Kocka, *Facing Total War*; and Gunther Mai, *Kriegswirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung* in Württemberg (Stuttgart, 1983).

[84] Noted in the Berlin Police Chief's first report on the mood of the population of 22 August 1914. Ingo Materna and Hans-Joachim Schreckenbach (eds.), *Dokumente aus geheimen Archiven. Bd. 4: 1914–1918. Berichte des Berliner Polizeipräsidenten zur Stimmung und Lage den Bevölkerung in Berlin 1914–1918* (Weimar, 1987), p. 3.

[85] See Ute Daniel's excellent *Arbeiterfrauen in der Kriegsgesellschaft. Beruf, Familie und Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen, 1989).

[86] "Arbeitslos," *Volksstimme* (Wiesbaden), 14 August 1914, no. 188, Beilage. Similarly for Berlin in "14000 Holzarbeiter ohne Beschäftigung," *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, 12 August 1914, no. 189, p. 2.

[87] Karl Hildebrand, *Ein starkes Volk. Eindrücke aus Deutschland und von der deutschen Westfront* (Berlin, 1915), p. 138. *Vorwärts* of 10 September 1914, quoted in Glazer and Glazer (eds.), *Berliner Leben 1914–1918*, p. 71.

[88] See especially the reports in BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, no. 15806, pp. 44–45.

we are dominated by a wonderful seriousness . . . the socialistic worker is not happy about the war; he is serious about it . . . The actual enthusiasm – I would like to say, the academic enthusiasm, as only the intellectuals can afford . . . this is absent, I believe. The people think very realistically, and the hardship lies very heavy upon them.[89]

According to a pastor in a working-class suburb of Stuttgart, "the declaration of war left people stunned – it was horrible."[90] The *Rheinische Zeitung* likewise described the morale in the working-class areas of Cologne in the first days of war as:

A tense mood lies over our working-class areas in the late hours. There is no noise, no songs. One hears crying women and sees serious-looking men . . . no loud patriotic words, no hurrahs, rather work and sacrifice for the whole.[91]

The pastor of a working-class community around Frankfurt/Main complained that "even after the victory reports only seldom does one hear patriotic songs and then only from drunken reserves in the bar."[92]

In short, workers were not "enthusiastic." In the words of the *Arbeiter-Turnzeitung*, the war was "extraordinarily unpopular: it is accepted as a heavy, unavoidable duty."[93] Most Social Democrats, such as Marie Juchahz, although they noted the *furor teutonicus* among their fellow bourgeois citizens, saw among Social Democrats only "deadly serious faces."[94]

The working class was scarcely enthusiastic; those "non-Germans" living within the German borders – the French in Alsace-Lorraine, the Polish in Eastern Germany, and the Danish in northern Germany – were also not enthusiastic. Although some newspapers reported "enthusiasm" in Alsace-Lorraine, and although government officials sometimes praised the mood of the population – the Regional Deputy Commander General, for example, thanked the population of Strasburg for "its excellent mood and its clear, active support during the mobilization," within months the government was complaining of the unpatriotic position of

[89] "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. VI. Streiflichter aus unsern beiden groessten Städten. 1. Berlin. b. Aus Moabit (Arbeiterviertel im N.W.)," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 2 Kriegsheft (November 1914), pp. 50–51.

[90] Pastor E., "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während des Krieges. IV. Aus württembergischen Dorfgemeinden. 2 Aus einer Stuttgarter Vorstadtgemeinde," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 1. Kriegsheft (October 1914), p. 25.

[91] "Der große Abschied," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 5 August 1914, no. 179, pp. 2–3.

[92] "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. III. Das hessische Land und Frankfurt a.M. 3. Aus einer unkirchlichen Arbeitergemeinde bei Frankfurt a.M.," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 1. Kriegsheft (October 1914), p. 22.

[93] "Auszug aus der Erklärung des Bundesvorstandes des Arbeiter-Turnerbundes von Ende August 1914," *Arbeiter-Turnzeitung* 22, no. 18 (1914), p. 245. I am indebted to Frank Heidenreich for this reference.

[94] Marie Juchacz, *Gründerin der Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (Bonn, 1979), pp. 71, 72.

most Alsace-Lorrainers. As Alan Kramer has noted, instead of a widespread enthusiasm "opinion in Alsace-Lorraine at the start of the war was polarized between pro-French and pro-German national sentiment."[95] Lower Alsatian loyalty was limited, and the mood of the population in Lorraine and Upper Alsace was, in the words of Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, "hostile toward the troops."[96] The government contributed to making the mood worse. Alsace-Lorraine was under an especially harsh state of siege at the beginning of the war; the arrest of about 400 of the more "questionable" members of the population hardly improved the situation.[97]

The Danish population in Schleswig-Holstein likewise displayed little enthusiasm. Hans Peter Hanssen described the people in Apenrade reading the placards that ordered the mobilization of the army: "pale serious men, dully resigned; women dissolved in tears; young couples who, without thought of those about them, tightly embraced each other; sobbing children – all feeling themselves caught by the inflexible and inevitable grip of fate."[98] The greatest lack of enthusiasm was found, not surprisingly, among the Polish population. Here was the only place in Germany where some men tried to avoid the draft, where they had to be

[95] Alan Kramer, "*Wackes* at War: Alsace-Lorraine and the Failure of German National Mobilization, 1914–1918," in John Horne (ed.), *State, Society, and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 107. [96] Quoted in *ibid*., p. 108.

[97] *Ibid*., p. 107. An Alsatian member of the German parliament complained about the state of siege in the parliamentary debate on censorship of 24 May 1916. As a result, the War Press Office prepared a report on conditions in Alsace-Lorraine since the beginning of the war, "Bericht der Zensurstelle beim A.O.K. Gaede am 20. Juni 1916," HStA Munich, Abt IV – Kriegsarchiv, MKr no. 13880. The emphasis in the report is on Alsace. The report gives the impression that the government considered Lorraine to be part of the German empire, whereas Alsace was considered part of the German nation. The harsh conditions in Alsace-Lorraine are also described in a letter from Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg to the Prussian War Minister at the beginning of the war, in GhStAPK, XIV/180/14762. Bethmann Hollweg asked the Prussian War Minister to release some of those who had been arrested. There are similar accounts of a depressed mood in Alsace in August in Martin Spahn, "Der Krieg und das Elsaß," *Süddeutsche Monatshefte* 11 (September 1914), pp. 817 ff., and in a report prepared by an Alsatian member of parliament, Wendel, for the Büro für Sozialpolitik of 15 May 1917, quoted in the remarks of Dr. Herz, in Germany, Reichstag, *Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses*, 4 Reihe, vol. V, p. 73. One possible way of analyzing the "enthusiasm" of the population in Alsace-Lorraine is to examine the number of volunteers. In Baden and Alsace, there were 27,225 volunteers between 1 August 1914 and 31 July 1916 for the 14th army corps, and 12,361 volunteers between 1 August 1914 and 15 July 1915 for the 15th army corps. J. Rose, M Stürmel, A. Bleicher, F. Deiber, and J. Keppi (eds.), *Das Elsass von 1870–1932. Bd IV: Karten, Graphiken, Tabellen, Dokumente, Such- und Namensregister* (Colmar, 1938), p. 83. According to Alan Kramer, "*Wackes* at War," p. 108, the majority of these volunteers came from Prussia, i.e., they travelled from Prussia to Alsace-Lorraine in order to volunteer. Still, the number of local volunteers does not seem to have been significantly less than that for Germany as a whole.

[98] Hanssen, *Diary of a Dying Empire*, p. 10.

forced into service by the police.[99] Once in the army they retained their lack of enthusiasm. A report by a local official at Schwertz noted that "the hurrah for the Kaiser given by one of the [Polish] companies as it marched out was in need of some practice."[100] Some Polish leaders even foolishly publicly proclaimed their support for Russia before being arrested. Most Poles, however, were quiet because, as one observer aptly noted, the Germans and Poles lived side by side, and the Poles knew they were being watched.

The government made this tense situation worse, too. In Schleswig-Holstein and in much of eastern Germany, the military government went forward with an iron hand, just as in Alsace-Lorraine, arresting many of the political leaders, and imposing an especially harsh state of siege. The Regional Deputy Commander Generals shut down most foreign-language newspapers. When a few weeks later the newspapers were allowed to resume publication, they continued to be closely watched.[101]

Yet although there was a good deal of fear, panic, sadness, and depression at the beginning of the war, there was also little opposition. In August 1914 4,000,000 men were mobilized and scarcely anyone was missing. Only among the Polish population in the east did men try to avoid the draft. (In 1813 and 1870, many draftees in Germany had to be forced to go.) All the trains were on time. All strikes ended. A grim determination characterized the mood of most of the population. Indeed, things went so well that a government which was extraordinarily wary of its people no longer felt it necessary to study the mood of the population.

[99] Letter from the *Oberpräsident* (West-Preußen), Danzig, 5 August 1914, in GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 863a, no. 3. The letter states that the greatest problems occurred in the province of West-Prussia, in Briesen, Strasburg, Loebau, and Thorn.

[100] Landrat from Schwertz, "Stellung der Polen zum Kriege," 10 January 1915, GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 863a, no. 2b, pp. 274 ff. The report was written in response to the 8 August 1914 request from the Prussian Minister of the Interior for information on the mood of the Polish population. The other reports here are similar. See, however, the different assesment of Richard Bessel, "Kriegserfahrungen und Kriegserinnerungen," p. 127.

[101] In Upper Silesia Polish newspapers were forbidden, according to the letter from the Regierungspräsident, Oppeln, 11 August 1914, GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 863a, no. 3, p. 13. The order for Danzig which allowed the Polish newspapers to publish in Polish again is in GhStAPK XIV/180/19154, p. 10 (13 August 1914). In the XVII army district, for example, all Polish leaders were arrested, and all Polish newspapers forbidden (all SPD newspapers, too). GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 863a, no. 3, p. 7 (signed Jagow). The Oberpräsident in Danzig then asked the Regional Deputy Commander General to rescind his orders, and he did. For Alsace-Lorraine, see "Ausführbestimmungen zu der Verordnung vom 31. Dezember 1914, betreffend das Gebiet der deutschen Geschäftssprache," signed by Vietenhoff-Scheel, in BA, Abt. Potsdam, Reichsamt des Innern, no. 12218, Bd. 1, p. 146. For Schleswig-Holstein (near Denmark) see K. Alnor, *Die schleswige Frage und der Weltkrieg*, pp. 663 ff.; as well as the diary of Hanssen, *Diary of a Dying Empire*, pp. 7 ff. Hanssen was one of the men arrested on 1 August 1914. More generally, see the remarks of Ledebour (SPD) in parliament on 20 March 1915. *Stenographische Berichte des Reichstage,* volume 306, pp. 108 ff.

"War enthusiasm": volunteers, departing soldiers, and victory celebrations

Although the carnivalesque crowds speak of a certain enthusiasm in the population it was an "enthusiasm" which required no sacrifices. It was an enthusiasm for enthusiasm's sake – for the pleasure of being rowdy, of letting off tension. Although an essential part of the "August experiences" such enthusiasm can scarcely be cited as evidence of "war" enthusiasm, and indeed, contemporaries seldom discussed it in this context. Rather, for evidence that Germany was united in "enthusiasm" myth-makers cited the enthusiastic crowds parading in the streets, the crowds applauding the departure of the troops, the mood of the soldiers departing to the front, the outpouring of charity, and the large numbers of volunteers. Of these the number of volunteers was, in the words of Matthias Erzberger, the "best judge of the enthusiasm of the people."[102]

On 4 August newspapers reported that vast crowds of young men were gathering in front of the barracks, volunteering for the army, and that vast crowds of young women were volunteering for the Red Cross.[103] On 11 August newspapers reported that over 1,300,000 men had already volunteered.[104] On 16 August the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* repeated this information, making it official, and it (or a larger number) would be repeated throughout the war, and in most history books up till the present day.[105]

Yet the press vastly exaggerated. About 185,000 men volunteered in August 1914. (In 1926, the War History Division of the Prussian army did a study on manpower in the First World War. The author of this study – employing archival materials destroyed in the Second World War – wrote that up till 11 August 1914 the Prussian army reported that 260,672 had attempted to volunteer; of these 143,922 were accepted. If one adds up the figures for the other armies [32,000 for Bavaria, 8,619 for

[102] Matthias Erzberger, *Die Mobilmachung* (Berlin, 1914), p. 4. More generally on volunteers in the First World War see George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, pp. 53 ff.

[103] During the first few weeks of August 1914 large numbers of young bourgeois women lined up outside these agencies to volunteer as nurses; in Frankfurt alone, by 5 August over 32,000 women had attempted to volunteer. "Deutsche Hilfsbereitschaft," *General-Anzeiger*, 10 August 1914, no. 186.

[104] So "1,300,000 Freiwillige," *Hermsdorff-Waidmannsluster Zeitung*, 11 August 1914, no. 94, and many others. Even SPD newspapers reported such numbers. "Kriegshysterie," *Volksblatt* (Bochum), 15 August 1914, for example, reported over 1,000,000 war volunteers throughout Germany.

[105] "Unsere Kriegsfreiwilligen," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16 August 1914, no. 192. For a modern account see Reinhard Rürup, "Der 'Geist von 1914' in Deutschland," p. 3.

Wurttemberg, and probably around 10,000 for Saxony] one comes up with 185,000.[106])

Although the press vastly exaggerated, 185,000 is evidence of a broad enthusiasm among at least sections of Germany youth. In the war of 1870/1871, there were less than 10,000 volunteers in the whole North German Federation. The German army's manpower needs were met through the draft, meaning that most young men could not volunteer – they were already assigned to a division. Only those under seventeen or over fifty, those who had had an exemption, or whose reserve division had not yet been called up, could volunteer. Moreover, the draft meant that those who did wish to volunteer had difficulties finding an army division with an opening.[107] As most divisions were not accepting any volunteers, young men gathered in long queues in front of the few divisions that were. Recognizing this difficulty, the government provided prospective volunteers with free train travel. As most youths visited many barracks before finding one with an opening, they were undoubtedly counted many times. Not surprisingly, many young men who grasped this opportunity had no intention of volunteering. Rather, as the War Ministry noted, they "have used this piece of paper to travel from one end of the country to the other."[108]

According to bourgeois journalists, the volunteers came from all social classes, and were thus evidence of enthusiasm among the population as a whole:

> over 2,000,000 volunteers have come forward from all social classes, from the rich to the poor. Without any class differences, wearing the same uniform, the rich and the poor are all united – welded together through discipline and through the courageous idea: we must, we will win.[109]

[106] This "Denkschrift über die Ersatzgestellung für das Deutsche Heer von Mitte September bis Ende 1914," prepared in 1926 by Schubert, can be found in the BA–MA, 15.17, Kriegsgeschichtliche Forschungs Anstalt, W-10/50902. See especially pp. 52 ff. In Bavaria, approximately 32,000 men volunteered for war in August 1914. (On 16 August 1914 the Bavarian War Ministry asked all army divisions to list the number of volunteers. I have added up the numbers in the replies. As two divisions did not respond, the number is approximate. HSTA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, MKR, no. 13413.) In Württemberg, there were 8,619 volunteers in August and 2,204 in September. ("Denkschrift betr. die Erfahrungen bei der Mobilmachung," written in 1918, in HStA Stuttgart M77/2, Bd. 4, pp. 19–20.) I was unable to find any figures for the Saxon army.

[107] At the end of August, the War Minister proclaimed that they had no room for any more volunteers. "Denkschrift über die Ersatzgestellung für das Deutsche Heer von Mitte September bis Ende 1914," pp. 52 ff.

[108] Letter from the War Ministry in Berlin of 24 August 1914, signed Hohenborn, in HStA Stuttgart, M 1/4, Bü 1304, p. 15.

[109] J. von Pflugk-Harting, "Einkehr nach Innen," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 17 September 1914, Beiblatt.

Was this the case? Given the available evidence, it is almost impossible to answer this question adequately. However, an examination of the rolls of two divisions suggests that the social composition of the volunteers corresponded broadly to that which journalists described for the "enthusiastic" crowds. The "enthusiasm" was found in its greatest concentration among the educated elite, but no part of German society was immune from it. There were many students; there were also many young businessmen and professionals, as well as some tradesmen. The working class was under-represented but not fully absent.[110]

Why did the young men volunteer? Many tradesmen, unemployed and facing a dismal economic future, may have decided to join the army as a means of getting through these difficult times. For many youths, however, especially educated youths, "enthusiasm" is a fair description of their motivations. But what is meant by "enthusiasm?" Some greeted the coming of the war as an opportunity for personal growth, a chance to develop their personality. As George Mosse has noted, in 1914 war still had the aura of fear and courage for young intellectuals; its violent nature was still believed to be the true touchstone of a man.[111] War was a rite of passage, a "test of fire,"[112] a "male baptism."[113]

Many youths were glad to have a goal, a meaning, and a purpose in their lives, even if it was only a vaguely defined desire for adventure, of not returning to school, or of just getting over a relationship. They were less "enthusiastic" than curious. The philosopher Karl Löwith explained his motivations in his memoir:

> the desire to be emancipated from the confined bourgeois space of the school and home, a difficult struggle with myself after my first love affair, the charm of a "dangerous life," for which Nietzsche had been enthusiastic, the desire to try out a

[110] The only way to find out the social background of the volunteers is to go through the roll books of the army divisions. Unfortunately, these books are enormous, not necessarily complete, and include much repetition. It would require a large, well-funded project to go through them systematically. The tables are meant to be suggestive only. Evidence on the Social Democratic youth leaders can be gleaned from the report of the political police on one of the first meetings of the Social Democratic party in Berlin in September, in BLA, Rep 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, no. 15806, p. 164; and from *Die proletarische Jugendbewegung in der Kriegszeit: Jahresbericht der Zentralstelle für die arbeitende Jugend Deutschlands für die Zeit 1914/1915* (Berlin, 1915), p. 6. The report notes that of the 2,778 Social Democratic youth group leaders in the army 1,995 were drafted; 783 had volunteered.

[111] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers* pp. 15 ff. Similarly, Ulrich, "Die Desillusionierung der Kriegsfreiwilligen von 1914," p. 110.

[112] Otto Braun, quoted in Julie Vogelstein (ed.), *Otto Braun. Aus nachgelassenen Schriften eines Frühvollendeten* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 109–110.

[113] Ernst Jünger, "Kriegsausbruch 1914," *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. I, (Stuttgart, 1978), p. 544.

Table 1. *The social background of volunteers in the Leipzig Artillery Regiment, no. 77*[a]

Students	117
Tradesmen	111
Businessmen	98
Working class	33
Academics, engineers, artists, lawyers, teachers	33
Farmers	21
Total	413 volunteers

Note:
[a] BA–MA.

Table 2. *The social background of volunteers in the Stuttgart Tenth Infantry Regiment*[a]

Businessmen	136
Tradesmen	114
Academics, engineers, artists, lawyers, teachers, bureaucrats	86
Working class	64
Students	48
Farmers	2
Total	450 volunteers

Note:
[a] HStA Stuttgart, M 476.

new adventure . . . these and similar motives made me welcome the war as a chance for life and death.[114]

Ernst Toller, for example, volunteered because:

yes, we are living in a rush of emotions. The words Germany, fatherland, war have a magical power, when we say them they do not disappear, they hang in the air, circle themselves, ignite themselves and us.[115]

"War is like Christmas," a young lieutenant is supposed to have said in 1914, and even if he did not, many "enthusiastic" youths believed something similar.[116]

[114] Karl Löwith, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933. Ein Bericht* (Frankfurt/Main, 1976), p. 1. [115] Toller, *Eine Jugend in Deutschland*, p. 41.
[116] Alwin Münchmeyer, "Es gab zwei Welten – die unsere und die andere," in Pörtner (ed.), *Kindheit im Kaiserreich*, p. 312.

Others volunteered out of a sense of duty. The letters of the students collected and published by Philip Witkop are replete with noble phrases, the model for which seems to be the Greek and Roman conceptions of honor and love for one's country which they had learned at school.[117] Indeed, among the children of better-educated families, Bernd Ulrich has suggested, peer pressure was such that it was difficult not to volunteer. Over half of the 32,000 eligible university preparatory high-school (*Gymnasium*) students volunteered in 1914 (and, although I could find no figures there was most probably a similar percentage among the 64,000 university students). In some places, whole school classes signed up for the army.[118]

Many youths, especially in the youth movement, were enthusiastic less for themselves than for Germany. They believed that war would move German society away from bourgeois "materialism" toward an aesthetic idealism, move people away from the world of outer appearances back to inner truths. In place of greed and egotism the war experience would validate humility, sacrifice, and courage. As Jakob Müller has noted, the members of the youth movement displayed – as shown in their magazines and letters – little chauvinism and, indeed, little actual "enthusiasm."[119] Indeed, they had difficulty explaining their motivations to older, less-well-educated soldiers. As Hans-Gerd Rabe (a member of the *Wandervögel* from Osnabrück) wrote in his memoirs, many of them did not understand their motivations:

> what [our officer] never fully grasped was the fact of our volunteering. This was true not only for him but for many much higher up . . . We broke through the fat peace of the quiet order of the bourgeois world, a world which was already troubling for the *Wandervögel*, above all through our free decision.[120]

Many historians have taken such explanations at face value and seen in the enthusiasm the transformation of personalities, a change in identity, a

[117] Philip Witkop, *Kriegsbriefe gefallener Studenten* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1918). The first installment was published in 1915 as "Kriegsbriefe deutscher Studenten," *Der Panther* 3, no. 6 (June 1915), pp. 660–674. See Manfred Hettling and Michael Jeismann, "Der Weltkrieg als Epos. Philipp Witkops 'Kriegsbriefe gefallener Studenten,'" in Gerhard Hirschfeld and Gerd Krumeich (eds.), *Keiner fühlt sich hier als Mensch. Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Essen, 1993), pp. 175–198.

[118] Paul Küppers, *Die Kriegsarbeit der Stadt Bochum 1914–1918* (Bochum, 1926). Wilhelm Flitner, "Der Krieg und die Jugend," in Otto Baumgarten, Erich Foerster, Arnold Rademacher and Wilhelm Flitner, *Geistige und sittliche Wirkungen des Krieges in Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1927), p. 256.

[119] Jakob Müller, *Die Jugendbewegung als deutsche Hauptrichtung neukonservativer Reform* (Zurich, 1971), p. 197.

[120] Quoted in Gudrun Fiedler, "Beruf und Leben. Die Wandervogel-Idee auf dem Prüfstand," in Joachim H. Knoll and Julius Schoeps (eds.), *Typisch Deutsch: Die Jugendbewegung* (Opladen, 1988) p. 77.

liberation from Wilhelmine bourgeois culture.[121] Yet it is telling that most contemporaries did not judge the enthusiasm as a rejection of Wilhelmine society and values but as an affirmation. The breadth of enthusiasm, the popularity of the romanticism of war, demonstrated the success of the Wilhelmine education system and government sponsored youth organizations.[122] This sort of rejection of "bourgeois" culture, this emphasis on the "heroic" ideal, was at the heart of Wilhelmine bourgeois culture, a part of the internal contradictions of the German bourgeois identity.

The second piece of evidence cited for a Germany united in enthusiasm was the enthusiastic crowds accompanying the departing troops. As noted, the departure of the troops was at first a solemn affair. Only toward the middle of the month, after the first victories, did the departure become a festive event. Then, thousands of men, women, and children turned out to watch the regimental parade, to give the soldiers *Liebesgaben* such as chocolate, food, flowers, and cigars.[123] Yet even before this sort of cheering audience became institutionalized, from the very beginning of the war, in almost all German towns and cities a committee greeted the troops passing through. When the troops arrived the mayor, or some other notable, made a patriotic speech and then the young women of the Red Cross, especially popular with the troops, handed out *Liebesgaben* (literally: gifts of love) such as flowers, food, and cigars, often more than the soldiers could consume. It would all be repeated in the next town or city, often only a little way away.

A Social Democratic journalist wrote of the mood at the train stations in Cologne:

> A long train stands ready to depart. Let's walk alongside it . . . the wagons are decorated with freshly cut foliage. Everything so pleasant and pretty as if the soldiers were returning home from a maneuver, as if they would soon be out of their soldier's clothing. Yet they are going to bloody battles which will extend their term of service by who knows how many months.[124]

Friedrich Ebert, the Social Democratic politician and future President of Germany, wrote in his diary for the middle of August: "at the train stations the people stand thickly next to one another. They greet the train

[121] Leed, *No Man's Land*, pp. 1 ff.

[122] See, for example, the comments of Kurt Bittel, "Lateinunterricht bei Oberpräzeptor Ölschläger," in Rudolf Pörtner (ed.), *Kindheit im Kaiserreich. Erinnerungen an vergangene Zeiten* (Munich, 1989), p. 272. More generally see Ulrich Bendele, *Krieg, Kopf und Körper. Lernen für das Leben – Erziehung zum Tod* (Frankfurt/Main, 1984); Heinz Lemmermann, *Kriegserziehung im Kaiserreich. Studien zur politischen Funktion von Schule und Schulmusik 1890–1918*, two vols. (Lilienthal, 1984).

[123] "Liebesgaben auf dem Bahnhof," *Kieler Zeitung*, 8 August 1914, (Abend), 2. Blatt, describes how over 1,000 cigars, a gift from a citizen of Kiel, were passed out at the train station by the Red Cross to the members of the 85th division, stationed in Kiel.

[124] "Auf dem Hauptbahnhofe," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 6 August 1914, no. 180, p. 2.

with hurrahs. From almost all houses towels are waved."[125] As these were the first audience crowds which became enthusiastic crowds, the first example of an "enthusiastic" crowd in which all classes, generations, and gender participated, it is not surprising that many Germans considered the train trips as the highpoint of the August enthusiasm, the best evidence of a people united in "enthusiasm."[126]

For their part, the soldiers covered the sides of their trains with slogans displaying a naive innocence of the nature of the war they were about to fight, such as "breakfast in Paris, we will thresh them," or:

> We won't stop
> Till the French are fasting.
> French, Russians, Serbian,
> All must die.
>
> Czar, it is an ape-like shame
> What we must do to you and your band
> First, we will disinfect
> And then thoroughly cultivate.
>
> (Zar, es ist 'ne Affenschande,
> Daß wir dich und deine Bande
> Müssen erst desinfizieren
> Und dann gründlich kultivieren.)
>
> When it rains of Russian heads,
> And when French heads come down like snow
> Then we will ask the Lord God
> That the weather remain so.
>
> (Wenn es Russenköpfe regnet
> Und Franzosenköpfe schneit;
> Dann bitten wir den lieben Gott,
> Daß das Wetter noch so bleibt!)

Postcards depicted the slogans which the soldiers had written.[127] Caricatures in similar bad taste were published by the popular "humor" weeklies, *Kladderadatsch* and *Simplicissimus* (see illustration 4).

This enthusiasm, too, had little to do with the real war. The troops

[125] Friedrich Ebert's diary for the month of August is in BAL, 92 Sachthem. Sammlung, no. 265, p. 5.

[126] So, for example, Volquart Pauls (ed.), *Aus eiserner Zeit. 1914. Briefe aus dem Felde* (Elmshorn, 1914), pp. 11–12.

[127] The quotes are from Karsten Brandt, *Sturmumbraust! Stimmungsbilder vom Ausbruch des Weltkrieges 1914* (Leipzig, 1916), p. 115; Erwin Rosen (ed.), *Der Große Krieg. Ein Anekdotenbuch* (Stuttgart, 1914), p. 102; and Gunter Mai, *Das Ende des Kaiserreichs*, p. 24. Karl Wehrhan's *Gloria, Viktoria. Volkspoesie an Militärzügen* (Leipzig, 1915), is an interesting collection of the soldier's spontaneous poetry. Some of these postcards are reprinted in Hans Weigel, Walter Lukam, and Max D. Peyfuss, *Jeder Schuss ein Russ, jeder Stoss ein Franzos. Literarische und graphische Kriegspropaganda in Deutschland 1914–1918* (Vienna, 1983).

4. "Humorous" postcard by Louis Oppenheim from 1914

enjoyed being waved at, being taken care of at the train stations, especially by the young women. As one *Berliner Morgenpost* journalist noted, "the taking care of the troops has taken on the character of a party . . . young women dressed in their prettiest clothes," were "living out their instincts."[128] Already on 6 August, according to the diary of one minister in a small town in western Germany, "the people are talking about the war as if it was just a maneuver, as if glorious victories were inevitable."[129] As one soldier wrote in a letter home: "the mood of the troops is fresh and humorous . . . No one believes that we can be defeated; the will to victory is in us all."[130] The troops expected to be home by Christmas.[131]

This romantic vision of war did not survive the first experience with the real war, the first sight of death. The superficiality of such "enthusiasm" was noted by a Bremen soldier who wrote in a letter home that on 26 August his train going to the front passed a train of wounded in Berlin: "after our train once again started moving you no longer heard any more songs, for each of us had become aware that we stood a chance of becoming wounded or of dying on the battlefield."[132] Not only was such enthusiasm naive, if one looked under its surface one discovered what an American military psychologist has aptly termed "apprehensive enthusiasm." Such enthusiasm, wrote the psychologist, "relates to fear of death . . . The enthusiasm is a reaction formation against these feelings."[133]

The experience of the crowds applauding the troops departing on the trains was the first broader experience of unity. Yet this experience was ephemeral. Charity provided the first institutional framework for a German community transcending class boundaries. In 1914 there was a vast spontaneous outpouring of private charity. Throughout Germany local committees, generally led by the Red Cross, the local "National Woman's Service," or the city government, collected enormous sums to help the needy.[134] All women's organizations, including the Social

[128] "An eine kleine, aber lästig bemerkbarer werdende Minderheit unserer Mitbürgern," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 10 August, p. 3.

[129] Franzmathes, *Tagebuch vom Weltkrieg*, p. 8.

[130] Reprinted in Otto Pniower (ed.), *Briefe aus dem Felde 1914/15* (Oldenburg, 1916), p. 486.

[131] The popular belief in a short war was noted in "Stimmungs-Bericht I," p. 3, in GhStAPK, I/90J/1, p. 3. The belief in a short war was certainly widespread. All the same, one seldom finds mention of this belief in contemporary newspapers.

[132] "Erinnerungen eines Bremer Landwehrmannes," in Pniower (ed.), *Briefe aus dem Felde 1914/15*, pp. 287 ff.

[133] Franklin Del Jones speaks of "apprehensive Enthusiasm" in his "Psychological Adjustments to Vietnam. Speech to Medical Education for National Defense, 18 October 1967," quoted in Watson, *War on the Mind*, p. 227.

[134] In Düsseldorf, for example, the Red Cross received 300,491 marks in private donations in the first year of the war. "Bericht über die Hauptversammlung des Bezirksvereins vom Roten Kreuz (Düsseldorf)," of 23 October 1915. HStA Nordrhein-Westfalen,

Democratic women's organization, participated in the "National Women's Service," organized in the first days of the war by the leader of the "Association of German Women" (*Bund deutscher Frauen*), Gertrud Bäumer. Bäumer could thus with justice claim that "war charity work is one of the first examples in which the dissolving of the parties into a large *Volksgemeinschaft* became reality." Indeed, it was here – in local political organizations such as women's charities – where the SPD did its most effective work during the war.[135]

Soldiers were the focus of the charity. Girls at school, female students at the university, or just groups of women knitted and sewed clothes to send to the soldiers. Marlene Dietrich, a university student in Berlin at the time, wrote in her memoirs:

> when school began after the summer vacation in 1914 we went to the large auditorium . . . There we heard thunderous speeches; we could scarcely understand their significance . . . We would, they said, instead of learning at school, learn to knit.[136]

All of these efforts came together at Christmas 1914 when vast amounts of *Liebesgaben* were sent to the front. (The city government of Frankfurt/Main required fifty train wagons in order to transport its gifts.[137])

Such charity was not limited to soldiers but extended as well to those citizens negatively affected by the war, those unemployed, or those whose husbands were only earning a common soldier's wages. Charity organizations set up in August 1914 their first soup kitchens, created employment for unemployed women in sewing rooms, or set up centers to help citizens

footnote 134 (*cont.*)
Regierung Düsseldorf, Präsidialbüro no. 1208. The best sources on this charity remain the various books put together during the war to document their efforts, such as Fritz Dahm, *Jahresbericht des Kreiskomittees vom Roten Kreuz für den Stadtkreis Wiesbaden. 1 August 1914 bis 1. August 1915* (Wiesbaden, 1915). There are many of these books in the First World War collection in the *Staatsbibliothek* in Berlin.

[135] Gertrud Bäumer, *Der Krieg und die Frau* (Stuttgart, 1914), p. 27. As before the war the *Bund deutscher Frauen* had consistently refused to cooperate with the Social Democratic women's movement, this was a significant recognition of the Social Democrats. Barbara Guttmann, *Weibliche Heimarmee. Frauen in Deutschland 1914–1918* (Weinheim, 1989), pp. 130 ff. See, too, Gertrud Bäumer, "Frauenleben und Frauenarbeit," in Schwarte (ed.), *Der Weltkrieg in seiner Einwirkung auf das deutsche Volk*, p. 327. Many local bourgeois women's committees, such as the one in Cologne, acted similarly. Juchacz, *Gründerin der Arbeiterwohlfahrt*, p. 74.

[136] Marlene Dietrich, *Nehmt meine Leben* (Düsseldorf, 1979), pp. 16–17.

[137] Drüner, *Im Schatten des Weltkriegs*, pp. 92–93. At Christmas 1915 the number of trains decreased to forty. Drüner does not mention if in Christmas 1916 (or in the following years) any more trains were sent. In HStA Nordrhein-Westfalen, Regierung Düsseldorf, Präsidialbüro no. 1208, there is a list of *Liebesgaben* sent to the front. It has 273 pages. In December 1914 alone 22,920 shawls, 26,188 shirts, and 32,743 pairs of socks were sent to the soldiers.

through the maze of government bureaucracy.[138] And many organizations paid unemployment assistance. The Free Trade Unions, for example, spent over one-fourth of their savings in the first year of the war on unemployment assistance, assistance to the families of those drafted, and the like. Many industrialists patriotically proclaimed that they would continue to pay the salaries (or a portion thereof) of their employees who had been drafted.[139]

Although these private efforts were considerable, the efforts of local governments were even greater.[140] This outpouring of charity was evidence that the idea of community had taken hold among well-to-do Germans in August 1914. But it was a certain form of community. Charity remained mostly women's work. Indeed, for Gertrud Bäumer, the leader of the Bund deutscher Frauenverein (BdF), "charity work (*Heimatdienst*)" was the translation during the war of "women's movement."[141] Bourgeois women embraced this opportunity, as Barbara Guttmann has noted, not only because it was almost their only opportunity to participate in the "Great Times," but also because through such work they could prove they were capable citizens. As the war continued the charity decreased. Already in 1915 firms ceased paying the salaries of workers who had become soldiers, and private citizens stopped making large contributions to charity. There were few trains filled with *Liebesgaben* in 1916 and 1917.

The idea of a people's community could not be sustained through philanthropy alone. Charity did not decrease the distance between the classes; traditional elites warned against charity which out of "false" warmth broke down social distinctions. In August 1914 the governmental *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* asked wealthy women not to invite

[138] The soup kitchens are described in newspaper articles excerpted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. II, pp. 7 ff. There is a good discussion of the problems the wives of soldiers faced in Richard Müller, *Vom Reich zur Republik*, pp. 41 ff.

[139] On the Free Trade Unions see Paul Umbreit, *Die deutschen Gewerkschaften im Weltkriege* (Berlin, 1917), pp. 24 ff.; Bieber, *Die deutschen Gewerkschaften, 1914–1920*, pp. 86 ff.; and Emil Lederer, "Die Gewerkschaften und der Krieg," in Schäfer (ed.), *Der Krieg 1914/17*, pp. 393 ff. On the other unions, see Jastrow, *Im Kriegszustand*, pp. 109 ff.; and "Die Kriegsunterstützungen der Privatangestellten und deren Angehörigen," *Werkmeister-Zeitung*, 11 September 1914, no. 37, p. 770. On the industrialists see "Die Versorgung der Angehörigen der Kriegsteilnehmer," *Werkmeister-Zeitung*, 28 August 1914, no. 35, pp. 758 ff., and similar articles in later editions.

[140] See Julius Schult, *Die Familienfürsorge des deutschen Reiches während des Krieges* (Essen, 1914), Kaeber, *Berlin im Weltkrieg*. Paul Hirsch, *Kommunale Kriegsfürsorge* (Berlin, 1915), has a good description of the various aid programs. More generally, on the government's social welfare programs, see Klaus-Peter Müller, *Politik und Gesellschaft im Krieg. Der Legitimitätsverlust des badischen Staates 1914–1918* (Stuttgart, 1988), pp. 387 ff.

[141] Quoted in Guttmann, *Weibliche Heimarmee. Frauen in Deutschland 1914–1918*, p. 121.

hungry children to their homes because they might see vast differences in living standards and no longer be able to be happy. They asked that such charity take place outside the home, in schools, or in other public buildings.[142]

Finally, the charity could not hide the fact that in August there was a great deal of greed. Many well-to-do women informed their servants either that they would not be paid for the duration of the war or that their salaries would be drastically reduced. The Braunschweig Trade Association suggested that one should use the economic downturn to fire one's employees and rehire them at cheaper wages.[143]

A wider experience of war enthusiasm came at the end of August, aptly characterized by one contemporary as "the extra edition bringing the news of victory."[144] In Heidenheim (Brenz), when mobilization came, "at first everywhere there was great dismay, as we were aware of how serious it was . . . enthusiasm first showed itself with the victories."[145] The enthusiasm, in other words, was engendered by relief.

The first victory was celebrated on Friday, 7 August, when, from the steps of the Berlin palace, an officer proclaimed the German victory at Liège (a week too soon, it turned out). Twenty policemen on horses carried the news through Berlin.[146] After hearing the news, cheering, singing crowds once again sauntered up and down Unter den Linden. Church bells rang throughout the city, and the children received a school holiday on Saturday. Again on 10 August crowds milling around in the streets of Berlin saw a car rush towards the palace. Out of the car a General Staff officer yelled "victory of the Germans in Alsace." Again a parade formed on Unter den Linden, led by someone carrying a bust of the Kaiser covered with a green wreath. At exactly that moment, a group of elite troops marched down Unter den Linden on their way to the train

[142] "Falsche Wohltätigkeit," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22 August 1914, no. 198, p. 2. The article was responded to by "Gefährliche Wohltätigkeit," *Vorwärts*, 22 August 1914.

[143] Noted in a speech by the Trade Unionist Walter Lambach on 26 November 1920, in BAL, 62 DAF 3, no. 681, p. 18. Gertrud Hanna, *Die Arbeiterinnen und der Krieg* (Berlin, 1916), p. 6, has material on servants.

[144] Franz, *Kriegs-Chronik 1914–1916 Stadt Minden*, p. 23. Similarly, Eugen Schiffer, *Ein Leben für den Liberalismus*, p. 33: "one report of victory followed another." The importance of victories for the mood of the population is emphasized in all the reports by the Berlin Police Chief, BLA, Rep. 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, no. 15806.

[145] Kurt Bittel, "Lateinunterricht bei Oberpräzeptor Ölschlager," in Rudolf Pörtner (ed.), *Kindheit im Kaiserreich*, p. 276.

[146] "Berlin," *Vorwärts*, 8 August 1914. Similarly in "Die Kunde von Lüttich," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 8 August 1914, no. 369 (Morgen), 1. Beilage, p. 2; and "Der Eindruck der Siegesnachricht in Berlin," *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 8 August 1914, no. 218, p. 1. In truth, the fortress did not fall until 15 August 1914. Kurt Koszyk, *Deutsche Pressepolitik im ersten Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf, 1969), p. 116.

station. Not surprisingly, they were cheered enthusiastically, and given roses for their rifles and uniforms.[147] In the words of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* journalist, "already the effect of the heroic, hard-won victories shows itself among our population. The faces, which in the beginning only too often showed the expression of anxious worry, have relaxed. One reads solid trust in all."[148] These victories were celebrated only in Berlin. Throughout Germany the first victory celebration came on 20 August 1914.

Beginning on 20 August and lasting for about the next three weeks, the victories came one after another. In Berlin, on Friday, 21 August 1914, late-afternoon extra editions proclaimed the victory of the Bavarian army on the French–German border.[149] Church bells sounded throughout the city, and crowds celebrated on Unter den Linden. 22 August was a school holiday. Outside of Berlin, even in the smaller towns and the countryside, the victory was also celebrated with the ringing of church bells and the flying of flags from almost every house.[150] In Hanover the mayor proclaimed "out with the flags. Do away with any small-minded, depressed feelings. Express your joy."[151] Another victory celebration took place in Berlin on Saturday, 22 August, when the Germans moved into Brussels. Now flags flew on houses and apartments throughout Berlin. Sunday saw even more victory celebrations. A *Tägliche Rundschau* journalist wrote with relief that "the great times of heroes, which had almost become a legend, have returned. So, too, did our sons and brothers march off into the holy war."[152] Victory was celebrated again on 24 August (after the fall of Namur), especially in Wurttemberg, for troops from Wurttemberg had assisted in this victory.[153]

On 2 September 1914, Germans commemorated the victory at Sedan

[147] "Siegesstimmung," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12 August 1914, no. 188. Also described in the *Vossische Zeitung*, 11 August 1914, in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, p. 236.

[148] "Legt keine Trauer an für die Gefallenen," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 August 1914, no. 190.

[149] "Die Siegesfahnen über Berlin!," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 22 August 1914, no. 395 (Morgen), p. 4. Articles describing these and the following victory celebrations are excerpted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. II, pp. 48 ff.

[150] A description of the mood in Minden is to be found in Wilh. Franz, *Kriegs-Chronik 1914–1916 Stadt Minden*, p. 22.

[151] Quoted in the *Hannoverscher Kurier*, 24 August 1914, which is quoted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. II, p. 49.

[152] "Der Siegesonntag," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 24 August 1914, no. 398 (Sonder-Ausgabe), p. 4. Similarly described in "Ein Siegessonntag," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24 August 1914, no. 200.

[153] See "Die Siegesbotschaft von Namur," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 25 August 1914, no. 401, (Abend), p. 4. According to "Jubel in Württemberg," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 25 August 1914, no. 429, p. 3, the King himself read the telegram from the troops to the crowd in Stuttgart.

in 1870 with parades they fully expected were, in the words of a *Tägliche Rundschau* journalist, "a trial-run for the victory parade."[154] In Berlin, hundreds of thousands on Unter den Linden watched captured French war *materiél* pass by. Theodor Wolff wrote "all of Berlin is excited . . . it looks as if there were never as many people . . . in Berlin as now."[155] In the next week, "a serious old General warned the Berlin house owners . . . not to rent their windows for the victory parade at too high a price."[156] It was a rare contemporary who warned that the war had not yet been won, that the celebrations occurred too often, and that a depression was bound to follow if victory did not come quickly.

The enthusiasm even spread to Berlin's working-class districts. For the first time black, white, and red flags flew from working-class apartments, something right-wing newspapers commented on with glee.[157] A minister from Moabit (a working-class suburb of Berlin) reported that:

> out of the windows flags are hanging . . . an amazing picture for those who know the conditions. Usually there is not a single flag on, for example, the Kaiser's birthday . . . The Social Democratic worker is proud that he can show his patriotism.[158]

Bourgeois journalists claimed to have heard patriotic songs in bars where Social Democrats were known to congregate. Some Social Democrats wore black, white and red ribbons, and some working-class women knitted black, white, and red scarves for their men to wear.[159] Especially Social Democratic youths were taken in by the "war enthusiasm." According to a minister from a working-class suburb of Berlin, "the youth is naturally enthusiastic. In my youth group, which previously was not known for being patriotic, one sings, standing, every Sunday evening

[154] *Tägliche Rundschau*, 2 September 1914, reprinted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. II, p. 165.

[155] Theodor Wolff, *Tagebücher 1914–1918* (Boppard am Rhein, 1984), vol. I, 2 September 1914, p. 98.

[156] Hellmut von Gerlach, *Die deutsche Mentalität 1871–1921* (Ludwigsburg, 1921), p. 2.

[157] "Die Stadt der Fahnen und der Flaggen," *Deutsche Zeitung*," 2 September 1914, no. 44 (Morgen), p. 3. The Police Chief of Berlin reported on this in his second, third, and fourth "*Stimmungsberichte*" (reports on the mood of the population of 19 and 26 August 1914, and 2 September 1914), in Materna and Schreckenbach (eds.), *Dokumente aus geheimen Archiven. Bd. 4: 1914–1918*, pp. 4–6.

[158] "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. VI. Streiflichter aus unsern beiden grösten Städten. 1. Berlin. b. Aus Moabit (Arbeiterviertel im N.W.)," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 2 Kriegsheft (November 1914), p. 50.

[159] Complaint of a Social Democratic member at the *Zahlabend* of 9 September, noted in report of Abt. VII on the 4. Wahlkreis, BLA, Rep 30 Berlin C, Tit. 95, no. 15806, p. 169. For similar complaints at other *Zahlabende* of the same day, see pp. 163 ff. "Unsere Reservemänner," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 6 August 1914, no. 365 (Morgen), erste Beilage; and "Mensch, du singst ja nicht mit!," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 3 August 1914, no. 388, p. 2.

'Heil dir im Siegerkranz.'"[160] More significantly, the black, white, and red flags even flew in Berlin's working-class districts on monarchical holidays such as the Queen's birthday (22 October), and the Kaiser's birthday in January 1915.[161]

These crowds had a profound impact upon contemporaries; almost all of the descriptions of them use terms like "enveloping, moving." It seemed that the whole population had become infected with "war enthusiasm." One journalist, describing the victory celebration in Bremen on 24 August 1914, wrote:

> we lack the words to describe these experiences . . . We are standing in the middle of the greatest joys of our lives. Our victory wagon has departed and will no longer be able to be held back . . . We, young and old, will be allowed to remember always the Sunday passed as a day of unforgettable wonderful experiences.[162]

Yet limits to the enthusiasm remained. Only in Berlin did flags fly in working-class suburbs. In Düsseldorf government officials held a conference on 31 August in order to discuss ways to have the working class in the Ruhr fly the German flag.[163] More importantly, the "enthusiastic" crowds were ephemeral. The "spirit of 1914," the carnivalesque, festive public expression of patriotism, lasted only about six weeks. After Sedan day (2 September 1914) a month passed before the next victory celebration on 10 October, when Antwerp fell.[164] As the war continued the "war enthusiasm," too, passed. Already by 23 August, "the only recently so feverishly excited Berlin, which pulsated with violent changes of mood and hourly changing strong emotions, had become a quiet, serious city – had returned to its customary work."[165] Toward the end of September, "the loud coming together of people in the streets – often caused by false reports of victories – has stopped. There are no more demonstrations in the cafés and bars."[166] In 1915 and 1916, no crowds greeted the wounded heroes, no spectators put flowers in the guns of departing warriors.

Instead, different sorts of crowds would form. On 9 August the

[160] Pastor D., "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. VI. Streiflichter aus unsern beiden größten Städten. 1. Berlin b. Aus Moabit (Arbeiterviertel im N.W.)," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 2. Kriegsheft (November 1914), pp. 50–51.

[161] "13. Stimmungsbericht," by the Berlin Police Chief, dated 26 October 1914, in Materna and Schreckenbach (eds.), *Dokumente aus geheimen Archiven. Bd.4: 1914–1918*, p. 20; "27. Stimmungsbericht," by the Berlin Police Chief of Berlin, dated 30 January 1914, in Materna and Schreckenbach (eds.), *Dokumente aus geheimen Archiven. Bd.4: 1914–1918*, p. 40.

[162] The *Weser-Zeitung* of 24 August 1914, quoted in Buchner, *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. II, p. 49.

[163] Protocol of conference in GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit 332^{r}, no. 123, p. 11.

[164] Described for Karlsruhe in *Chronik der Haupt und Residenzstadt Karlsruhe 1914*, p. 121.

[165] Paul Lindenburg, "Berliner Brief," *Niederbarminer Kreisblatt*, 23 August 1914.

[166] "Stimmungs-Bericht, 19–28 September," BAL, Reichskanzlei, no. 2437/3, pp. 157 ff. (here p. 157).

government published the first list of the dead, wounded, or missing. Such lists would be published approximately every three days for the next four years.[167] In August the lists were published in the newspapers, and they were long – too long. In September the government decided to forbid their full publication. (Only partial lists – of the local dead, wounded, and missing – could be published, and only in the smaller cities or towns.) But the full lists were still posted on boards in front of the War Academy on the Dorotheenstrasse in Berlin. By the end of September, except for the celebrations of an occasional victory, the largest crowds in Berlin were composed of people searching for names on these long lists. And thus the War Academy, one of those "national" sites which the patriotic parades visited in the last week of July, slowly but surely became in the popular mind the symbol of the horror of war's reality, a place where one might find the name of a loved one or a friend.

In August 1914 Germans could read that they had all experienced the outbreak of war in the same way, that through the August experiences a "national" identity had come to replace the various local or class identities as the most important social identity. Yet, as the liberal sociologist Leopold von Wiese noted in late 1914, "people are different, and the great, serious, days – very moving through their very simplicity – were, so far as I could tell, experienced differently according to a person's disposition and experience."[168]

There was a great deal of public "war enthusiasm." Even if not all of this is adequately described with the term "enthusiasm" the opportunity to go to war was a moment of great adventure such as few generations are given. Within the active, purposive, enthusiastic crowds, people experienced themselves as a community, capable of acting as a collective and coherent entity. For many, especially for academic intellectuals, this experience was the experience of a lifetime.

Yet there were generational, occupational, temporal, gender, and geographical differences in German public opinion in August 1914. "War enthusiasm" was mostly limited to large cities, where it was localized among the better classes, especially the educated youth. The enthusiasm may have helped bridge some differences among Germans – the enthusiasm was found both in Catholic and in Protestant areas, among north and south Germans, among Christians and Jews, among men and among women. But the feeling of unity, of community, was limited to a small section of the urban population.

[167] "Die erste Verlustliste," *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, 10 August 1914, no. 187, p. 1.

[168] Leopold von Wiese, *Politische Briefe über den Weltkrieg* (Munich and Leipzig, 1914), pp. 93–95. Similarly Leopold von Wiese, *Der Liberalismus in Vergangenheit und Zukunft* (Berlin, 1917), p. 177.

"War enthusiasm" does not seem to have extended outside the city bourgeoisie. There was little public enthusiasm in the smaller towns, in the countryside, and in the working-class sections of the large cities. In villages and in farming towns the mood was more somber than exuberant. And there was little enthusiasm in the larger cities near the border. "Enthusiasm" was also not felt by families, who had to cope with fear and uncertainty. Men were more "enthusiastic" than women. Many women were genuinely worried and upset at the beginning of the war.[169] All told, it seems safe to say that the majority of Germans in July and August 1914 did not feel "war enthusiasm." If a referendum had been held on 1 August on whether or not there should be a world war it would have been overwhelmingly rejected.[170]

And yet it would be a mistake to search too closely for a sociology of German public opinion in August. People had mixed emotions, as a Berlin journalist noted on 2 August:

> neither the enthusiastic crowds tumbling down the street nor the signs of pure fear, produced by conceptualizations of undistilled nervous worrying, can be considered the single description for the mood of the Berlin population in these days. There has never been a better example of the concept of "mixed emotions."[171]

The essence of the August experiences was not so much enthusiasm but excitement, a depth of emotion, an intensity of feeling. It was a time lived and perceived by the participants as a historical time. Germans felt pride, enthusiasm, panic, disgust, curiosity, exuberance, confidence, anger, bluff, fear, laughter, and desperation. All of these emotions may have been felt by the same person. At the very least they were found in the same place. In front of the barracks there were families – most often women and children – saying goodbye to their men, or, biting their nails, waiting to see one of them. They were often crying. Alongside them were groups of enthusiastic, boisterous young boys, trying to look older, trying to volunteer. Nearby were crowds of curious bystanders, who had come to watch a piece of history unfold, to be able to tell their grandchildren that they had seen this world theater.

Did identities change as a result of the August experiences? Certainly some individual identities changed. Some drifters, such as Adolf Hitler, found a purpose in life. Yet social identities did not change. Most Germans responded to the outbreak of war more or less as one would have expected. The Germans were united, not in their enthusiasm but in their purpose.

[169] This topic is worthy of further investigation. There is a very interesting fictional account of the feminine "August experience" in Margaret Böhme, *Kriegsbriefe der Familien Wimmel* (Dresden, 1915).

[170] Heinz Potthoff in *Volk oder Staat?* (Bonn, 1915), p. 14.

[171] "Berliner Beobachter," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 2 August 1914, no. 387, 1. Beiblatt.

A historical curiosity, an innocent and naive playing at heroism, a moment of profound tragedy, the end of a militaristic innocence, these are some of the possible narratives of the "August experiences" if the narrative had been based on the sum of individual experiences. Such a narrative was not written because a different narrative of these days, a social memory, was being composed at the time. This social memory would come to shape people's individual memories of their own experiences. The rest of the story is the history of the memories of those warm days in July and August 1914.

4 The "spirit of 1914" in the immediate interpretations of the meaning of the war

Contemporaries who examined "public opinion" in 1914 agreed that its most striking characteristic was the degree to which the war had captured the public's interest. Johannes Müller, a professor of theology, wrote that "all life in the fighting nations is now war. War has become the total meaning and the only purpose."[1] This had not been the case in the last war, in 1870. Newspapers filled their pages with stories about the war to the exclusion of almost everything else. Illustrated magazines carried photographs of soldiers, military equipment, or battlefields instead of photographs of sports and movie stars. Literary magazines published articles on the philosophy of war, on war and culture, on the aesthetics of war. Theaters, after closing briefly at the beginning of August 1914, reopened either with productions of classical treatments of martial themes, or, more often, with productions of quickly written pieces which recreated the "August experiences."

Publishers chose manuscripts which treated war themes.[2] Ministers, priests, and rabbis discussed the war in their sermons, some even replacing the afternoon church service with a patriotic lecture.[3] Those who preferred their religious patriotism outside church attended one of the "patriotic evenings" staged in many of Germany's larger cities, whose program resembled the Lutheran liturgy. Established lecture organizations such as the Red Cross and the Goethe-Bund increased the size of

[1] Johannes Müller, *Der Krieg als Schicksal und Erlebnis* (Munich, 1915), p. 1. There are good overviews of German public opinion in Walter Goetz, *Deutschlands geistiges Leben im Weltkrieg* (Gotha, 1916); and Theobald Ziegler, *Die geistigen und sozialen Strömungen Deutschlands* (Berlin, 1916).

[2] Woldemar von Seidlitz's *Das erste Jahr des Kulturkrieges* (Munich, 1915) is an excellent introduction to the war literature of the first few months. For 1915, see Ferdinand Avenarius (ed.), *Kriegsratgeber über deutsches Schrifttum* (Munich, 1915/1916). There is a list of all publications in Germany in the first year of the war, arranged according to subject, in Fritz Tögel, "Zeitgemäße Literatur," *Akademische Rundschau* 3, no. 9 (June 1915), p. 387.

[3] Wilhelm Pressel, *Die Kriegspredigt 1914–1918*, p. 11; Karl Hammer, *Deutsche Kriegstheologie 1870–1918* (Munich, 1971), p. 50. Heinrich Missalla, *"Gott mit Uns." Die deutsche katholische Kriegspredigt 1914–1918*, pp. 19 ff.

their operations; alongside them new lecture associations sprang up. Not only were many lectures given, in the first two years of the war they also seem to have been well attended. A police report in Munich stated that often 3,000 to 3,500 people came to these – quite academic – talks.[4] For those with any poetic inclination the war provided the inspiration that overcame inhibitions. According to one contemporary, 1,500,000 war poems were written in August 1914; that is, 50,000 a day on an average. This is most certainly an exaggeration. Yet it is an exaggeration which most contemporaries believed, which itself sheds light on the "August experiences."[5]

Teachers restructured their lesson plans. In mathematics students learned to add, subtract, multiply, and divide the number of ships and soldiers.[6] Museums exhibited war art, uniforms, captured war material, or children's wartime school essays. In Berlin the government built a fake trench in the wealthy Westend district that for a few months was a popular attraction. Window displays and advertisements took on a martial character. The German *Werkbund* organized a committee to replace "French" with "German" fashion. On 27 March 1915 the *Werkbund* presented the results of its labor in a fashion show held, appropriately enough, in the Prussian parliament.[7]

The war occupied a central place in the public mind. Was this evidence that the masses had become politicized, had come to view themselves as the subject and not just the object of German politics, as Peter Fritzsche has recently argued?[8] A certain memory of these August experiences would become an important collective narrative – the National Socialists, for example, would claim that their revolution began in 1914. What was the status of this collective narrative in the immediate explanations of the

[4] There is a complete list of all public lectures in Munich from 12 February 1915 till the end of the war in HStA Munich, Abt. IV-Kriegsarchiv, MKr, no. 14013. There is material on all the public lectures in Baden in Landesarchiv Karlsruhe, 236–23074.

[5] Carl Busse (ed.), *Deutsche Kriegslieder 1914/16*, third edition (Bielefeld and Leipzig, 1916), p. vi, cited in Klaus Vondung, *Die Apokalypse in Deutschland* (Munich, 1988), p. 193. *Hinrichsbuchkatalog, 1911–1914*, pp. 1787–1789, lists about 300 to 400 poetry books published in 1914.

[6] The school books are a fascinating collection of the bravado and prejudices of the time. A typical example is H. Korsch, *Kriegsstunden. Stoffe für Darbietung in der Schule* (Leipzig, 1916). Some wonderful examples of essays by seventh to ninth graders are in Arthur Fröhlich (ed.), *Aus eiserner Zeit. Freie Kriegsaufsätze von Meeraner Kindern* (Leipzig, 1915).

[7] Bäumer, *Heimatchronik*, 30 August 1914 (p. 27); 11 January 1915 (p. 58); and 27 March 1915 (p. 236); Gustav E. Pazaurek, *Patriotismus, Kunst und Kunsthandwerk* (Stuttgart, 1914), p. 29. The trade show was reviewed positively by Klara Sander, *Die Mode im Spiegel des Krieges* (Essen, 1915), and negatively by Eugen Diedrichs, "Gedanken zur deutschen Mode," *Die Tat* 7, no. 7 (October 1915). The fake trench is described in the 13 May 1915 *Vorwärts*, reprinted in Glazer and Glazer, *Berliner Leben 1914–1918*, pp. 142–143.

[8] Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*.

meaning of the war? If there was no single August experience, was there at least a shared interpretation of the meaning of the August experiences? I will divide my discussion here into popular and elite culture.

The "Great Times": the melodrama of the August experiences

In a report on German public opinion prepared in November 1914 for the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Geheimrat von Berger claimed that because of censorship "the attempt to discover something about the mood of the population in the country leads to the recognition that the press has . . . little or nothing at all in common with the mood of the population."[9] It was certainly correct that censorship could eliminate the expression of dissatisfaction but not the discontent itself. Yet it was a peculiar argument to claim that the press had little to do with public opinion. August 1914 was the heyday of the German press. Newspapers provided a crucial link between one's individual fate, the fate of loved ones, and the larger historical events. As one contemporary noted, "if before the war the newspaper was the friend of the house, now it is its ruler, for it determines the content of almost every conversation among family and friends."[10] Accordingly, newspaper owners were among the first war profiteers; the circulation of some newspapers almost doubled.[11]

And yet, reading the lead articles of the press in August, as in July, tells us more about the political vocabulary of the journalist, about the stereotypes journalists employed to organize news, to describe the meaning of the war, than it does about the reception of these stereotypes, or about the degree to which these stereotypes were shared by the reading public. Journalists couched the war as defensive. They supported Austria's actions toward Serbia, and Germany's alliance with Austria, criticizing Russia's leaders for their "duplicity," asserting that Russia had attempted to keep the peace talks going in order to gain more time for its mobilization.[12] They couched the war as defensive not only in the sense that Russia was responsible for having started it, but also in terms of cultural

[9] "Stimmungs-Bericht" I, for Nov. 1914, written by Berger in the Ministry of the Interior, GhStAPK, I/90J/1, p. 1.

[10] Pastor W. Stark, *Die Kriegsarbeit des Evangelischen Preßverbandes für Deutschland* (Berlin, n.d. (1915?)), p. 3.

[11] Horst Heenemann, *Die Auflagehöhen der deutschen Zeitungen*, pp. 73 ff.

[12] So "Deutschland im Kriegszustand," *Berliner Abendpost*, 1 August 1914, no. 178, p. 1 and "Das Schicksalstag der Alten Welt," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 563 (Mittag), p. 1. On the press in the first few days see especially Theo Goebel, *Deutsche Pressestimme in der Julikrise 1914*, but also Thomas Raithel, *Das "Wunder" der inneren Einheit. Studien zur deutschen und französischen Öffentlichkeit bei Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Bonn, 1996), pp. 311 ff.

progress: Germans were fighting "for the protection of European culture," "fighting Asiatic despotism." As Theo Goebel noted, in 1914, as in 1939, journalists did not distinguish between a "bad" government and a "good" Russian people; rather, the "Russians" were "Asiatic."[13] Although the emphasis was on Russia, all enemies were described in the vocabulary of national cultural stereotypes. Journalists reminded people that the French were Germany's historic enemy (*Erbfeind*), and that France desired revenge. After England declared war, newspapers accused "perfidious Albion" of having begun the war out of envy, with the hope of destroying German industry.[14]

The counterpart to the identification of the enemy with evil was the identification of Germany with good and good with German; a German victory would further the cause of culture. The *Augsburger Neuesten Nachrichten* explained in an article entitled "The Holy War":

> The world will become healthy once again through the German soul. So wrote once one of our poets. Therefore it is our right, indeed our duty, to be victorious. What is at stake here is not just our own house, not even just the honor and existence of our nation. No, what is at stake is the heart of the world itself, a heart which beats most purely and most generously in Germans. This is a crusade for the most holy good there is, for peace, for the culture of the world.[15]

That these moral clichés had little relationship to the real historical events was shown on 3 August 1914, a day after Germany had invaded Belgium, when the Center Party's *Kölnische Volkszeitung* cynically wrote that Germany is "fighting for the norms of morality, for international law."[16]

This dichotomy of good and evil helped assuage one's fears for, as one journalist wrote, "if, as history and nature teaches us, final victory does indeed always go to the good, the just, the progressive, then in this immense, fiery struggle the holy German cause will eventually win out."[17] Still, although journalists asserted that war would move history forward, the war itself was couched as defensive, as historic, as "fate," and the actual fighting as something terrible. Especially Social Democratic newspapers published articles labelling war an atrocity incompatible with civilization, an "absolute horror."[18]

The official narrative that would become known as the "spirit of 1914," first expressed in articles in conservative newspapers on the enthusiastic

[13] Goebel, *Deutsche Pressestimme in der Julikrise 1914*, pp. 214–215.
[14] The responses to the English declaration of war are excerpted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, pp. 137 ff.
[15] "Der Heilige Krieg," *Augsburger Neueste Nachrichten*, 3 August 1914, p. 1.
[16] "Der Menschheit heilige Rechte," *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 3 August 1914, quoted in Goebel, *Deutsche Pressestimme in der Julikrise 1914*, p. 194.
[17] "Erwartungsvolle Stille," *Kösliner Zeitung*, 11 August 1914, no. 186.
[18] "Ernste Tage," *Rheinische Zeitung*, 4 August 1914, no. 178, p. 2.

crowds in the larger German cities on 25 July 1914, was further developed in the first week of the war. The *Darmstädter Zeitung* wrote on 8 August 1914, describing the crowds in the first week of August: "suddenly all internal bickering has ended, all the fighting of the parties. A united, armed people – so Germany goes to war."[19] Yet, although almost all contemporary bourgeois newspapers employed some version of the phrase "a united, determined Germany goes to war," only a few perceived a causal relationship between enthusiasm and unity or asserted that the unity was the product of enthusiastic crowd experiences. More often, "enthusiasm" and "unity" were invoked as part of a self-mobilizing discourse that spoke to people's fears, that aimed to give Germans confidence they would be victorious. "Unity" was thus invoked in the sense of "a nation so united can not be defeated."[20] As one poet wrote on 5 August in a local newspaper:

> Then let the holy war begin
> The united Germany will win
> Because all, all are holding together,
> City dweller and farmer, the young and the old.[21]

"Unity" was thus not just an experience but a duty, "a German duty to the German Fatherland."[22]

"Enthusiasm," when employed in the lead articles on the meaning of the war, referred less often to the crowd experiences than to a will to fight. This usage of enthusiasm was often conducted with a great deal of hubris. In the first week of August many German journalists bravely quoted Bismarck: "We Germans fear God and nothing else in this world," and asserted that a *furor teutonicus* would lead Germany to victory, no matter how many nations should become enemies, "even if the world is full of devils."[23] Germany would be victorious because the German people were truly committed whereas the others were fighting for material, egotistical reasons. As one *Vossische Zeitung* journalist wrote, "the will to victory has taken hold of our nation in arms . . . And this will, this moral power is the security that we will be victorious in this war."[24] Or in the words of Fürst Bülow, the former German Chancellor, "it can not and it will not be that

[19] "Politische Wochenschau," *Darmstädter Zeitung*, 8 August 1914, p. 1.
[20] Raithel, *Das "Wunder" der inneren Einheit*, pp. 467 ff.
[21] Otto Wiegmann, "An die deutsche Jugend," *Kösliner Zeitung*, 5 August 1914, no. 181, p. 2.
[22] "Wir Deutschen fürchten Gott, aber sonst nichts in der Welt!," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 1 August 1914, no. 562 (Morgen), p. 1.
[23] *Ibid.*; "England erklärt uns den Krieg. Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 5 August 1914, no. 572, p. 1.
[24] *Vossische Zeitung*, 11 August 1914, excerpted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, p. 236.

so much heroism could be in vain."[25] The purpose of these articles was to keep up one's courage, to summon up the will to fight. It is therefore not surprising that the authors of such political commentary concentrated on the positive aspects of the "August experiences," and neglected the other parts of German public opinion, which one young soldier included in his letter home:

> our train cars are full of flowers. Our uniforms and helmets have been covered [with flowers] by beautiful hands. On the streets, as we drive by, there are old men who take off their hats before us youths, there are the small hands of children reaching out, crying, toward us. Young women whom we do not know greet us warmly. And somewhere cries a mother.[26]

This account of German public opinion was already removed from the real historical experience. As the official and mythic narratives developed over the course of the war, the memory of the real August experiences would recede further. Yet in 1914 itself the interest in history prevailed. It is telling that the actual phrase, the "spirit of 1914," which would later become symbolic for the official narrative of the August experiences, meant in August and September 1914 public opinion in all its various facets. "The Spirit of 1914," as a chapter heading in the magazine *Kriegs-Echo* at the end of August, was synonymous with the claim that these were historic times, with, as one SPD magazine wrote, "The War as Experience (*Der Krieg als Erlebnis*)," with "world theater," that one is "experiencing world history."[27]

The pleasure of witnessing history was an essential part of the August experiences, and it found its expression not only in newspapers and magazines but in many media. In the same way that tourists collect postcards as mementoes of places they have been, in 1914 Germans collected what one contemporary aptly termed "hurrah-kitsch" mementoes of the "Great Times."[28] One could buy a flag, a pillow, a memo box, a letter opener, with the Iron Cross or "1914" or a drawing of Hindenburg on it. Major newspapers published "war chronicles," "pages of memory to be

[25] "Ein Wort des Fürsten Bülows," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 7 August 1914, no. 214, p. 1.

[26] Fritz Mayer, "Der Aufmarsch," *Deutschlands Akademiker im Weltkrieg 1914* (Magdeburg, 1916), p. 90.

[27] So the title of the lead article in *Arbeiter-Jugend* (SPD), no. 25 (5 December 1914), p. 329. "World theater" is from "Bewegte Tage," *Bamberger Neueste Nachrichten*, 27 July 1914, no. 172, p. 2. "World history" is from "Die erste Kriegswoche," *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 9 August 1914, no. 584 (Morgen), p. 1. Raithel, *Das "Wunder" der inneren Einheit*, p. 507, incorrectly states that the phrase "spirit of 1914" was first employed in November 1914 in an article by Ernst Rolff in *Preußische Jahrbücher*.

[28] K. Mittenzweig, "Die Lehre des Hurrakitsches," *Innendekoration* 27 (1916), p. 402. See Hans Sachs, "Vom Hurrakitsch. Von Nagelungsstandbildern, Nagelungsplakaten und anderen – Schönheiten," *Das Plakat* 8, no. 1 (January 1917), pp. 3 ff.; and George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, pp. 126 ff.

put away for later years."[29] These "war chronicles" consisted of newspaper clippings of the "August experiences"; news articles, sermons, poetry, drawings, pictures of enthusiasm and of panic, letters written by common soldiers, and the "humor" of soldiers.

Theaters, after closing briefly at the beginning of August 1914, reopened either with productions of classical treatments of martial themes, or, more often, with productions of quickly written pieces in which the "August experiences" were recreated. (Forty-five of the seventy-two plays performed in Berlin theaters between September and December 1914 were such plays, with titles like: *Mobilization. A Festival Play from a Serious Time* (Fritz Hillmann), *The First of August. A Play Treating the Outbreak of the Great War* (Ludwig Thoma), and *The Franc-Tireur. A Tragedy in One Act* (P. Saget).[30]) In short, a desire to remember the "Great Times" was a part of the August experiences. The best way to get a feel for this aspect of the August experiences is to take a closer look at one of the plays.

Vorwärts mit Gott! Vaterländisches Zeitbild in einem Aufzug, written by Anton Ohorn, and published in 1914 by Reclam, was a typical "spirit of 1914" play. The plot begins on 2 August. The baron (a retired general), his wife Klara, and their son Heinz are sitting around the table in a room at their estate. They discuss the origins of the present war, seeing the cause of the war in Slavic overconfidence, French chauvinism, and English jealousy. They hope that a German victory will make the more noble German national characteristics more important in the world, and they believe that good will ultimately triumph over evil.[31]

This melodramatic trope – good versus evil, almost a direct quote of

[29] This is how the *Solinger Krieg-Zeitung* advertised itself, quoted in Johannes Motz (ed.), *Solingen im 1. Weltkrieg*, pp. 10–11. Already on 8 August 1914 publishers began to advertise for their war chronicles. Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, p. 215.

[30] Throughout Germany eighty-six "spirit of 1914" pieces were written and performed between 1 August and 31 December 1914, and an additional twenty between 1 January and 31 May 1915. Wolfgang Poengsen, *Der deutsche Bühnen-Spielplan im Weltkriege* (Berlin, 1928), p. 28; and Heinrich Stümcke, *Theater und Krieg* (Oldenburg and Leipzig, 1915), pp. 15, 128. Probably the most popular was *Immer Fest druff*, which played at the Metropol theater on the Nollendorfplatz in Berlin. By November 1914 it had already been performed fifty times. Gisela Wenzel, "'Schöneberg voran!' An der Front der Tod, in der Heimat die Not," in Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt (ed.), *August 1914: Ein Volk zieht in den Krieg* (Berlin, 1989), p. 161. On these plays, see Carola Jüllig, "'Ja, Frankreichs Geist, du bist verbannt für ewig . . .' Die erste Kriegsspielzeit der Berliner Theater," in Rainer Rother (ed.), *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Bilder des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 137–148, and, especially, the forthcoming work of Martin Baumeister, "Spielen im Ernst: Krieg und Theater 1914–1933."

[31] Anton Ohorn, *Vorwärts mit Gott! Vaterländisches Zeitbild in einem Aufzug* (Leipzig, 1914), pp. 5–6.

the newspaper's meaning of the war articles – could be found in almost all these plays. It was an essential part of the "Great Times," the spy craze, the attempts to eliminate all foreign words and foreign culture. It allowed those at home to participate in the war and it brought about some unusual modifications in German manners. In September and November 1914 it was not uncommon for people to greet each other with "God punish England (*Gott strafe England*)," to which one replied: "He will punish them (*Er strafe es*)." As Gertrud Bäumer noted in her war diary for 18 November 1914:

> Two school girls, blond haired, and childish, say good-bye to each other on the street. Serious and solemn, one says to the other: "Live well, God punish England." This greeting is a duty in the provincial city where I heard it . . . It is not easy to make them understand why one should not say this.[32]

Many even stamped this slogan on their letters to foreign nations, prompting the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* to ask German businessmen not to do this.

This sort of "hatred," although broad, seems not to have been very deep. In the play it is only a brief interlude. After the short discussion of the origins of the war, the mother, remembering that her son will soon leave for the front, becomes sad. Heinz consoles her by reminding her that not only will the war increase Germany's standing in the world, it will make men of the boys, teach them courage, comradeship, and selflessness. Heinz even tells his mother that eventually all men must die and that a death for the fatherland is the most beautiful death imaginable. He so convinces his mother that she replies: "then come back with your shield or on it."[33] Such heroic Spartanesque responses were peculiarly popular in these plays and, indeed, could be found elsewhere as well. The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, for example, called on widows not to wear black but to show pride at the death of a loved one.[34]

What is absent here, of course, is the reality of war, the injuries, the death, the trauma. What is absent here as well is a modern version of heroism. The plot of the penny dreadfuls, the cheap literature for youths, was characterized, as one critic noted in 1916, by the heroism of adventure, not the heroism of the hardened soldier:

> there are about 20 series containing about 300 individual works. These books describe the war for our youth from the perspective of the thief and the murderer.

[32] Bäumer, *Heimatchronik* (18 November 1914), p. 106.
[33] Ohorn, *Vorwärts mit Gott!*, p. 8.
[34] "Legt keine Trauer an für die Gefallenen," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 August 1914, no. 190.

They speak of heroes such that the grey mask of the feathered jewelry of Indian tribes shines through.[35]

Act II opens with friends and neighbors rushing into the house, bringing with them the latest war news, the news of the English "treason," excited and shaken. Excitement is at the heart of the "August experiences." It is this excitement, rather than any one emotion, which characterizes these plays. All the 1914 experiences are there: the panic as well as the "enthusiasm," the women crying, the fear among the working classes. In one play there was even a sympathetic depiction of two Belgian partisans ("franc-tireurs"), who have been caught and are to be tried and executed.[36]

Later on in the play the talk turns to love, duty, and unity. In one scene Lene, the wife of a worker and mother of three, discusses her fears with the baroness. The baroness consoles her with the cliché that it is all in God's hands, and a just God will watch over us. In another scene Heinz declares that "he was there when a worker with his scarred hands held the Kaiser's proclamation ["I no longer recognize any parties; I know only Germans"] and read it in a voice full of emotion. The other workers took their hats off and their eyes flamed."[37]

This being a melodrama, the plot turns on a love story. Throughout the play Heinz, of noble birth, and Else, the daughter of a bourgeois factory owner, discuss their predicament. Although in love, their parents have forbidden them to marry. Not only would their marriage cross class boundaries, their parents dislike each other. What, however, was once impossible is now possible. The two, assisted by the baroness, decide to announce their engagement and to see what happens. Their fathers, carried away by the spirit of 1914, embrace.

Reading these plays today it is hard not to agree with the young Berlin theater critic Herbert Ihering, who wrote in a review of a different play:

It is hardly possible to describe how horrible is the bodily pain a sensitive person feels watching such a piece. It is the beginning of the war as seen from the perspective of the little man. Tears flow, hearts melt, enthusiasm overflows. There are volunteers and newly weds, landowners and Social Democrats, ministers and shopkeepers, servants and coachmen. It is all there, all that which a couple of weeks ago we felt as reality, heard as speeches, as jokes, and read as anecdotes in

[35] Wilhelm Fronemann, "Grundsätzliches zur Auswahl von Jugend- und Volksbüchern über den Krieg 1914–1916," *Jugendschriften-Warte* 23, no. 6 (June 1916), HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, Stellv. GK des I AK, no. 1004, no p. See, more generally, Rudolf Schenda, "Schundliteratur und Kriegsliteratur," *Die Lesestoffe der kleinen Leute. Studien zur populären Literatur im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1976), pp. 78 ff.

[36] P. Saget, *Der Franktireur. Trauerspiel in 1 Akt* (Recklinghausen, n.d. (1915)).

[37] Ohorn, *Vorwärts mit Gott!*, p. 7.

the newspapers . . . The public is supposed to find itself once again, to applaud once again what it once applauded in the streets.[38]

Another critic, Heinrich Stümcke, agreed, claiming that the plays had "a cheap talkativeness, an uninhibited chauvinism, a merry thoughtlessness and a stupidity displayed in a childish absence of reality."[39]

Yet these pathetic melodramas probably came much closer to capturing the popular bourgeois perception of the reality of German public opinion than all of the intellectual's musings on the "ideas of 1914." The plays were well attended. A largely bourgeois public enjoyed feeling once again the "pathos" of history, enjoyed watching itself experience the pleasures of excitement. Ihering, after criticizing one romantic poem where "the fear of death and death itself are misused in a tactless and terrible sentimental couplet," was forced to admit that "the audience roared."[40]

It would be a mistake to see these plays as a part of what George Mosse has termed the "trivialization of war," that is, a way of cutting "war down to size so that it would become commonplace instead of awesome and frightening."[41] As contemporary critics noted, the war of these August experiences did not need to be cut down to size; the real war, the war at the front, was not a part of these plays. Rather, the war was a *deus ex machina*, a means of eliminating boredom, of bringing lovers together. Identities were modified, but never in a profound manner. If social boundaries fell it was almost never the one between the bourgeoisie and the working class but rather the boundary between the nobility and the bourgeoisie. The working class participated with a grim determination. There was a great deal of high diction in these plays – how great it is to die for one's country – but it was the high diction of melodrama; it was also, sometimes even word for word, the same combination of chauvinism and hubris that one could read in the lead articles of the newspapers.

Underlying the excitement was the awareness that, as one unimportant poet wrote, "now we are writing history ourselves."[42] These were "great times," "this is a piece of history which is happening here," "future generations will record that a new era of world history began here."[43] Yet,

[38] Herbert Ihering, "Theaterbarbarei," *Die Schaubühne* 10, vol. 2 (1914), p. 229. This 26–year-old theater critic would later play an important role in promoting Brecht.

[39] Stümcke, *Theater und Krieg*, p. 14.

[40] Ihering, "Theaterbarbarei," p. 230.

[41] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, pp. 124 ff.

[42] The poem, entitled "Geschichte" (History), by Hans Ludw. Linkenbach, is reprinted in Bennata Otten (ed.), *Kriegsgedichte aus den ersten Monaten des Weltkrieges 1914* (Lübeck, 1914), p. 25.

[43] Quotes from Rosen (ed.), "Introduction," in *Der Große Krieg*, p. 8; a soldier's letter, quoted in H. Strunk, *Mobilmachung und Aufmarsch der Heere auf dem westlichen Kriegsschauplatz. August, 1914* (Leipzig, 1916), p. 7; and "Erwartungsvolle Stille," *Kösliner Zeitung*, 11 August 1914, no. 186.

although the characters were witnesses to history, they were not masters of their own fate; they were not actively shaping their own history. Nor do they seem to have wanted to be masters of their own fate. Nowhere in these plays is there any evidence that the "people" want to become the subject, and not the object of their own history. This incredible confidence in the course of history is perhaps the most unusual aspect of the 1914 "enthusiasm." For most people the experience of the hand of fate is rarely such a pleasant one.

The plays suggest that the "enthusiasm" was real only so long as the war itself was not. Confronted with the reality of a modern war, this sort of pleasure faded away. In September 1914 soldiers at the front complained about the caricatured, humorous depictions of the enemy in the postcards, feeling that these humorous representations of the enemy as pure cowards and criminals did not do justice to the reality of the front, claiming, as one soldier noted, that "such postcards are as fitting at the front as a clown at a funeral"[44] (see illustration 4). On 3 October the Bavarian officials began to censor postcards; on 22 October 1914 the Berlin government likewise instructed its censors to prohibit postcards which "could decrease the good name of the German army and its accomplishments."[45] In August and September 1914 newspapers and magazines had printed an enormous quantity of letters from soldiers, in which the soldiers described their war experiences in often graphic and gruesome detail. Beginning in October 1914, however, the government worried that this detail, which, if it were a short war, only contributed to the aura of heroism, would be detrimental to morale in a war of endurance, and began to forbid their publication.[46]

By January 1915 almost no one went anymore to see a theatrical recreation of the August experiences. The *Kreigsschmarren* largely disappeared from the stage, and theaters returned to their regular repertoire, albeit with a militaristic cast.[47] By 1915 fewer and fewer war poems were being

[44] "Der Krieg ist eine heilige Sache. Scherz-Karten," *Die Post*, 17 October 1914 (no. 499), quoting a letter from a soldier at the front.

[45] The Bavarian government began censoring postcards on 3 October 1914. Based on press releases from the Correspondence Hoffmann. HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, MKr no. 13918. See further MKr no. 13344, and no. 13345/1, and HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, Stellv. GK des I. AK, no. 1756. The prohibition of the Berlin government of 22 October 1914 is in HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, MKr, no. 13344. See also the material in HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, MKr no. 13345/1.

[46] There is a superb collection of these letters, clipped from a broad range of newspapers, in BAL, RLB Pressearchiv, no. 7595–7613. Many editions of war letters were published during the war. Among the most interesting are the letters in Pniower (ed.), *Briefe aus dem Felde 1914/15*; and in *Hundert Briefe aus dem Felde. Was die Soldaten über den Krieg erzählen* (Nuremberg, 1915). On these letters see Ulrich, *Die Augenzeugen*.

[47] Poengsen, *Der deutsche Bühnen-Spielplan im Weltkriege*, p. 28; Stümcke, *Theater und Krieg*, pp. 15, 128; "Das Jahr der Bühne," *Die Schaubühne* 10, vol. 2 (1914), p. 564.

published. A lot of the war chronicles, these pages of memory, had already ceased publication at the end of 1914. By early 1915 the memory of the "August experiences" as "Great Times," with all their naive and carnivalesque aspects, as times full of excitement and history, had largely disappeared from the popular media. These aspects of the August experiences would, indeed, not be remembered again. This was not, however, the end of the memory of the August experiences. The "spirit of 1914" would be repeatedly invoked in political discourse throughout the war, but less as a pleasant memory, as a memory of pleasant moments, than as a metaphor for political ideologies, or as a "myth," a part of the war propaganda.

The "ideas" of 1914

The "August experiences" plays have received little attention from historians. In contrast, there is an enormous literature on German intellectuals during the First World War. In August 1914 German artists, writers, journalists, and academics were among the most "enthusiastic" of all Germans. As Thomas Mann noted, in 1914 most German intellectuals "sang as if in competition with each other the praises of war, with deep passion, as if they and the people, whose voice they are, saw nothing better, nothing more beautiful than to fight many enemies."[48] The breadth of the intellectual war enthusiasm – there were, indeed, very few intellectuals who were not initially "enthusiastic" – has been one of the most important reasons why historians largely accepted the official narrative of a unity of enthusiasm in 1914. Why were so many intellectuals so enthusiastic?

In a perceptive essay written in 1915, Siegfried Kracauer saw two motivations behind the intellectual's enthusiasm. First, according to Kracauer, many intellectuals genuinely embraced the ideas they believed war legitimated: brotherhood, self-sacrifice, sharing, courage, and humility.[49] These values were, in their minds, more worthy than the narcissistic values of a modern peacetime, capitalist society – egotism, materialism, individualism, and urbane mannerisms. The "August events" were thus a "reeducation (*Umlernen*)," a purification, a "revelation (*Offenbarung*)," a movement away from "degeneracy (*Entartung*)" toward culture, from

[48] Thomas Mann, "Gedanken im Krieg," *Die Neue Rundschau* (November 1914), p. 1473. Wolfgang J. Mommsen's masterly *Bürgerliche Kultur und künstlerische Avantgarde. Kultur und Politik im deutschen Kaiserreich 1870–1918* (Frankfurt/Main, 1994), pp. 117 ff., is the best synthesis on German intellectuals during the war. Still useful are: Klaus-Peter Philippi, *Volk des Zorns*; Schröter, "Der Chauvinismus und seine Tradition," pp. 7 ff.; Koester, *Literatur und Weltkriegsideologie*; and Roland Stromberg, *Redemption by War: The Intellectuals and 1914* (Lawrence, KS, 1982).

[49] Siegfried Kracauer, "Vom Erleben des Krieges," *Preussisches Jahrbuch*, 158 no. 3 (July–September, 1915), pp. 410 ff.

bourgeois "materialism" to idealism, from the world of outer appearances to inner truths.

A decadent society in need of regeneration was a common theme in Wilhelmine cultural criticism. Nietzsche may have termed his reflections "untimely" because they were written in an age of unprecedented industrial growth, yet his ideas – or rather, a set of similar ideas which contemporaries termed "neo-romantic" – were very popular among many bourgeois elites.[50] Fritz Stern has written perceptively about the conservative authors who asserted that civilization was destroying *Kultur*. Expressionists ridiculed stifling bourgeois norms and sensibilities. The youth movement rebelled against a sterile education.[51] *Lebensphilosophers* such as Wilhelm Dilthey or Georg Simmel criticized the decline in the quality of the life of the mind that accompanied technological advances. Sociologists such as Ferdinand Tönnies wrote that modern society alienated man from man, that the group in the modern world was held together not by genuine bonds of brotherliness but by artificial conventions and contracts; indeed, that modern society (*Gesellschaft*) produced atomized individuals incapable of real community (*Gemeinschaft*).[52]

It was one of the peculiarities of the time that many young intellectuals claimed that inner, deeper truths were not to be found in culture but in experience, and that there was no "experience" (*Erlebnis*) more extreme than war.[53] The expressionist poet Georg Heym captured the "spirit of the times" in his diary on 15 September 1911: "my God – I am suffocating with my unused enthusiasm in this banal time . . . I hope at the very least for a war. But even that does not happen."[54]

[50] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1981). On the reception of Nietzsche, see R. Hinton Thomas, *Nietzsche in German Politics and Society 1890–1918* (Manchester, 1983); and Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890–1990* (Berkeley, 1992). More generally see Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair. A Study of the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1961). See further George Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York, 1964); Mommsen, *Bürgerliche Kultur und künstlerische Avantgarde*, pp. 113 ff.: Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, pp. 77 ff.; and George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, pp. 53 ff.

[51] Harry Pross, *Jugend, Eros, Politik. Die Geschichte der deutschen Jugendverbände* (Berne, 1964); and Walter Laquer, *Young Germany. A History of the German Youth Movement* (New Brunswick, 1984).

[52] Georg Lukacs, *The Destruction of Reason* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1981), is a fascinating critique of this intellectual approach.

[53] The phrase is Walter Rathenau's, *Zur Mechanik des Geistes* (Berlin, 1913). One of the most interesting expressions of this idea came from Martin Buber, in his introduction, "Ekstase und Bekenntnis," in his edited edition, *Ekstatische Konfessionen* (Jena, 1909).

[54] Quoted in Erich von Kahler, "Einleitung. Die Bedeutung des Expressionismus," in Wolfgang Rothe (ed.), *Expressionismus als Literatur. Gesammelte Studien* (Berne and Munich, 1969), p. 15. For other examples, see Mommsen, *Bürgerliche Kultur und künstlerische Avantgarde*, p. 116.

In 1914, when war came, young intellectuals yearned to participate. Many young authors and artists volunteered, although often for the medical service, whom one never would have suspected of being "war enthusiastic," such as Max Beckmann, Peter Kollwitz, the son of Käthe Kollwitz, even Hugo Ball, who would later help to found the anarchistic Dada "movement" in Switzerland.[55] They were less "enthusiastic" than curious. The expressionist sculptor Ernst Barlach wrote on 29 August 1914 in a letter:

> I can only compare the experience of this great time with a love affair (*Liebesabenteuer*), so much does it move me and take me out of myself. It is a great joy to be out of oneself, apart from oneself. And this greatness is something true, not just an idea.[56]

Max Beckmann viewed the war as a "magnificent catastrophe," the possibility to experience "all the pathetic depths of life."[57] The expressionist painter Otto Dix wrote that:

> The war was abominable, yet none the less it was something colossal. I simply could not miss out on it. If one wishes to know anything about mankind, one has to have seen human beings surviving in this extraordinary state in which all restraints on behavior fall away. One must see for oneself the full baseness of life; that's why I went to war, and why I volunteered for military service.[58]

Many of those too old to participate directly wrote, full of enthusiasm, works glorifying the cultural progress the war had engendered. Probably the most famous such book, reviewed everywhere, was Max Scheler's *Der Genius des Krieges und der deutsche Krieg*. Scheler praised war as the experience of the absolute, of God's will on earth. War tore the mask off appearances; all that was left after this storm had passed were deeper, inner, authentic truths. War increased the amount of brotherliness, of community; it taught the value of humility, of sacrifice. Gertrud Bäumer even wrote, in her review of Scheler, that war increased the amount of love in this world for it taught one to love one's neighbor more than oneself.[59]

Idealism was one of the sources of the intellectual's enthusiasm. Kracauer suggested that an even more important motivation came from

[55] Jindrich Toman, "Im Kriege regt sich das Urgewässer. Hugo Ball und der Kriegsausbruch 1914," *Hugo-Ball Almanach* 1981, pp. 1–38.

[56] Friedrich Dross (ed.), *Ernst Barlach, Briefe, volume I, 1888–1924* (Munich, 1968), p. 432.

[57] The first quote is from Max Beckmann, *Briefe* (Munich, 1993), p. 90; the second is quoted in Otto Conzelmann, *Der andere Dix. Sein Bild vom Menschen und vom Krieg* (Stuttgart, 1983), p. 133. See also Matthias Eberle, *Der Weltkrieg und die Künstler der Weimarer Republik: Dix, Grosz, Beckmann, Schlemmer* (Stuttgart, 1989).

[58] Quoted in Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "German intellectuals and the meaning of war," Horne (ed.), *State, Society, and Mobilization in Europe*, p. 27.

[59] Gertrud Bäumer, "Der Genius des Krieges," *Die Hilfe* 21, no. 41 (14 October 1915), pp. 656 ff. Max Scheler, *Der Genius des Krieges und der deutsche Krieg* (Leipzig, 1915). Also especially important to contemporaries was Rudolf Eucken's *Die sittlichen Kräfte des Krieges* (Leipzig, 1914).

the intellectual's longing for an audience, and their belief in 1914 that they had found that audience. The modernization of the German economy and society had, Kracauer noted, isolated Wilhelmine intellectuals, and produced a sense of alienation. Wilhelmine intellectuals felt themselves to be the natural voice of public opinion.[60] In 1914 intellectuals hoped that by placing themselves at the front of a "mass" audience, by giving meaning to the events around them, by explaining what Germany was fighting for, they could once again become that voice.[61]

Accordingly, in 1914 intellectuals were quite busy. Rudolf Eucken, a philosophy professor in Jena and a Nobel laureate in literature, gave thirty-six speeches in the first year of the war. Although Eucken was possibly the most popular German professor, most academic intellectuals participated. Klaus Schwabe noted that of the sixty-nine professors of history in 1914 forty-three were active in publishing articles on the war.[62] And the public seemed to be listening – at least the lectures were well attended. In August 1914 academic intellectuals claimed to speak for "public opinion," and many Germans accepted their claims.

Seldom in the first year of the war did anyone lecture on the "spirit of 1914," or, for that matter, on the "meaning" of the war at all. Instead, the speakers in 1914 and early 1915 spoke on "Belgium and Holland," "The War and Women," "A Christmas Visit to the West Front," "Tsingtaus Heroes," "What do We Owe our Kaiser," or "Hindenburg" – topics which would have been suitable for a speech at the *Sedanfest* before (or, if one won, after) the war.[63] And yet very quickly the account which emphasized

[60] See Rüdiger vom Bruch, *Weltpolitik als Kulturmission. Auswärtige Kulturpolitik und Bildungsbürgertum in Deutschland am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Paderborn, 1982), p. 52; and Rüdiger vom Bruch, *Wissenschaft, Politik und öffentliche Meinung. Gelehrtenpolitik im Wilhelminischen Deutschland (1890–1914)* (Husum, 1980). See also Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins* (Harvard, 1969); and Walter Struve, *Elites Against Democracy. Leadership Ideals in Bourgeois Political Thought in Germany 1890–1933* (Princeton, 1973). Perhaps the best example of this understanding of oneself is found in Ferdinand Tönnies, *Zur Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung* (Berlin, 1922). I have discussed the peculiarities of Tönnies' understanding of public opinion in "Tönnies Begriff der 'öffentlichen Meinung,' oder: das Demokratieverständnis eines Vernunftrepublikaners," in Wolfgang Bialas and Georg Iggers (eds.), *Weimarer Intellektuelle: Neue Interpretationen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1996) pp. 159–176.

[61] Kracauer, "Vom Erleben des Krieges," p. 420. This was also argued by Koester, *Literatur und Weltkriegsideologie*, pp. 133, 143, 211; Mommsen, *Bürgerliche Kultur und künstlerische Avantgarde*, pp. 111 ff.; and Gudrun Fiedler, *Jugend im Krieg. Bürgerliche Jugendbewegung, Erster Weltkrieg und sozialer Wandel 1914–1923* (Cologne, 1989), pp. 127 ff.

[62] Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, p. 21.

[63] Based on the list of lectures in Landesarchiv Karlsruhe, 236–23067, 236–23074; the complete list of the lectures given in Munich after February, 1915 in HStA Munich, Abt. IV-Kriegsarchiv, MKr no. 14013 (beginning on 2 February 1915); and the complete list of lectures in Karlsruhe in 1914 in *Chronik der Haupt- und Residenzstadt Karlsruhe für das Jahr 1914. Im Auftrag der städtischen ArchivKommision* (Karlsruhe, 1916), pp. 272 ff. The first began again on 7 September 1914. In 1915, according to *Chronik der Haupt- und Residenzstadt Karlsruhe für das Jahr 1915* (Karlsruhe, 1917), pp. 285 ff, there were 223 lectures, but no memorial lecture for 1 or 4 August.

the importance of the unity of enthusiasm in 1914 obtained a central role in academic discourse. It was essential, according to the authors of the introduction to an important collection of essays by leading German intellectuals, "that we should become aware of the inner values we had won in the first weeks of the war, and take hold of these values as a part of our heritage."[64]

The most important value gained in 1914 was community. Many intellectuals had themselves subjectively experienced "community" in August 1914, and described the essence of their 1914 "experience" as "the experience of being one with the fatherland,"[65] "the experience with all Germans of the deep unity of the soul."[66] In the words of Ernst Troeltsch:

> Under this incredible pressure German life melted in that indescribable wonderful unity of sacrifice, brotherhood, belief, and certainty of victory, which was, and is, the meaning of the unforgettable August.[67]

Often, this discourse even employed the categories of mass psychology: the loss of the individual identity, subject and object becoming one in a mass soul, a religious experience of the eternal. Marianne Weber, the wife of Max Weber, wrote in 1916 that in 1914:

> everyone felt themselves grow out of themselves to become one with a greater being. The breakdown of the soul broke the barriers of our individual, and the lonely, limited, needy ego flowed over into the great river of community . . . And in the collapse (*Untergang*) of the ego and its special existence in this living unity we felt ourselves become part of a higher ethical dignity, which exists in the complete willingness to sacrifice oneself for the good of the whole.[68]

The Berlin philosophy professor, Alois Riehl, also employed the vocabulary of an ecstatic religious experience:

> Our first victory – even before our victory in battle, has been the victory over ourselves. Never was a people so united as in those early, unforgettable August days . . . Each of us felt we lived for the whole and that the whole lived in all of us . . . The whole population was possessed of the truth and reality of a religious power.[69]

[64] Dr. Waldeyer and Dr. Erdberg, "Vorwort," in Zentralstelle für Volkswohlfahrt und dem Verein für volkstümliche Kurse von Berliner Hochschullehrern (ed.), *Deutsche Reden in schwerer Zeit* (Berlin, 1914), p. vii.

[65] J. Reink, *Deutscher Geist. Rede zur Feier des Geburtstages seiner Majestät des Deutschen Kaisers König von Preussen Wilhelm II (27 January 1915)* (Kiel, 1915), p. 9. On the importance of the idea of community in the intellectual's interpretations of the meaning of 1914 see Kurt Hammer, *Kriegstheologie*, p. 76, and Leed, *No Man's Land*, pp. 39 ff.; and Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, pp. 40 ff.

[66] Walther Bottermann, *Der Krieg als inneres Erlebnis. Festrede/Kaisersgeburtstag 1915* (Ratzeburg, 1915), p. 8.

[67] Troeltsch, *Der Kulturkrieg*, pp. 25–26.

[68] Marianne Weber, "Der Krieg als ethisches Problem," in *Frauenfragen und Frauengedanken* (Tübingen, 1919), p. 158.

[69] Riehl, "1813 – Fichte – 1914," in Zentralstelle für Volkswohlfahrt und dem Verein für

As the sociologist Emil Lederer noted at the time, it was only natural for intellectuals to turn those intellectual currents which they had subjectively lived into ideologies.[70] In the course of this transformation the actual historical experiences receded into the background. The "August experiences" were employed as a framework in which the "real" story – a collective narrative of German unity – could be told. Perhaps not surprisingly, many intellectuals saw the essence of Germanness in German culture. In 1914 an enormous number of books taught Germans to be German by describing what was German, claiming that the essence of the 1914 experiences was the "awakening of Germanness."[71] Hermann Bahr stated that in 1914 "the German appeared to us . . . we now know for the first time who we really are . . . now we are nothing other than German."[72]

But what was German? In their works describing German culture the authors did not go far beyond clothing the cultural chauvinism found in newspapers in an academic, philosophical discourse. As in the lead articles of the newspapers, "Germans" were what the others were not. If the Russians were "half-barbarians . . . whom we are not able to recognize as being equal before the claims of the higher goals of humanity,"[73] if the French were superficial, nationalistic, atheistic, frivolous, and egotistical,[74] if the English were individualistic, capitalistic, superficial, in short, a land of *Händler* (merchants), then Germans were heroes (*Helden*).[75]

Some, such as Max Scheler, saw the philosophical foundation of these stereotypes in the opposition between culture and civilization. Culture was the inner-looking search for philosophic truth and beauty, civilization the obsession with outward appearances and manners. Scheler saw the meaning of the war in the "overcoming of the individualistic rationalism of the enlightenment," as well as in "the reinvention of the idea of 'objective spirit' in place of the relativistic subjectivity so peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon philosophical tradition."[76]

volkstümliche Kurse von Berliner Hochschullehrern (ed.), *Deutsche Reden in schwerer Zeit*, vol. I (Berlin, 1914), p. 107.

[70] Lederer, "Zur Soziologie des Weltkrieges," p. 131.

[71] See Stickelberger-Eder, *Aufbruch 1914*, pp. 116 ff.; Koester, *Sinngebung*, pp. 149, 196.

[72] Bahr, *Kriegssegen*, pp. 5–6.

[73] Hans Delbrück, "Über den kriegerischen Charakter des deutschen Volkes," in Zentralstelle für Volkswohlfahrt und dem Verein für volkstümliche Kurse von Berliner Hochschullehrern (ed.), *Deutsche Reden in schwerer Zeit* (Berlin, 1914), p. 73; and many others. See the interesting reflections on the importance of the enemy for modern nationalism in Michael Jeismann, *Das Vaterland der Feinde. Studien zum nationalen Feindbegriff und Selbstverständnis in Deutschland und Frankreich 1792–1918* (Stuttgart, 1992).

[74] Pressel, *Die Kriegspredigt 1914–1918*, p. 127.

[75] This is, of course, most strongly argued in Werner Sombart's infamous *Händler und Helden. Patriotische Besinnungen* (Munich, 1915). Unfortunately, Sombart was not exceptional. See the newspaper articles excerpted in BAL, RLB Pressearchiv, no. 7565.

[76] Scheler, *Der Genius des Krieges*, p. 65. More generally, see Koester, *Literatur und Weltkriegsideologie*, pp. 109 ff.; and Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, pp. 90 ff.

Johann Plenge, in what he termed the "ideas of 1914," perceived the underlying foundation of the national unity in 1914 in a special German ability at organization, one which found its expression in German bureaucracy and, above all, in the German organization of the economy. The "ideas of 1914" were thus the realization of the idea of national socialism and, as such, constituted a revolution in European history equal to the revolution of 1789: "in us lies the twentieth century. No matter how the war ends we are the ideal people. Our ideas will be the goals of humanity."[77]

What was it that made Germans so peculiarly capable of fulfilling the requirements of organization? According to the theologian Ernst Troeltsch the answer lay in a special "German idea of freedom." Such freedom was "the free, conscious dutiful giving of oneself to the existing whole created through history, the state, and the nation."[78] Unity came from the "free acceptance and participation in one's duties."[79] Some labelled this understanding of freedom "democratic"; some claimed it was responsible for the German victories.[80]

These ruminations on culture, on German culture, these "ideas of 1914," did not have much of an impact upon German intellectual history. The war intruded upon the routines and habits of everyday life, tore people out of carefully constructed contexts and relationships, and made many of the old clichés obsolete. The war not only opened up possibilities for reshuffling the dominant norms and values of the German cultural tradition, after it became clear how little the inherited narratives had to do with the authentic war experience much of the cultural inheritance would be rejected, and with it, what one government official termed the "cheap banalities" of the intellectuals in this "difficult and great time."[81]

[77] Johann Plenge, *1789 und 1914. Die symbolischen Jahre in der Geschichte des politischen Geistes* (Berlin, 1916), p. 20. Johann Plenge first coined the term "ideas of 1914" in his *Eine Kriegsvorlesung über die Volkswirtschaft. Das Zeitalter der Volksgenossen* (Berlin, 1915). On the "ideas of 1914," see Mommsen, *Bürgerliche Kultur und Künstlerische Avantgarde*, pp. 123 ff.; Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Der Geist von 1914: Das Programm eines politischen 'Sonderwegs' der Deutschen," in *Nation und Geschichte. Über die Deutschen und die deutsche Frage* (Munich, 1990), pp. 87–106; Dieter Krüger, *Nationalökonomen im wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Göttingen, 1983), pp. 189 ff.; and Hermann Lübbe, *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte* (Basle, 1963), pp. 173 ff.

[78] Ernst Troeltsch, "Die deutsche Idee von Freiheit," in Adolph von Harnack, Otto Hintze, Friedrich Meinecke, Max Sering, and Ernst Troeltsch, *Die deutsche Freiheit. Fünf Vorträge, gehalten am 25. Mai, 1917 im Abgeordnetenhaus, Berlin* (Gotha, 1917), p. 27. See Mommsen, *Bürgerliche Kultur und Künstlerische Avantgarde*, pp. 153 ff.

[79] Troeltsch, "Der metaphysische und religiöse Geist," in Harnack, Hintze, Meinecke, Sering and Troeltsch, *Die deutsche Freiheit,* p. 63.

[80] Rudolf Kjellen, *Die Ideen von 1914*, pp. 30 ff; Hermann Bahr, "Ideen von 1914," *Hochland 14* (1916/1917), p. 438. D. Carl Meinhoff, *Deutschland und der preussische Geist* (Hamburg, 1915), p. 3.

[81] "Stimmungs-Bericht I.," for Nov. 1914, written by von Berger in the Ministry of the Interior, in GhStAPK Dahlem, I/90J/1, p. 9.

The war not only brought about a reshuffling of many of the most cherished bourgeois values and norms of German society, it also modified the public's perceptions as to who could best speak to these cultural meanings. At the beginning of the war many people had accepted the intellectual's claims to speak for public opinion. By 1916, however, attendance at the lectures had fallen off sharply.[82] In part this had to do with the fact that as the war progressed popularity (or, in Max Weber's terminology, "charisma") would replace education as the most important criteria for credibility in speaking to collective meanings. In part this had to do with the one-sided interpretations of the meaning of the war in 1914. Martin Rades, a professor of theology, wrote in *Christliche Welt*, an important liberal Christian journal:

> I am of the opinion that the church has done its duty. She has understood how to express the calling which our people were given at the beginning of the war. The church has placed itself from the very beginning of the war fully and without reservation on the side of the fighting people . . . Christianity was dissolved in Germanness (*Das Christentum ging auf im Deutschtum*).[83]

As socialist critics of the war apologies pointed out, if war was so good for people it would be good for the world to be continually at war, and this was ludicrous.

And yet, although it is easy to criticize the intellectual's ideas of 1914, and many contemporaries and historians have done so, the intellectual discourse on the "spirit of 1914" was neither wholly self-interested nor disingenuous. Nations are less often created in a shared experience than in a shared memory, a shared narrative, a national myth. In times of war all nations need myths, as a means of representing the social identity, as an explanation both of the collective that one is fighting for, and as an individual explanation of the sacred nature of one's duty.

In 1914 Germans had a collective purpose – but they did not yet have a collective identity. In 1914 German intellectuals clearly felt that the old myths, largely monarchical myths, did not suffice, that a new collective identity was needed. The intellectual's "ideas of 1914" can be understood as an attempt to create a popular representation of the collectivity for which the Germans were fighting – in essence a national myth, something all Germans agreed on.

The peculiarity of this discourse is perhaps best seen in a European context. In the First World War all warring nations had to some extent an initial "enthusiasm," a national unity, and the narrative of this unity and enthusiasm was given a prominent place in the public mind. Moreover, it

[82] Rudolf Eucken, *Lebenserinnerungen. Ein Stück deutschen Lebens* (Leipzig, 1922), p. 100.
[83] Quoted in Hammer, *Deutsche Kriegstheologie*, p. 51. See, critically, Lübbe, *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland*, pp. 216–217.

is natural in war for nations to employ a mythic discourse as a part of their giving meaning to the war. Yet only German intellectuals developed an "ideas [*sic*] of 1914," developed the argument that the awareness of these ideas, a shared cultural identity, was an element of the initial enthusiasm at the beginning of the war. This specific German creation, as well as the strength of its reception, speaks more to the degree of social division in German society before 1914 than it does to the peculiarity of the German "August experiences."

Toward a "myth" of the spirit of 1914

In 1917 the *Deutsche Kriegswochenschau*, a propaganda magazine published by the War Press Office, published a series of articles commemorating the third anniversary of the "August experiences." In one of these articles Rudolf Eucken wrote, looking back, "there rose up a powerful storm, which wiped away all worries and doubts and filled our souls with fiery anger and tied us together, made us one. Now there was only one goal: the defence of the Fatherland." Eucken continued: August was not just about the defence of the Fatherland, it was an "ethical transformation," a recognition of our duty to God, a movement to a better, purer culture.[84]

In his essay the propagandist and journalist Rudolf Stratz also recreated the mood of these days. The peaceful people of the *Dichter* and *Denker* rose up and through a holy *furor teutonicus* became mean and terrible. The quiet and peaceful Michel became a serious and angry St. Michel. After a very brief discussion of present troubles Stratz asserted that we must return to the mood of those days, it is the duty of each of us,

> for then a ray of sunshine will go out from this sacred moment of our past into the present and it will show us the way into the future. The way to victory. The iron, unshakeable, faithful will to victory. That will and nothing else is the spirit of those days.[85]

The distance between Stratz's account of the "spirit of 1914" and the account in the plays of 1914 could scarcely be greater. The enthusiasm of 1914 has lost all its carnivalesque aspects. The "August experiences" are no longer the "Great Times." Yet there is a difference as well between Stratz and Eucken, between the "ideas of 1914" and what I term the "myth" of the "spirit of 1914." No longer are Germans becoming aware of their shared Germanness. The unity has been stripped of its fraternal

[84] Rudolf Eucken, "Der Sturm bricht los!," *Deutsche Kriegswochenschau*, 29 July 1917, no. 34, p. 494.

[85] Rudolf Stratz, "Deutschland in den Tagen der Mobilmachung," *Deutsche Kriegswochenschau*, 29 July 1917, no. 34, pp. 495–496.

aspects; it has become the *furor teutonicus*, mean and terrifying, with all the negative characteristics of the mass personality, except that now they are seen as positive.

In place of emotion, in place of enthusiasm, there is the fanatic. As Walter Lippmann has noted, fanatics are those who "have redoubled their effort when they have forgotten their aim. The effort itself has become the aim. Men live in their effort, and for a time find great exaltation. They seek stimulation of their effort rather than direction of it."[86] The fanatic gets his strength from the power of faith, of will, from being truly committed. To achieve the benefits of faith you have to take a religious attitude toward the world. In this propagandistic discourse the narrative of the "spirit of 1914" became a transcendent myth. By believing in it, Stratz asserted, one could achieve the benefits of faith.

In 1917 the *Deutsche Kriegswochenschau* carried both of these accounts of the 1914 experiences. In the next two chapters we will take a look at other accounts of the 1914 experiences, examine how other groups within German society attempted to develop a narrative of the "spirit of 1914" and to employ this "spirit of 1914" as a metaphor for their political ideology. These narratives were, however, not only competing with each other. As the episode above shows, the debate was not just about what is "German," about what is the nature of the political collective, but also about what was needed in the wartime environment: a collective narrative, a representation of the collectivity, or a transcendent myth, something to believe in.

[86] Walter Lippmann, *Liberty and the News* (New York, 1920), p. 57.

5 The government's myth of the spirit of 1914

To the crowds assembled beneath his castle window on 1 August 1914 the Kaiser uttered the famous words:

> I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the expression of your affection and your loyalty. When it comes to war all parties cease and we are all brothers. If this or that party has attacked me in peace time, I now forgive them wholeheartedly.[1]

He repeated the remarks on 4 August, slightly modified ("I no longer recognize any parties, I know only Germans"), to the assembled parliamentarians. Within hours newspapers proclaimed these words in their headlines. Within days street vendors sold postcards with the picture of the Kaiser and these words.[2]

These sentences would become the most important quote of the war, an essential part of the government's narrative of the "spirit of 1914." This narrative stated that in 1914, when the Kaiser called the nation to war, all Germans willingly came, with enthusiasm, and in this moment of enthusiasm "the Kaiser and his people have become one."[3] The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote: "how they all stood there, all reading the extras: the quiet worker next to the finely dressed lady; the old man next to the youth, and how they all, feeling the same thing, shook hands, and formed a chain of loyalty around the beloved royal house."[4]

This narrative of the "spirit of 1914" was at the heart of the government's propaganda message. Conservative journalists may have first articulated the legend that in the enthusiastic crowds of 1914 social identities changed and all workers became "Germans." Popular literature and theater may have portrayed the "August experiences" as melodramatic "Great Times." Intellectuals may have asserted that the 1914 experiences

[1] His speech is translated and reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire*, vol. I, p. 4. I have modified the translation.

[2] His speech is translated and reprinted in *ibid*., pp. 7 ff. The postcards are described by Ernst Toller in his memoirs, *Eine Jugend in Deutschland*, p. 39. Raithel, *Das "Wunder" der inneren Einheit*, pp. 517–518, has reprinted the speeches of the Kaiser and Bethmann Hollweg to the crowds in Berlin on 31 July and 1 August 1914.

[3] H.R., "Die erste Kriegswoche," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 9 August 1914, no. 371, p. 1.

[4] "Segen bringt der Krieg," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23 August 1914, p. 1.

were characterized by the people becoming aware of a common idea, a shared German culture. But it was the government which, by giving this narrative, the "spirit of 1914," a central position in its account of the meaning of the war, and by censoring any criticism of this narrative, assured its prominence in the public realm. In large part because of the government's efforts this narrative, although flawed as history – the naive, carnivalesque elements of the "August experiences" are missing – became a social memory. This social memory supplanted, even replaced individual memories.[5]

What had the Kaiser and his government intended with his remarks to the crowd on 1 August? According to Otto Hammann, the government's Press Secretary, the Chancellor, who composed the Kaiser's speech, wrote these sentences in order to win over those members of the SPD's parliamentary faction who were not sure how they would vote on 4 August. Friedrich Stein of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* had warned Hammann on the morning of 1 August that some Social Democrats might vote against war appropriations, as they were having difficulty forgetting the Kaiser's caustic red scare tactics before the war. Hammann then talked to the Chancellor, and the Chancellor and Hammann wrote this "retraction" (but not an apology), which the Kaiser proclaimed to the crowds.[6] On a very simple level the Kaiser's words were an attempt to secure the support of the whole population for the war which the government was about to undertake. It is possible that the government was surprised by the enthusiastic reception of the Kaiser's speech. Perhaps the jubilant reception of these words inspired the Kaiser himself, on his own initiative, to repeat the words in his 4 August speech to parliament. They were not in the text that the Chancellor had prepared for him.

Yet even if the government was surprised by the reception of this speech, the government worked very hard in 1914 to stage a popular war. Newspapers may have kept up the excitement and suspense with the publication of innumerable extras, yet it was the government which supplied much of the news to the press, the government which asked the people to stay on the lookout for spies, the government which passed on the news

[5] When I first started doing research on this topic I was able to interview some people who remembered their "August experiences." Their account was almost always the social memory. When I suggested that their account was unlikely to be true they often admitted that they were not so sure about their memory. For example, I once pointed out to a lady who had grown up in Posen (now Poznan) that all of my research suggested that the population in the east, and especially the Polish population, was not that enthusiastic in 1914. After discussing it for a while she was willing to admit that she might be wrong about the enthusiasm; her memory was vague about things that had happened so long ago. And, she said tellingly, so much had happened since then.

[6] Otto Hammann, *Um den Kaiser* (Berlin, 1919), p. 96.

about foreign "atrocities." The government was well aware that a modern war was a mass war, and that the support of the whole population was a precondition for military success. The head of the German General Staff, Helmuth von Moltke, put forward the common military wisdom when he warned in a 1913 memorandum that only "if we can successfully state the *casus belli* so that the nation will take up its weapons united and with enthusiasm [will we] be able under the present conditions to look forward to even the most difficult tasks with confidence."[7]

The "spirit of 1914" was thus a representation of a militaristic public opinion, of a will to fight. This identification of the symbol, the "spirit of 1914," with morale itself, would continue throughout the war. When in the later years of the war the government asked the German people to sustain the "spirit of 1914" Germans understood that the government was asking them to strengthen their resolution. Yet this was not the only function of the myth of the "spirit of 1914." The government also hoped with the myth of the "spirit of 1914" to increase legitimacy for the conservative idea. The myth of the "spirit of 1914," as a collective narrative, a representation of the collectivity, was supposed to play a role similar to that of the representation of German popular enthusiasm in the Franco-Prussian war. The successful war, fought under the leadership of the Kaiser, and with the support of the whole people, would contribute to the legitimacy of the monarchical idea.

Certainly the "war enthusiasm" did have a monarchical flavor. In July and August 1914 the largest crowds gathered in front of royal residences; royalty received the crowd's loudest cheers; spontaneous speeches ended with "hurrahs" for the Kaiser. Yet there were elements of the August experiences that did not fit so easily into the paradigm of a traditional ovation. Governing elites claimed that in 1914 all Germans had embraced the existing form of government, which the most perceptive contemporaries termed a bureaucratic constitutionalism (*Obrigkeitsstaat*). In the *Obrigkeitsstaat* citizens were properly the object, not the subject, of political decisions made by an enlightened bureaucracy; the people were unpolitical.[8] The August crowds, however, were politicized and self-confident. The people did not keep their distance, but swarmed up to the royal automobile. Moreover, although the crowds came to the Kaiser, they were not expressing their personal feelings for

[7] Moltke is quoted in Groh, *Negative Integration*, p. 382. Bismarck had often made similar statements. See Erich Ludendorff, *Kriegführung und Politik* (Berlin, 1922), p. 11.

[8] The best contemporary discussion is found in Hans Delbrück, *Regierung und Volkswille*, second edition (Charlottenburg, 1920). More critically on the *Obrigkeitsstaat*, see Hugo Preuss, *Das deutsche Volk und die Politik* (Jena, 1915); and Max Weber, "Parlament und Regierung im neugeordneten Deutschland," in *Gesammelte Politische Schriften* (Tübingen, 1921), pp. 306 ff.

the Kaiser or the Hohenzollern family as much as for what he represented. It was "Germany" they believed in and would die for.

Perhaps if it had been a short war the "spirit of 1914" would have taken its place in the annals of Prussian military prowess alongside the wars of Frederick the Great, the Wars of Liberation, and the Franco-Prussian war. Yet as the war progressed what was needed was not a discourse of legitimacy but of mobilization. The "spirit of 1914," developed as a representation of popular support for the monarchical idea, would also be at the center of the government's efforts to improve morale. In the course of this transition, the narrative of the "spirit of 1914" would undergo a number of modifications. Whereas in 1914 the Kaiser was the central figure by 1916 the Kaiser was absent from the government's representations of the "spirit of 1914." This was not an easy process, and it was characterized by a good deal of debate within the government about the best means to mobilize public opinion. For in its development of propaganda the government was trapped by the need to regenerate and remobilize and the impossibility of doing so without engaging in a political process that would cast doubt on authoritarian principles and the privileged role of the military.

There were two approaches within the government to mobilizing public opinion, reflecting two different conceptualizations of morale and of the "masses." Conservatives such as the Prussian Interior Minister, Friedrich Wilhelm von Loebbel, asserted that in August 1914 the masses had left their working-class leaders and followed a strong and determined national leadership. As Loebbel wrote in a 1915 memorandum, "when the leadership of the Social Democratic party was forced to come to a position in the first meeting of parliament, there were no more Social Democrats," only Germans, Germans who believed "in authority, especially in the power and in the sole ability of the monarchy to lead."[9] In other words, for Loebbel the claim "I no longer recognize any parties" was to be taken literally. In 1914, a liminal experience in which individual and social identities had been transformed, the people left their parties and once again became loyal subjects of the crown.

According to Loebbel, morale could be upheld by turning the August experiences into a permanent condition. The government must continue to set powerful nationalistic goals, goals that united the German people in their national honor, and which would reward the people for their sacrifices. The government must assert its claim to direct public opinion by "upholding the *Burgfrieden* (civic truce) in the form of avoiding any type

[9] Loebbel, "Bericht über die innenpolitische Entwicklung während des Krieges. Geheim! Berlin, den 22. November 1915 (als Ms. gedruckt)," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte* I, pp. 237 ff. (here p. 241).

of political discussion."[10] It must remain paternalistic, intervening in the economy to take care of the people. And it must present the government's ideas through more and better propaganda.[11]

Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg disagreed. He recognized that the right hoped with a strong foreign policy to increase national honor, to give Germany a more important role in the world, and he aimed to fulfill some of these hopes after a German victory. At the same time he asserted that for most Germans not "national ambition" but a desire to defend the nation had been their primary motivation in 1914.[12] Profoundly moved by what he saw as the free choice by a free people to identify their fate with the German nation and the German state, he hoped to sustain morale and conservative legitimacy through a "new orientation" of government policy. The government would no longer be a government of the "national" parties (in practice the upper classes), but a government of all the people. This meant reforming German governmental political culture, eliminating the divisive political rhetoric which had characterized pre-war governmental politics. Government officials could no longer suggest that the political opponent's motives were immoral; they could no longer try to exclude him from the body of "Germans" by accusing him of being a "fellow without a country (*vaterlandslose Gesellen*)." This also meant changing the laws and the constitution, reforming those laws that discriminated.[13] Ultimately, this meant reforming German political culture.

Bethmann Hollweg characterized his politics of compromise as a "politics of the diagonal:"

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

[11] Loebbel's plans are most clearly formulated in his "Aufzeichnung über eine Verbesserung der Preßorganisation," dated 5 October 1914, BAL, Reichskanzlei no. 2466/4, pp. 10 ff. See also the documents in GhStAPK I/90/2415, including Bethmann Hollweg's letter to Loebbel of 11 October 1914, p. 36. See Koszyk, *Deutsche Pressepolitik*, pp. 58 ff.

[12] So Bethmann Hollweg in a letter to Loebbel: "Schreiben des Reichskanzlers an den Chef des Geheimen Zivilkabinetts. Ausführungen zur Denkschrift des preußischen Ministers des Innern über die innerpolitische Entwicklung während des Krieges," by Bethmann Hollweg of 9 December 1915, in Wilhelm Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik im Weltkrieg 1914–1918* (Düsseldorf, 1970), vol. I, p. 272. Out of a vast literature on Bethmann Hollweg, see Konrad Jarausch, *The Enigmatic Chancellor. Bethmann Hollweg and the Hubris of Imperial Germany* (New Haven, 1973); and Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Bethmann Hollweg und die öffentliche Meinung in Deutschland 1914–1917," *Vierteljahresheft für Zeitgeschichte* 17, no. 2 (1969), pp. 117 ff.

[13] On the "new orientation" see Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Bethmann Hollweg und die öffentliche Meinung 1914–1917," pp. 117 ff.: Johanna Schellenberg, "Probleme der Burgfriedenspolitik im ersten Weltkriege. Zur innenpolitischen Strategie und Taktik der herrschenden Klassen von 1914 bis 1916," doctoral disssertation, Humboldt University (East Berlin), 1967, p. 274; *Deutschland im Ersten Weltkrieg* I, pp. 429 ff.; and Willibald Gutsche, "Bethmann Hollweg und die Politik der 'Neuorientierung.' Zur innenpolitischen Strategie und Taktik der deutschen Reichsregierung während des ersten Weltkrieges," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 13, no. 2 (1965), pp. 209 ff.

For the sake of German unity no policy could be conducted during the war but a policy of the "diagonal" . . . During the war, I considered it my patriotic duty to walk the narrow path of cool-headedness among passions, tensions, and delusions.[14]

It was a difficult task. In essence, as Hugo Preuss noted during the war, the new orientation was an attempt to remain an "unpolitical" bureaucratic state (*Obrigkeitsstaat*) through revisions which left most conservative privileges intact. Yet the left would argue that the reforms did not go far enough and the right that the reforms were eating away at the monarchical foundations of the German state, leading to democracy.[15]

The "spirit of 1914" was at the heart of Bethmann Hollweg's rhetorical strategy. More than any other government official Bethmann Hollweg spoke with warmth of the "spirit of 1914," of the "moral greatness of a whole people, such as has never before been seen in world history."[16] He wrote to the governments of the Federal states on 10 September 1914:

the proclamation of his majesty the Kaiser that in this moment of grave danger he no longer recognizes any differences between the parties is a slogan of unity for all governments and parties . . . If we are ever to attempt to bring the working class out of its political beliefs, this can only be done in a time of national uplift (*Erhebung*), such as we are presently experiencing.[17]

On Sunday, 4 April 1915, the Kaiser sent the Chancellor a telegram (which the Chancellor had written) which stated:

the spirit of unity will last beyond the noise of the weapons, and after a joyous peace it will also shed good, victorious fruit to aid the internal development of the empire. As our victory prize a national life will blossom in which the German people can develop free and strong.[18]

And in his memoirs, written after the war, he claimed that the spirit of 1914 was the "only idea during the war which had the power to unite."[19]

That in the First World War Bethmann Hollweg employed the narrative of the "spirit of 1914" as the most poignant representation of the

[14] From Bethmann Hollweg's autobiography, quoted in Gatzke, *Germany's Drive to the West*, p. 67. On Bethmann Hollweg's politics of the diagonale, see Gatzke, *Germany's Drive to the West*, pp. 69 ff.; and, especially, Mommsen, "Die Regierung Bethmann Hollweg und die öffentliche Meinung 1914–1917," pp. 133 ff.

[15] Preuss, *Das deutsche Volk und der Weltkrieg*, p. 163. The best discussion of the conservative opposition to the new orientation is in Kuno Graf von Westarp, *Konservative Politik im letzten Jahrzehnt des Kaiserreiches* (Berlin, 1933), vol. II, pp. 222 ff.

[16] So in his 2 December 1914 speech to parliament, reprinted in *Stenographischer Bericht des Reichstags*, volume 306, p. 10.

[17] Bethmann Hollweg's letter is reprinted in Mai, *Das Ende des Kaiserreiches*, pp. 173–175.

[18] Quoted in Gertrud Bäumer and Friedrich Naumann, *Kriegs- und Heimatchronik* (4 April 1915), p. 244. Many of his speeches in parliament are reprinted in Friedrich Thimme (ed.), *Bethmann Hollwegs Kriegsreden* (Stuttgart, 1919).

[19] Bethmann Hollweg, *Betrachtungen zum Weltkriege* (Berlin, 1919), vol. II, p. 390.

German collective identity points not only to the power of this narrative but also to a latent crisis of conservative legitimacy. Bethmann Hollweg recognized that, given the inherent divisions in German political culture, in the First World War only the "spirit of 1914" could represent German unity, the identification of the people with the nation and the state. This particular construction of collective memory represented a break with the collective memories that had governed Germany in the past.

Sustaining the "spirit of 1914" through censorship

In his efforts to reform German political culture, Bethmann Hollweg was forced to enlist the military's help. Under the provisions of the law on the state of siege, Germany was divided into twenty-four military districts, each of which had a Regional Deputy Commander General, who was in charge of the censorship and propaganda in his district, and who was responsible only to the Kaiser. The law of the state of siege had, as the Prussian Minister of the Interior wrote, "the character of a military dictatorship."[20]

Accordingly, much depended on the character and personality of the Regional Deputy Commander Generals, and upon the ability of the Chancellor to persuade them. It was a difficult task. The Regional Deputy Commander Generals were some of the most conservative men in Germany, men with a very traditional view of society. They believed in the importance of authority and obedience, in discipline, and possessed the arrogance of a caste who believed themselves to be superior to civil society. Although most of the press would gladly have worked closely with the military, the military did not desire to work closely with the press.[21] Rather, as the journalist Hellmut von Gerlach noted:

> with most [of the censors] their general stupidity was only trumped by their incredible egotism. One noticed with what sadistic joy they worked against the hated press, which in general they thought to be highly useless . . . The military felt themselves to be so powerful that they made no attempt to win the press. They believed it sufficient to command it.[22]

And yet it was also a part of the Prussian military tradition to follow the civilian, "political" leadership in political affairs. In the last week of peace

[20] Loebbel's 22 October 1917 report is in BAL, Reichsamt des Innern, no. 12217, pp. 412–416. On the state of siege see Wilhelm Deist, "Zur Institution des Militärbefehlshabers und Obermilitärbefehlshabers im Ersten Weltkrieg," *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel und Ostdeutschlands* 13/14 (1965), pp. 223 ff.; and Wilhelm Deist's "Einleitung" to his *Militär und Innenpolitik im Weltkrieg 1914–1918* (Düsseldorf, 1970).

[21] "Vortrag des Chefs des Kriegspresseamts am 29. Februar 1916;" HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, no. 13880, p. 6 of lecture.

[22] Gerlach, *Die große Zeit der Lüge*, pp. 38, 87–88.

Bethmann Hollweg was able to convince the military to stand by its earlier agreement not to arrest SPD leaders or prohibit the publication of their newspapers.[23] (When war came only a few Regional Deputy Commander Generals, clearly uninformed about the new policy, arrested local SPD leaders. The men were quickly set free.[24])

And Bethmann Hollweg was able to convince the military to promulgate censorship rules formulated by the civilian government. Not only would the military censor all pacifist sentiments or criticisms of the government's conduct of the war, it would also censor any divisive political discussions, it would uphold the *Burgfrieden* (civic truce). On 13 August 1914 the General Staff informed censors that:

> a unity of opinion among the parties and the press is of central importance for the war . . . The authorities in charge of censorship are to suppress thoroughly the smallest attempts to upset the unity of the German people and its press by those who choose to emphasize the views of a particular party, regardless of the party.[25]

Moreover, they would even censor all disrespect and intolerance, any insulting language. On 9 November 1914 the civilian government wrote to the censors that:

> 1. A questioning of the national sentiment and determination of any German, any party or any newspaper is highly detrimental, because it impairs the impression of Germany unity and energy.[26]

The censors did attempt to treat all political parties equally, and to forbid all intolerant, divisive discourse. In the first months of the war

[23] See Johanna Schellenberg, "Die Herausbildung der Militärdiktatur in den ersten Jahren des Krieges," in Fritz Klein (ed.), *Politik im Krieg 1914–1918. Studien zur Politik der deutschen herrschenden Klassen im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 1964), pp. 31 ff.; Groh, *Negative Integration*, pp. 581 ff.; Miller, *Burgfrieden und Klassenkampf*, p. 51; as well as the correspondence in GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit 332r, no. 60, Bd. 1; and in BAL, Reichsamt des Innern, no. 12215.

[24] Some SPD leaders were arrested in Trier and Saarbrücken. See the report by the Regierungs-Präsident of Trier, 3 August 1914, GhStAPK, Rep. 77, Tit. 332r, no. 68, p. 8.

[25] "Erlass des Chefs des Generalstabes des Feldheeres an die bundesstaatlichen Kriegsministerien und die Generalkommandos betr. die Wahrung des Burgfriedens" (signed I.A., Stein), in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*, vol. I, p. 193. This is, to my knowledge, the first use of *Burgfrieden* during the war. Similar statements would be made throughout the war. Many of these statements are reprinted in *Zusammenstellung von Zensurverfügungen des Kriegsministeriums, des stellv. Generalstabs und der Oberzensurstelle des Kriegspresseamts* (Berlin, 1916), reprinted in Heinz-Dietrich Fischer (ed.), *Pressekonzentration und Zensurpraxis im Ersten Weltkrieg*; and in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*. The best works on censorship in wartime Germany remain: Koszyk, *Deutsche Pressepolitik*; Klaus-Peter Müller, *Politik und Gesellschaft im Krieg*, pp. 70 ff.; and Doris Fischer, "Die Münchner Zensurstelle während des ersten Weltkrieges. Alfons Falkner von Sonennburg als Pressereferent im Bayerischen Kriegsministerium in den Jahren 1914 bis 1918/19," doctoral dissertation, Munich, 1973 (for Bavaria).

[26] Reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire*, vol. I, p. 180. The discussions within the government leading up to this proclamation are described in Mommsen, "Bethmann Hollweg und die öffentliche Meinung 1914–1917," pp. 131 ff.

military censors forbade all anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic, and anti-Social Democratic organizations.[27] The *Staatsbürgerzeitung*, an anti-Semitic newspaper in Berlin, was forced in August by the government to make the following public explanation: "as a result of the patriotic standpoint of the whole population we are giving up our character as an anti-Semitic newspaper, and not only for the duration of the war but also for the peace."[28] In September 1914 the government warned newspapers not to criticize religious denominations (brought about because of the invasion of Belgium, during which northern, Protestant newspapers accused Belgian priests of having committed atrocities).[29] And the government moved strongly against breaches of the *Burgfrieden* in the press.

Yet, although the censors had good intentions, they could not treat all parties fairly. For all their good will, the censors were biased. "As the commanding general has often stated," one Regional Deputy Commander General tellingly wrote, "the political direction of the newspaper does not interest him, he requires, however, in these difficult times a purely patriotic German-National position."[30] Social Democrats complained, with justice, that they were more harshly and more often punished than their bourgeois counterparts (see tables 3–5).[31] The Social Democratic *Königsberger Volkszeitung*, for example, was punished at the beginning of the war for having written that in the battle of the Masurian Lakes German democracy defeated Russian despotism.[32] On the far right, radical nationalists such as Wolfgang Kapp claimed that the government aimed to shut them up:

[27] These efforts are well described in Werner Jochmann, "Die Ausbreitung des Antisemitismus," in Werner E. Mosse (ed.), *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916–1923* (Tübingen, 1971), pp. 411 ff.

[28] Quoted in Harry Schumann, *Deutschlands Erhebung 1914. Ein Stück Zeitgeschichte* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1914), p. 100. Eventually, according to "Staatsbürgerzeitung," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 14 December 1914 (HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, MKr, no. 13921), this newspaper was also forbidden. Anti-Semitic newspapers and journals such as the *Hammer* or the *Deutsches Volksblatt* which refused to make such a public declaration and which continued to be somewhat anti-Semitic, were forbidden. On the *Hammer*, see BAL, Reichsamt des Innern, no. 12276, pp. 14–16, 287. It was forbidden in 1916. On the *Deutsches Volksblatt*, see HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, Stellv. GK des I. AK, no. 1727.

[29] See the documents in HStA Munich, Polizei Direktion Munich, no. 4544; HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, MKR no. 13918.

[30] Letter to a Polish newspaper of 3 February 1915, quoted in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*, p. 273 (footnote 9).

[31] See Koszyk, *Deutsche Pressepolitik*, pp. 170 ff. These complaints were most often made in parliament because speeches in parliament could be reprinted without censorship.

[32] Hugo Haase noted this in a speech in parliament on 10 March 1915, *Stenographischer Bericht des Reichstages*, volume 306, p. 46.

Table 3. *Newspapers punished from the beginning of the war till 30 March 1916*[a]

Political orientation of newspaper	Number of newspapers forbidden	Total days prohibited to publish
Conservative	4	20
Free conservative	1	4
National Liberal	5	20
Liberal	3	34
Left liberal	1	2
Center Party	9	35
SPD	23	149
Independent	9	156
Polish	12	158
Danish	2	11
"Friendly to Russia"	1	8
Anti-Semitic	1	5
Revolutionary, annexationist, nationalistic	21 (9 of these were in Strasburg)	for ever

Note:
[a] BAL, Reichsamt des Innern, no. 12276, pp. 142 ff.

Table 4. *Newspapers punished between 8 March 1916 and 15 May 1918*

Political orientation of newspaper	Number of newspapers forbidden
Conservative	19
National Liberal	3
Left liberal	7
Liberal	1
Center Party	1
SPD	36
Independent	11
Polish	4

Table 5. *Newspapers punished from the beginning of the war until 15 May 1918 (tables 3 and 4)*

Political orientation of newspaper	Number of newspapers forbidden
Conservative, free conservative	23
National Liberal	8
Liberal	4
Left liberal	8
Center Party	10
SPD	59
Independent	20
Polish	16
Danish	2
"Friendly to Russia"	1
Anti-Semitic	1
Revolutionary, annexationist, nationalistic	21

The "unity" called for by the chancellor means: be quiet, stay calm, believe and hope everything, but keep your troubles to yourselves in this the greatest, most beautiful and difficult hour of German history. Wait patiently for what comes. Do not disturb government circles. Theirs, not yours, is the task to determine the history of the Fatherland.[33]

Yet the job the censors had been given to do was an impossible one. Censorship could decrease intolerance, but it could not increase tolerance. Censorship could sustain the appearance of a "unity" between the government and the people, even among the people themselves, but it could not reform German society, German political culture. But then, it was not supposed to. The reforms designed to uphold the identity of the people with the nation and the state were a part of the "new orientation."

The "new orientation"

The "new orientation" became public policy when, on 21 October 1914, in a meeting with party leaders in the Prussian parliament, Clemens Delbrück, the Imperial Secretary of the Interior, promised a "new orientation of our internal politics after the war." Delbrück repeated the promise in a discussion with members of the German parliament on 6 November 1914 and on 4 December 1914 in the budget commission of

[33] Wolfgang Kapp, "The National Groups and the Imperial Chancellor (1916)," reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire*, vol. I, pp. 81, 83.

the Prussian legislature.[34] "New orientation" became a slogan when government officials publicly promised it in the Prussian parliament in February 1915 and in the German parliament on 10 March 1915.

The "new orientation" may have been proclaimed by the government, yet the SPD was the driving force. Aware of the importance the government attached to German unity the SPD cleverly pointed out the cases where governmental policy collided with its rhetoric, and warned that if the government did not reform itself German unity, the newly formed identity of the people and the state, would break down. In early August 1914 the SPD asked the government to allow *Vorwärts* to be sold in German train stations. The government agreed, and, indeed, went further; after 31 August soldiers and students were allowed to read Social Democratic literature in military barracks and schools.[35] The SPD next raised the issue of government employees belonging to trade unions, and here, too, with success: after 17 August state enterprises no longer required workers to sign a pledge that they did not belong to a trade union, although they did not abolish the requirement. Many other reforms would follow. Perhaps most importantly, the government tacitly accepted the right of workers to organize by recognizing the unions as legitimate organizations, instituting parity in many relationships between workers' organizations and industry.[36] Nor were such reforms limited to Social Democrats. The government dropped all discriminatory regulations against the Jesuits, and closed all anti-Semitic organizations. And sometime in the week before 28 August 1915 the government decided that the Reichstag would receive the inscription "for the German people." (It was finally added to the building at Christmas 1916.[37])

[34] Philipp Scheidemann, *Memoiren eines Sozialdemokraten* (Dresden, 1928), vol. I, pp. 310 ff. There is a vast literature on "new orientation." See especially Klaus Schönhoven (ed.), *Die Gewerkschaften in Weltkrieg und Revolution 1914–1919* (Cologne, 1985); Gutsche, "Bethmann Hollweg und die Politik der Neuorientierung," pp. 209 ff.; and Schellenberg, "Burgfrieden."

[35] The protocol of the State Ministry meeting of 15 August 1914, during which the *Vorwärts* issue was discussed, is in GhStAPK, I/90/2428, p. 87. The proclamation from the War Minister of 15 August 1914 is in BAL, Reichskanzlei, no. 2437/3, p. 43.

[36] See Gerald Feldman, *Army, Industry and Labor*, pp. 6, 73–74, 86 ff., 203 ff., 418 ff., 435 ff.; Schellenberg, "Burgfrieden," pp. 149 ff.; Klaus Saul, "Jugend im Schatten des Krieges. Vormilitärische Ausbildung – kriegswirst schaftlicher Einsatz – Schulalltag im Deutschland 1914–1918," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 34 (1983), p. 99, the documents in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*; and in BAL, Reichsamt des Innern, no. 6111.

[37] Wallot, the architect, had suggested the inscription at the time the building was built (1890s), but it had been rejected by the Kaiser. "dem deutschen Volke," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 28 August 1915, no. 436, p. 1. See Michael Cullen, *Der Reichstag: die Geschichte eines Monumentes* (Berlin, 1983), pp. 313–324. The decision to end all religious discrimination was approved by the Prussian State Ministry on 28 July 1915, and made public some time later, however. GhStAPK, Rep. 90a, Abt. B, Tit. III, 2b, no. 6, Bd. 164, p. 210.

These were profound changes. With the new orientation the government admitted the bankruptcy of its earlier politics, its previous efforts to distinguish between "good" bourgeois parties and "evil" Social Democrats. This amazed many contemporaries. Alfred Fried, the pacifist author, wrote in his diary on 20 August 1914: "*Vorwärts* can be sold on Prussian train stations! That is the most unbelievable event of this era, which will overturn all that exists."[38] The liberal journalist Hellmut von Gerlach, in an article entitled "The Year of Upheaval," wrote that "the most incredible experience of the war was that there no longer existed first and second class citizens, no longer friends and enemies of the empire, no longer national and anti-national elements. For the state there only exists Germans with the same duties and the same rights."[39] Some Social Democrats even saw in the governmental reforms the "socialist achievements of the war."[40]

Yet the politics of the diagonal was doomed to failure. The "new orientation" spoke to the unity between the people and the government, but said nothing about the war itself. As the war continued, such unity was not enough. In August 1915 government officials noted that morale was declining and that this was endangering the war effort.[41] They disagreed, however, as to how to improve morale. All officials agreed that hunger and the war were the two most important factors behind the decline in morale. But the government could do little to improve the food situation. Although the government intervened in the economy, rationing food and setting price limits to fight inflation, this produced few positive results.[42] As one pastor who had been "enthusiastic" in 1914 noted in his diary on 16 October 1915:

> It is beginning to appear that the authorities are powerless against this unbelievable price increase. That is a very evil recognition. The honest enthusiasm of the German people for the German way of life, which until now has gripped all circles, is being torn apart by the sad recognition that the famed German unity consists of one class enriching itself at the expense of the other.[43]

The war, too, was not the "fresh and happy" (*frisch-fröhlich*) experience that many in 1914 had hoped it would be. In 1916, the government

[38] Fried, *Kriegstagebuch*, vol. 1, p. 27.
[39] Hellmut von Gerlach, "Das Jahr des Umsturzes," *Die Welt am Montag* 20, no. 52 (28 December 1914), pp. 1–2.
[40] Hugo Heinemann, *Die sozialistischen Errungenschaften der Kriegszeit*, pp. 2 ff.
[41] So the Prussian Minister of the Interior, von Loebbel, in a letter to Bethmann Hollweg, reprinted in *Deutschland im Ersten Weltkrieg*, vol. II, p. 255.
[42] On the fighting of inflation in Baden, see Klaus-Peter Müller, *Politik und Gesellschaft im Krieg*, pp. 283 ff.
[43] Diary of Pastor Falck, BAL, 92 Sachthematische Sammlung, p. 81. The morale of the population during the war is well documented in the local histories.

started to censor soldiers' private letters, as some soldiers had asked their relatives not to subscribe to war loans.[44]

As the war continued it tested the ability of the state not only to raise mass armies and bring them to the battlefield, but to mobilize the population through propaganda, defined by the historian John Horne as "the engagement of the different belligerent nations in their war efforts both imaginatively, through collective representations and the belief and value systems giving rise to these."[45] The war forced German elites to become more interested in the social engineering of public opinion, a development Elie Halevy has aptly phrased (in a different context) as "the organization of enthusiasm."[46] The "spirit of 1914" was at the heart of the propaganda, and in the course of being employed in this discourse it became a different sort of myth.

Propaganda in the service of national unity

On 2 March 1916 the Prussian War Minister, von Wandel, asked the Prussian Minister of Education and Church Affairs to do more to improve morale. The Minister testily responded that the government had already done all it could.[47] Anything more, he claimed, would be counterproductive, for it would force the government to reveal its hand, and this, in Germany's bureaucratic political culture, would undo all the efforts to become a government of all the people, and lead to the government

[44] Noted in a 20 October 1916 letter from the Minister of the Interior to the Minister of Churches and Schools (Bavaria), HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, MKr no. 2331.

[45] John Horne, "Introduction: Mobilizing for 'total war,' 1914–1918," p. 1.

[46] Elie Halevy, "The Era of Tyrannies (1936)," reprinted in *The Era of Tyrannies*, edited by R. K. Webb (Garden City, 1965), p. 266. We lack a good overview of German propaganda during the First World War. But see Kurt Koszyk, *Deutsche Pressepolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg*; Alice Goldfarb Marquis, "Words as Weapons: Propaganda in Britain and Germany during the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 13, no. 3 (1978), pp. 467–498; and the collection of documents in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik im Weltkrieg 1914–1918*. I have discussed "Some Lessons of the War: The Discourse on Propaganda and Public Opinion in Germany in the 1920s," in Bernd Hüppauf (ed.), *War, Violence and the Structure of Modernity* (New York, 1997), pp. 99–118.

[47] The 12 March 1916 letter of the Prussian Minister of Education and Church Affairs is in GhStAPK, Rep. 76 I, Sect. I, no. 177, Bd. 1, p. 3. Many similar letters followed. On 5 May 1916, the Prussian Minister of the Interior and the Prussian Minister of Education and Church Affairs wrote to the Prussian War Minister and repeated their assertion that all that could be done in their jurisdictions has been done. BAL, Reichsamt des Innern, no. 12475, pp. 27 ff. In a meeting of the Prussian State Ministry of 19 August 1916 the Prussian Minister of Education and Church Affairs again noted that "as regards the ministry and the teachers everything has been done which could be done." GhStAPK, Rep. 90a, Abt. B., Tit. III, 2b, no. 6, Bd. 165, p. 198. On 21 January 1917 the Prussian Minister of Education and Church Affairs once again wrote to his colleagues that "I have done everything posssible to ensure a confident morale in the German people." Quoted in Schellenberg, "Burgfrieden," p. 62.

becoming involved in party politics and ultimately to a backlash against the government.

The testy response revealed that the government was under fire. Since the beginning of the war radical nationalist, Pan-German critics had accused the government of having failed to have put forth clearly defined goals that would mobilize and unite the German people, asserting that "today, nineteen months after the beginning of the war, the German people lack a goal, an ideal for the war."[48] They also accused the government of having neglected "propaganda." There was not much justice to this second claim. From the very beginning of the war, building on its pre-war experiences, the government worked hard in those public realms open to it. The government, in possession of a virtual monopoly of the news which most interested people, was able to put its "spin" on the news. Newspapers which used the government's telegraph service (and almost all major newspapers did) were required to print the reports exactly as delivered. Smaller newspapers, hurt economically by the loss of advertising revenue in August 1914, gladly took advantage of the free correspondences and articles the government supplied. Many provincial newspapers went so far as to accept the government's offer of a free "newspaper" in which the local publisher had only to insert his title.[49]

In the schools and the churches the government put forward its message with a special vigor. Schools staged "parents' evenings," where children read patriotic poems or performed patriotic songs in the clever hope that this would entice the parents to come. With success, for as one contemporary noted, "through the children one won the parents; yes, the children even educated the parents. Never before did schools have a greater influence upon the home than in the beginning of the war. The children reminded the parents of their patriotic duty, and with success."[50] And already on 16 August 1914, the government transformed its youth group, "Young Germany," into a "pre-military youth education" program for all youths over sixteen.[51]

In 1915, surveying these developments, the liberal sociologist Leopold von Wiese wrote that "the state has begun not only to regulate the actions

[48] Quoted in "Kriegsziele und Kriegsideale," *Vorwärts*, 19 February 1916, GhStAPK, Rep. 77 CBS, 970b, p. 183.

[49] "Druckfehler," "Zensurbuch der deutschen Presse, 1917," in Heinz-Dietrich Fischer (ed.), *Pressekonzentration* (Berlin, 1973), p. 213.

[50] Günther Dehn, quoted in Ingeborg Rürup, "'Es entspricht nicht dem Ernste der Zeit, daß die Jugend müßig gehe.' Kriegsbegeisterung, Schulalltag und Bürokratie in den höheren Lehranstalten Preußens 1914," in Berliner Gesichtswerkstatt (ed.), *August 1914*, p. 191.

[51] See the two excellent articles (and collection of documents) by Klaus Saul, "Der Kampf um die Jugend. Zwischen Volksschule und Kaserne. Ein Beitrag zur 'Jugendpflege' im wilhelminischen Reich," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 1/1971, pp. 97 ff.; and "Jugend im Schatten des Krieges," pp. 91 ff.

of its citizens but also its citizens' thoughts. This is a magnificent, a terrible fact: the state now regulates the ideas of its citizens."[52] Yet Wiese exaggerated. Germany was not yet a total state. One could still refuse to participate. Most youths stayed away from the "pre-military education" program, fearing that participation would lead to their being drafted.[53] In spite of censorship journalists were able to criticize the government to a surprising degree. In 1914 the government had no desire to become a total state, to direct its citizens' private thoughts. All the same, Wiese was right to note the breadth of the government's efforts to influence public opinion. The problem with German propaganda was not the lack of effort but the message. What was the government's message?

In early December 1916 the government distributed a propaganda leaflet that well encapsulated the government's "enlightenment" efforts during the first two years of the war. At the top are the words "we must win." Underneath the title are portraits of Hindenburg and Bismarck as well as a drawing of the Reichstag. The Kaiser is absent. It is the Reichstag, the parliament, that represents the people. Underneath the portrait of Hindenburg is a request to "sustain the 'spirit of 1914'." Nowhere in the closely printed text that follows is there any further reference to the "spirit of 1914," any explanation of what is meant by the "spirit of 1914." In the text the government warns that a defeat would push the development of the nation back decades. It asks the people to have confidence in their leaders. Above all, it emphasizes, the people should stop complaining. The central message is: hold out (*Durchhalten*).

The argument that the German people should have confidence in their government, that the people should "hold out (*Durchhalten*)," was not very compelling. As one soldier wrote on 10 November 1916 in a letter published in the *Vossische Zeitung*:

> I have been at the front for over two years . . . One says to us [soldiers] that time is nothing, that we will hold out till the bitter end, no matter how long it takes. Is there any language which is more depressing, more horrible, more sad for the people at the front?

In the first two years of the war the radical national right not only pointed out the weaknesses of such propaganda, they claimed, as had the Prussian Interior Minister Friedrich Wilhelm von Loebbel, that morale could be improved by calling for vast territorial gains; war aims would be

[52] Leopold von Wiese, *Gedanken über Menschlichkeit* (Munich and Leipzig, 1915), p. 31.

[53] In the first few months of the war approximately 600,000 youths participated. By early 1915 this number was declining and it was clear that more and more youths were staying away. 600,000 was the figure given in a 6 February 1915 meeting of the Prussian State Ministry GhStAPK, Rep. 90a, Abt. B, Tit. III, 2b, no. 6, Bd. 164, p. 125.

an integrating element for the German home front. (The war aims "movement" that grew up around this argument has been discussed in a number of works; I wish here only to examine the way in which the "movement" employed the "spirit of 1914" in its rhetoric.[54]) "Establishing high goals," wrote the Pan-German Manfred Kloss, "awakens powers and makes a people capable of great accomplishments."[55] A July 1915 petition for war aims stated that:

> there is only one fear in all our people – it is especially strong and deep in our simplest compatriots – namely, that out of false humanistic illusions or even out of a nervous impatience peace will be concluded too soon and consequently will not last.[56]

Radical nationalists not only suggested that setting vast territorial gains would inspire people, they also asserted that the decline in morale was a function of a widespread dissatisfaction with the government, that the government no longer represented the will of the people, the "spirit of 1914." The left responded by pointing out that most Germans did not support war aims, fearing that they would lengthen the war. They warned that people were tired of the war, that they wanted the war to end, that only the idea of a defensive war could sustain the unity of 1914.[57] The government, recognizing that the German people were deeply divided over war aims, forbade in November 1914 their public discussion.[58]

[54] German war aims are discussed in Fritz Fischer's courageous work, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, pp. 95 ff. Gatzke's *Germany's Drive to the West*, provides, along with Fischer, the best overview; Dirk Stegmann's *Die Erben Bismarcks. Parteien und Verbände in der Spätphase des Wilhelminischen Deutschlands. Sammlungspolitik 1877–1918* (Cologne and Berlin, 1970), pp. 449 ff., the best account of Class's and Hugenberg's efforts. Dietrich Schäfer's "Kriegszielbewegung," in Dietrich Schäfer (ed.), *Der Krieg 1914/17*, pp. 1 ff., is a good, brief, contemporary account by one of the "movement's" leaders. Heinrich Class gave his own, self-congratulatory version in his autobiography, *Wider den Strom. Vom Werden und Wachsen der nationalen Opposition im alten Reich* (Leipzig, 1932), pp. 319 ff.

[55] M. Kloss, *Die Arbeit des Alldeutschen Verbandes im Kriege. Rede, gehalten auf der Tagung des Alldeutschen Verbandes zu Kassel, am 7. Oktober 1917* (Munich, 1917), p. 11. Similarly, "Der Wille zum Sieg (27.7.1916). Ein Aufruf Berliner Universitätsprofessoren," in Klaus Böhme (ed.), *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart, 1975), p. 139. More generally, see Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, p. 180.

[56] "Deutschlands Kriegsziele, (8 July 1915)," in Auskunftsstelle Vereinigter Verbände (ed.), *Gedanken und Wünsche deutscher Vereine und Verbände zur Gestaltung des Friedens* (n.p., n.d.), p. 22. Similarly, Dietrich Schäfer in *Deutschlands Zukunft und der deutsche Friede: Ansprachen und Reden* (Berlin, 1917), pp. 17–18. Similarly, "Seeberg-Adresse," reprinted in Böhme (ed.), *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg*, p. 126.

[57] On the SPD's opposition to war aims, see Gatzke, *Germany's Drive to the West*, pp. 108 ff.; and the Social Democratic newspaper articles collected in GhStAPK, Rep. 77, CNBS, 970bI. For Friedrich Naumann's arguments see "Vergesst den Kriegsanfang nicht," *Die Hilfe*, 27 November 1915 (no. 47); and his 11 February 1918 letter to Ludendorff. The letter was also signed by Professor Jäckh and Robert Bosch, and is reprinted in Bernhard Schwertfeger, *Die politischen und militärischen Verantwortlichkeiten im Verlaufe der Offensive von 1918* (Berlin, 1927), pp. 136 ff.

[58] Stegmann, *Die Erben Bismarcks*, pp. 458 ff.

Yet, in spite of the fact that war aims were unpopular with large sections of the German population, the radical nationalist right did at least speak to the central problem facing the government: how to improve morale. Recognizing the power of this argument, the government decided to try to do something to defuse it. In 1916, the Chancellor's Office, following a suggestion by Matthias Erzberger, a leading Center Party politician and one of the leading figures in the government's foreign propaganda organization (*Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst*), and Ullrich Rauscher, an editor with the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, decided to found its own "war aims organization," its own "spirit of 1914" organization, the German National Association (*Deutscher Nationalausschuss*). The German National Association was to be the party of reason, so that, in the words of the head of the Kaiser's Civil Cabinet, Rudolf von Valentini, "the struggle against the Pan-German craziness is not just fought by the left-liberals."[59] The German National Association supported moderate war aims, and warned that those who called for vast war aims endangered German unity. In its own words:

> The German National Association sees its duty as keeping alive the spirit of confidence, and with this to strengthen the backbone for our fighters in the field. It believes it is its patriotic duty to work against all efforts which, not recognizing the seriousness of the moment, endanger the unity which promises victory.[60]

The "spirit of 1914" was at the center of its publicity campaign. For its first major public relations event the German National Association organized a series of public speeches on 1 August 1916 to commemorate the "spirit of 1914." The association won some of the most important names in German politics and letters to give these speeches, such as Max Weber, Ernst Troeltsch, and Friedrich Naumann, as well as some right-wing Social Democrats such as Adolf Südekum, August Müller, and Anton Fendrich (the party later disavowed them, saying they had spoken for themselves). The "German National Association" asked the speakers to support the government and to support war aims "within the realm of the possible." At the last moment, however, Bethmann Hollweg, afraid that

[59] Quoted in Willibald Gutsche, "Deutscher Nationalausschuss für einen ehrenvollen Frieden," in Dieter Fricke (ed.), *Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland: Handbuch der Geschichte der bürgerlichen Parteien und anderer bürgerlicher Interessenorganisationen vom Vormärz bis zum Jahre 1945* (Berlin, 1968), p. 197. See especially Mommsen, "Bethmann Hollweg und die öffentliche Meinung 1914–1917;" also Wolff, *Tagebücher*, 7 July 1916, no. 386, p. 398; Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral*, pp. 117 ff.; and Dietrich Schäfer, *Mein Leben* (Berlin, 1926), pp. 188 ff. There is also information on the German National Committee in BA Koblenz, NL Traub, no. 44.

[60] From a leaflet entitled "Deutscher National-Ausschuß," in BA Koblenz, NL Traub, no. 44, p. 75. On the back of this leaflet is a list of the "memorial ceremonies" (*Gedenkfeiern*) held on 1 August 1916, and of the speakers.

any discussion of war aims would provoke the right, asked the speakers not to discuss war aims but only German unity, the "spirit of 1914."[61] This they did; all of the speakers warmly remembered the August days. Otto Baumgarten, for example, stated in Hanover that "this war has given our people a gift – the unity, with which all classes went to war, the common patriotic feeling."[62]

The German National Association was an impressive failure. The association had planned to have seventy-five memorial services on 1 August 1916, but they were able to organize only thirty-nine, and most of these were poorly attended. (In Kiel so few tickets were sold that the speech was cancelled.) Even the bland speeches provoked dissension. The right, incensed that the government did not endorse strong war aims, harshly criticized the government, while left-liberal journalists such as Hellmut von Gerlach argued that if the government wished to make propaganda for moderate war aims then out of fairness to opposing viewpoints it had to stop censoring the war-aims discussion altogether. Two months after its inception, on 12 November 1916, the organization published its last official document, a call for broad war aims, and then disappeared.[63]

An organization which tried to stay out of politics was a peculiar anachronism in 1916. The people wanted to learn how the government planned to end the war. The war-aims movement at least offered an answer to this question; the war would end when Germany had conquered a good deal of Europe.[64] Bethmann Hollweg's propaganda message, that Germans were dying for the "spirit of 1914," did not address this issue. The "spirit of 1914" put forward in the speeches on 1 August 1916, as noble a description as it may have been of what a better Germany could look like, was not something that one died for, at least it was not something that made one understand how dying would help to bring it about, and above all, it was not something that could bring about the end of the war.

In late 1916, under increasing pressure from the right, the government ended all censorship of war aims, hoping that this would improve morale. In the publicity campaign that followed the radical nationalists employed the "spirit of 1914" as one of their most important slogans, asserting that

[61] Mommsen, "Bethmann Hollweg und die öffentliche Meinung 1914–1917," p. 153.

[62] There is a report on each of the memorial lectures in GhStAPK, Rep. 89 H, no. 15097. The quote from Otto Baumgarten is on page 6.

[63] "Das Fiasko des 'Nationalausschusses,'" *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 4 August 1916, no. 396, p. 2. Hellmut von Gerlach, "Die Organisierung der 'Mitte,'" *Die Welt am Montag* 22, no. 29 (17 July 1916), p. 2. Loebbel said at a meeting of the Prussian State Ministry of 19 August 1916 that the German National Committee had failed. GhStAPK, I/90/2415, pp. 139 ff. The 12 November 1916 document is reprinted in *Schulthess' Europaeischer Geschichtskalendar, 1916*, p. 537.

[64] Noted by Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster, "Eine realpolitische Betrachtung," in Hugo Ball, *Almanach der Freien Zeitung* (Berne, 1918), pp. 281 ff.

the desire for vast territorial acquisitions was at the heart of the enthusiasm of 1914, that in August 1914 the German people "recognized to the last man that the state is above all power."[65] The left, in contrast, argued that in 1914 the Germans had gone off to fight a defensive war, and that war aims were unpopular. They were right. The mayor of Nuremberg, Otto Gessler (who would be the Reichswehr Minister for the Democratic Party during much of the 1920s), wrote in the summer of 1917:

> The people have had enough, nothing matters to them anymore. They lack an understanding of what a lost war will bring . . . Those who support strong war aims are at present the most hated people in the cities.[66]

It was the realization of the unpopularity of war aims which inspired a majority in parliament on 19 July 1917 to approve a resolution in favor of a "peace of understanding." It is telling that this resolution began with a reference to 1914: "as on 4 August 1914, the words which occurred in the speech from the throne, 'We are not urged on by lust of conquest,' still hold . . . The Reichstag strives for a peace based on an understanding and a permanent reconciliation among the nations."[67]

The Germany Bethmann Hollweg hoped to create with the new orientation, with his narrative of the "spirit of 1914" – a Germany characterized by civic equality, respect, and tolerance – was a noble goal. Yet a new German community, a *Volksgemeinschaft*, was not something the government could create by itself. It required the active participation of the political parties. As we shall see in the next chapter, the parties developed their own narratives of the spirit of 1914, narratives which were in competition with the government's narrative. Furthermore, the war was a peculiarly difficult context in which to try and create such a community. For in the First World War the German people needed not only a description of the collectivity that they were fighting for, they also needed a description of the way out of this crisis.

[65] Dietrich Schäfer, "Der Sinn des Krieges," *Der Panther* 3, no. 1 (January 1915), pp. 38–51. See also their pamphlets *Durchhalten bis zum siegreichen Frieden. Niederschriften der Reden, die auf der großen nationalen Kundgebung der Auskunftsstelle Vereinigter Verbände im Zirkus Busch zu Berlin am 21. Januar, 1917, gehalten wurden* (Berlin, 1917); and *Durch deutschen Sieg zu deutschem Frieden. Fünf Reden zur Lage, gehalten am 19. Januar in der Versammlung des 'Unabhängigen Ausschusses für einen Deutschen Frieden' in der Sitzungshalle des Abgeordnetenhauses zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1917) for many references to the "spirit of 1914."

[66] Quoted in Schwarz, *Weltkrieg und Revolution in Nürnberg*, p. 154.

[67] Quoted in Otto Nippold, *The Awakening of the German People* (New York, n.d. [1918]), p. 22. See Wilhelm Ribhegge, *Frieden für Europa. Die Politik der deutschen Reichstagsmehrheit 1917–18* (Essen, 1988).

6 The "spirit of 1914" in the discourse of the political parties

On 4 August 1914 all parties voted for war credits. Given the extraordinary virulence of pre-war German politics – before 1914 the right had accused the left of being *vaterlandslose Gesellen*, whereas the left had accused the right of being immoral and selfish – the unanimous vote for war credits was an extraordinary accomplishment. In August 1914 parliament appeared both to have given evidence of German unity and at the same time to have recreated itself as a representation of German unity. Yet what did this vote mean at the time? And how did the meaning of the vote change as the parties employed the memory of it as a symbol in their political discourse?

For although this vote was unusual, the interpretation political parties gave to this event and to the August experiences was even more unusual. All parties contributed to creating a mythic aura, an overlay of emotion around the memory of the August events. They did so for largely the same reasons as the government. First, all political parties recognized that the broadest support of the people was a precondition for success in this war. Second, they recognized that the war was a collective endeavor, and that in this collective endeavor Germans needed to know what they were fighting for, dying for.

With the exception of the section of the Social Democratic Party that would split from the SPD during the war, all political parties agreed that a narrative of the "spirit of 1914" was the best existing representation of the German nation. This was in part because of the profound events of 1914, in part because it was the only narrative representation of the nation that they could agree upon. Before 1914 German political culture was deeply divided; there were no unquestioned national myths. At the same time political parties recognized that if they were able to identify their ideology with this social myth they might be able to give it a hegemonic position in German political culture. Accordingly, all parties attempted to develop a narrative of the August experiences which in practice was a metaphor for their own ideology.

The left saw the August experiences as having moved German society

toward brotherliness and equality. They did not often speak of "enthusiasm," but rather of resolution and claimed that the foundation of German unity must be political equality. The right saw the "August experiences" as having convinced the people of the importance of leadership. Given that these narratives were in essence political it is not surprising that they were not very historical. In these accounts of the "spirit of 1914," as in the government's narrative of the "spirit of 1914," the memory of the 1914 events was purified of its naive, carnivalesque, or oppositional aspects. These narratives had little to do with the real 1914 experiences, with the excitement, fear, and exuberance of August 1914.

These narratives of the "spirit of 1914" served as historical evidence in debates concerning the future of Germany, the matrix of the foundations upon which the German empire and its people depended. These were hotly contested debates, for in the First World War a chain of associations relating to the "people" was being dislodged and rearranged. Such debates, difficult enough in peacetime, were given a special poignancy because of the war. For in the First World War the myth of the "spirit of 1914" spoke not only to a need to understand the origins and nature of the German collective, it was also, as a means to mobilize the population, a part of the strategy to win the war.

The 4 August vote in parliament: the birth of the *Burgfrieden*

By any measure, it was an unusual session of parliament. It began, as customary, with a church service. Members of the royal house, except the Kaiser, government officials, except the Chancellor, and members of parliament, except the Social Democrats, gathered at 10.00 a.m. in the Berlin Cathedral. In his sermon the minister, Dryander, stated what was to become the theme of the day: the experience of national unity. He charged that this unity came from a shared "feeling for the state" (*Staatsgefühl*), a shared love for the fatherland: "we are fighting for our culture against the lack of culture (*Unkultur*), for German civilization against barbarism, for the free, German personality, dutiful to God, against the instincts of the disorderly masses." Dryander closed by quoting the poet Max von Schenkendorf: "never will the empire be destroyed if we remain faithful and united."[1]

After lunch, at 1.00 p.m., members of parliament gathered in the "white room" of the Berlin castle. Although the SPD's Paul Göhre had suggested to the Chancellor on 3 August that the SPD would attend if

[1] Dryander, "Ist Gott für uns, wer mag wider uns sein?," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 6 August 1914, no. 365 (Morgen), pp. 2–3.

this ceremony were transferred to the Reichstag the Chancellor refused.[2] Accordingly, the SPD, as customary, boycotted this "court function." The Kaiser, his sons, most government officials, and about one-quarter of the members of parliament wore military dress. The Kaiser was introduced by Graf von Lerchenfeld, the Bavarian ambassador, thus demonstrating the unity among the German royal houses. In his speech the Kaiser spoke of "his" diplomatic efforts to prevent war, of Germany's just cause, and of his belief and hope that Germany would be victorious. The bland text did not discuss internal affairs and, indeed, the speech would have been quickly forgotten had not the Kaiser, after finishing his prepared text, on his own initiative, repeated his words of 1 August: "I no longer recognize any parties. I know only Germans." The Kaiser then continued: "if the party leaders agree with me, I invite them to step forward and confirm this with a handshake," which they did. The Kaiser, unaware that the Social Democrats were not present, mistook one of the bourgeois politicians for a Social Democrat, and gave him an especially warm handshake. The Kaiser then listened to parliament sing "Heil dir im Siegerkranz" (the unofficial Prussian "national anthem"). By all accounts the Bavarians and Saxons sang the Prussian national anthem as loudly as the Prussians. (Official national anthems are, of course, a post-First World War development. It is one of the great ironies of the war that two of the nations fighting each other had the same melody for their unofficial national anthems: "Heil dir im Siegerkranz" has the same melody as "God Save the King."[3]) As he was leaving the room the Kaiser stopped for a second to talk to one member of parliament, Prof. van Calker. As Calker was in uniform the Kaiser asked him if he was going to the front. When he responded "yes," the Kaiser said, "well, then let us go and thresh them." (These words became a favorite motif for postcards.[4])

After a short recess parliament moved to the Reichstag, with the SPD now attending. The president of the parliament, Wilhelm Kaempf (Progressive), spoke for the "bourgeois" parties. Kaempf couched the war as defensive, citing the public enthusiasm and the national unity as evi-

[2] Noted by Conrad Haussmann in his memoirs, *Schlaglichter. Reichstagsbriefe und Aufzeichnungen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1924), p. 3.

[3] My account is based on "Der Reichstag zeigt ein einiges Deutschland, stark und entschlossen, allen Angriffen zu begegnen," *Weser-Zeitung*, 5 August 1914, no. 24360 (erste Morgen-Ausgabe), p. 1; "Des deutschen Reichstags größte Stunde," *Tägliche Rundschau*, 5 August 1914, no. 363 (Morgen), erste Beilage; and Hanssen, *Diary of a Dying Empire*, pp. 25 ff. The Kaiser's speech, which was written for him by the Chancellor, is translated and reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire*, vol. I, pp. 7 ff.

[4] Described in *Münchner Illustrierte Kriegs-Chronik*, published by the *Neuen Münchner Tageblatt*, p. 1. Examples of these postcards can be found in *Ein Krieg wird ausgestellt. Die Weltkriegssammlung des Historischen Museums (1914–1918)* (Frankfurt/Main, 1976), pp. 93 ff.

dence that the German people believed the war to be defensive. The Chancellor spoke next. He described at length the diplomatic activity leading up to the war. He made public the German invasion of Belgium, claiming that in a time of dire need there is no higher law than self-preservation. He then proclaimed German unity:

> our army stands in the field, our fleet is ready for battle – behind them stands the whole German nation [*protracted enthusiastic applause in entire House; the Reichstag rises*], the entire German nation [*looking to the Socialists*], united till the last man.[5]

Some Social Democrats applauded – the first time they had ever in parliament applauded a speech by a government official. (During the recess which followed, the SPD's parliamentary faction leaders warned that there must be no more public support for government officials.[6])

After the second recess, Hugo Haase, who along with Friedrich Ebert was the leader of the SPD's parliamentary faction, spoke, offering the SPD's explanation for their decision: "faced with the inexorable fact of war," faced with "the threat of hostile invasion" and "Russian despotism" the SPD had no choice but to participate in the nation's defence. Haase claimed that "we are only doing what we have always emphasized: that in the moment of danger we will not let down our fatherland."[7] Haase's speech was applauded vigorously from the center and the left; the right sat there "ice cold."[8] The liberal politician Conrad Haussmann noted in his diary that "however, in the newspapers 'loud applause' will be noted, and that's enough."[9]

After Haase finished, parliament unanimously approved a number of laws and appropriations. Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg then gave another short speech, in which he placed this session in the pantheon of German history, claiming that "whatever the future may have in store for us, the fourth of August 1914 will to all eternity be one of the greatest days of German history."[10] After the Chancellor finished, Kaempf reiterated: "after these words from our Chancellor I can only repeat that Germany is united from the first to the last man, united in its will to achieve victory for German honor and German unity or to die on the

[5] His speech is reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire*, vol. I, p. 13.
[6] Groh, *Negative Integration*, p. 700.
[7] Haase's speech is reprinted in Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire*, vol. II, pp. 6–7.
[8] So Bethmann Hollweg to Weizsäcker on 13 May 1917. Quoted in Dieter Groh, *Negative Integration*, p. 701, footnote no. 176.
[9] Conrad Haussmann, *Schlaglichter*, pp. 7–8. Haussmann records that before the vote Ludwig Frank from the SPD came over to him and asked him and the other parties to applaud loudly after the SPD's speech. Haussmann agreed, but noted that when the moment came, many of the other parties did not join in.
[10] The Chancellor's speech is reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire 1914–1918*, vol. I, p. 16.

battlefield."[11] The session closed, as customary, with a hurrah for the Kaiser, to which were now added "the people and the fatherland" (*Volk, Vaterland und Kaiser*). For the first time the SPD did not leave parliament during this hurrah. Some Social Democrats even joined in.

This was indeed an unusual session, the birth of the *Burgfrieden* (civic truce) not only between the government and the parties but among the parties themselves. In practice the *Burgfrieden* was negative; it was an agreement among the parties to support the government and to postpone all potentially controversial conversations until after the war. It was upheld by inactivity, and, with the exception of the Social Democratic Party, local party organizations remained inactive until 1917. Political associations, such as the Navy League and the Army League, also remained inactive during the first part of the war. (The Pan-German League was the exception.) Most by-elections were uncontested.

Yet the rhetoric surrounding the *Burgfrieden* was effusive. The government saw in this session the birth of what would later be termed the *Volksgemeinschaft*, a "united German people of brothers."[12] Many on the left also saw in the *Burgfrieden* the birth of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, but whereas the government saw the August experiences as a popular acclamation, the left saw it as an event that transformed German political culture. The left-liberal *Berliner Morgenpost*, for example, wrote of the 4 August session of parliament: "On the anniversary of that August night of 1789, in which France, now aligned with the Tsar, removed all caste differences, fell in Germany the barriers which had been built up through the traditions of centuries."[13]

Not surprisingly, many of those who had suffered discrimination in Wilhelmine society, such as German Jews, gave the *Burgfrieden* an enthusiastic embrace. A Rabbi wrote on 12 August 1914 in the *Jüdische Volkszeitung*, and most of his colleagues would have agreed:

> In the German fatherland there are no longer any Christians and Jews, any believers and disbelievers, there are only Germans. May God allow these great times to become a part of the consciousness of our people, and to make us truly a united people.[14]

[11] Quoted in *Der deutsche Reichstag und der Weltkrieg 1914–1915. Verhandlungsniederschrift der historisch denkwürdigen Reichstags-Sitzungen vom 4. August und 2. Dezember 1914. Ein Spiegelbild deutscher Einigkeit und Größe Denkschrift für das deutsche Volk* (Frankfurt/Main, 1915), p. 12.

[12] W. St., "In der Reichshauptstadt. Siegestage am 4. und 5. August," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 August 1914, no. 183, p. 1.

[13] *Berliner Morgenpost*, 5 August 1914, quoted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. I, p. 125.

[14] Dr. Jacob, in *Jüdische Volkszeitung* (Breslau), 28 August 1914, reprinted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. II, p. 122. More generally, see Werner Mosse (ed.), *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916–1923; ein Sammelband* (Tübingen, 1971); and

These curious sentences, with their description of the same social condition both in the present and the future tense, capture well the ambiguities of the left's narrative of the August experiences. The "spirit of 1914," meaning equality, fraternity, and tolerance, well described many of the left's hopes for the future. Was it truly also a description of the present?

Toward a civil society: liberal attempts to improve the style of political rhetoric

On 28 February 1915 Eugen Schiffer, a National Liberal lawyer and member of parliament, founded a pressure group, the "Free Patriotic Association" (*Freie Vaterländische Vereinigung* [FVV]), to sustain the community of 1914. Wilhelm Kahl, a Berlin law professor whom Schiffer had asked to lead the organization, affirmed in his speech that evening that the "the reality of the unity and solidarity of the German people" was "the most unbelievable event of the war."[15] In a pamphlet published immediately thereafter the association set forth its goals:

> Hatred and strife among national compatriots (*Volksgenossen*) have been silenced, old boundaries have been broken, and rusty old prejudices removed . . . [The FVV] will help channel the river of national unity from wartime into peace. She will hold alive the idea of unity.[16]

It is worth noting that Schiffer, who was in Berlin in August 1914, was well aware that this image was not historically correct; old prejudices had not been removed.

Accordingly, the "unity" of 1914, the "spirit of 1914," was to be sustained not by conserving the August experiences but by reforming German political culture in the direction of mutual respect, tolerance, and decency. At a 25 July 1915 meeting of the association in Weimar Schiffer asserted:

> nothing is more necessary than that we change the tone of our political struggles . . . When in the past the political opponent was repeatedly treated not as a human being . . . but as an idiot or a fool . . . this itself contributed to the bitterness

Stephen Magill, "Defence and Introspection: German Jewry 1914," in David Bronsen (ed.), *Jews and Germans from 1860 to 1933* (Heidelberg, 1979), pp. 209–233.

[15] "An die Deutschen im Reiche," in Wilhelm Kahl (ed.), *Die Freie vaterländische Vereinigung. Urkunde ihrer Gründung und Entwicklung* (Berlin 1915), pp. 12–13.

[16] The pamphlet "Die Freie Vereinigung" was published on 10 March 1915. It was hoped that the best names of German public opinion would sign this petition. The pamphlet can be found in BA Koblenz, Nl Traub, no. 43, pp. 250 ff.; and in Kahl (ed.), *Die Freie vaterländische Vereinigung*, pp. 5 ff. The historiograhy on the FVV is sketchy. See *Deutschland im Ersten Weltkrieg*, pp. 227 ff.; Willibald Gutsche, "Freie Vaterländische Vereinigung (FVV) 1915–1916," in Fricke (ed.), *Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland*, pp. 663 ff.; and Stegmann, *Die Erben Bismarcks*, p. 464.

between the various classes, to a social division which had become a danger for our people (*Volkstum*).[17]

The emphasis was on style. The only point in the FVV's program which proposed reforming existing institutions or laws, called for the end of all aristocratic privilege: "all government offices are to be open to those who are morally and intellectually capable, not just by law but in practice. The fruits of science and the arts are to be shared by all the people."[18] Indeed, the FVV took a bland stand on pressing political issues, making only broad, vague statements about the food situation, social welfare, and other pressing issues.

Nor did the FVV try to bridge social divisions. No workers or even SPD "notables" were invited to participate in local FVV chapters. FVV leaders admitted in a letter to the Chancellor of 31 July 1916 that "so far our activity has been exclusively to bring about the unity of the German bourgeoisie."[19] The FVV seemed to suggest that political civility could best be achieved by avoiding "politics." Indeed, the FVV blamed political parties for the pre-war internal strife, claiming that it is necessary that "the necessary struggles among the parties do not lead to a *rule of the party spirit over the national spirit*."[20]

The idea of decency was one to which many important politicians paid tribute. The National Liberal Gustav Stresemann defined the *Burgfrieden* as:

the mutual respect of the parties . . . that one admits from the very beginning that his opponent loves the "fatherland" as much as himself, that he wishes to see it strong and respected in the world, and that only the ways are different in which he wishes to reach his goal.[21]

The Conservative Party leader, Ernst von Heydebrand, stated that:

I believe that no one can say that he, too, did not treat his opponent with a certain amount of injustice. This will certainly change after the war . . . we will have to try to understand one another and to say to oneself: "respect the man who once defended the same fatherland as you."[22]

[17] "Das Verhältnis der Freien Vaterländischen Vereinigung zu den politischen Parteien," in Kahl (ed.), *Die Freie vaterländische Vereinigung*, pp. 53–54.

[18] Point no. 3 in the pamphlet "Die Freie Vereinigung." BA Koblenz, Nl Traub, no. 43, pp. 250 ff., also in Kahl, *Die Freie Vaterländische Vereinigung*, pp. 5 ff.

[19] Letter of 31 July 1916 from the Vorstand to Reichskanzler, BAL, Reichskanzlei no. 2437/11, p. 109. In his speech at Weimar on 25 July 1915, Wilhelm Kahl likewise stated: "all at once everything is changed: outside war, inside peace, unity of the bourgeoisie, the dissolution of the parties in the Fatherland." Kahl, *Die Freie Vaterländische Vereinigung*, p. 31.

[20] Proclamation of 16 January 1916 (Stettin), BAL, no. 2437/10, p. 16. Italics in the original.

[21] *Stenographische Verhandlungen des Reichstages*, vol. 307, p. 736.

[22] Heydebrand's speech in Magdeburg on 15 January 1915 is quoted in *Mitteilungen der fortschrittlichen Volkspartei 1915*, p. 44.

Yet the FVV did not win over everyone. Although the FVV was supported by leading intellectuals such as Hans Delbrück, and although the civilian government in Berlin responded warmly, the military administration and most of German political society did not. In February 1916 the Regional Deputy Commander General in Pomerania forbade the formation of a local organization, asserting that as the participants at the meeting would belong to different political parties and would discuss issues on the basis of their political beliefs this would disturb the *Burgfrieden*.[23]

The FVV had no more than 1,000 members; its first petition was signed by only a couple of hundred people. The SPD and most left-liberals rejected the association, seeing in it an elitist association; no Social Democrats and only a few liberals joined. Even most National Liberal and Conservative Party politicians – as well as their newspapers – greeted the FVV with restraint if not outright disdain.[24] Schiffer became isolated within the National Liberal Party; a friend had to convince him not to resign his seat in parliament. Not surprisingly, many of the notables who had signed on abandoned the sinking ship. What was supposed to have been a large meeting in Weimar on 25 July 1915 was poorly attended; only two of the FVV's own board of directors showed up.[25] By 1917, the association had in practice ceased to exist, although there would be sporadic meetings for the duration of the war.

The "German Society of 1914" (*Deutsche Gesellschaft 1914*), was a similar organization. The society, the brainchild of Wilhelm Solf, Minister for Colonial Affairs, was also created to uphold the ideals of 1914. In his inaugural speech on 28 November 1915 General Helmuth von Moltke,

[23] Letter of Königlichen Polizei-Präsident of 28 February 1916 (signed by Bötticher), BAL, Reichskanzlei no. 2437/10, p. 10. See, too, BAL, no. 2437/10, p. 13. The comments of the government in an article in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of 10 March 1915 are quoted in *Mitteilungen der fortschrittlichen Volkspartei 1915*, p. 77. Hans Delbrück's March, 1915 review of the association in his *Preußische Jahrbücher* is reprinted in his *Krieg und Politik*, vol. I, pp. 95–98.

[24] The *Mitteilungen der fortschrittlichen Volkspartei 1915*, p. 76, called the FVV "a new attempt to prepare the ground for another "coalition politics (*Sammelpolitik*)." Schiffer himself stated in his speech, "Das Verhältnis der Freien Vaterländischen Vereinigung zu den politischen Parteien" at the meeting in Weimar, reprinted in Kahl, *Die Freie Vaterländische Vereinigung*, p. 50, that the leading men of the larger parties were cool to the proposal. Manfred Koch, "Die Zentrumsfraktion des deutschen Reichstages im Ersten Weltkrieg," doctoral dissertation, Mannheim, 1984, pp. 256–257, notes that the Center Party leadership told its members to take a "wait and see" attitude toward the organization.

[25] See the list of participants in the protocol of the meeting, BA Koblenz, Nl Schiffer, no. 22, pp. 49 ff. Approximately fifty people attended. On Schiffer's decision to stay in parliament, see Hartwig Thieme, *Nationaler Liberalismus in der Krise: die nationalliberale Fraktion des Preussischen Abgeordnetenhauses 1914–18* (Boppard am Rhein, 1963), pp. 188 ff.

whom Solf had persuaded to be the organization's president, asserted that the "spirit of 1914" was a "holy flame . . . which has melted the steel fence which the egotistical pursuit of the good life set up between us." In his speech Solf claimed that the organization had been founded to "sustain the holy flame [of 1914], this most precious possession, for our children and grandchildren, and above all, for ourselves."[26]

Whereas Schiffer did little to bring the different classes together Solf convinced the industrialist Robert Bosch to buy a large house in Berlin to house the "German Society of 1914," and he invited leading Social Democrats to be members. In essence he created a political club in which "German men from all occupations and classes without any consideration of their party" would be given "the chance of social interaction without prejudice or pressure, and thus to help transfer the spirit of unity of 1914 into peacetime."[27] Like the FVV, the organization rejected aristocratic privilege. A 28 June 1915 letter asking for members stated: "Not office or title but personality, not opinion but accomplishment, not wealth but ability shall serve as the recommendation for membership in the German Society."[28]

The German Society 1914 supplied a space. The club had an excellent library and an excellent restaurant where many members ate regularly (and which remained well stocked long after the blockade had forced most restaurants to cut back on consumption). On Monday and Thursday evenings lectures, readings, and concerts were given by some of the best-known names in German letters. In this atmosphere, members of industry, government, and politicians of all political persuasions were supposed to learn to respect one another.

Fostering social interaction between the "national" and "un-national" classes was indeed a radical break with German political culture. Yet the German Society of 1914, although an implicit critique of aristocratic privilege, was a defence of privilege. Only a few Social Democrats were invited to be members – in 1916 Social Democrats made up less than 2

[26] Moltke's speech is reprinted in his *Erinnerungen, Briefe, Dokumente, 1877–1916; ein Bild vom Kriegsausbruch, erster Kriegsführung und Persönlichkeit des ersten militärischen Führers des Krieges* (Stuttgart, 1922), pp. 443 ff. Solf's speech was printed as *Rede zur Gründung der Deutschen Gesellschaft 1914* (Berlin, 1915), p. 19.

[27] "Satzungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft 1914," BA Koblenz, ZGS-1, E-71. The protocol of the meeting of "Der Vorbereitende Ausschuss der Deutschen Gesellschaft 1914" of 4 October 1915 is in HStA Munich, GhStA, Bay. Gesandschaft Berlin, no. 1156. Bernd Sösemann's "Politische Kommunikation im 'Reichsbelagerungszustand.' Programm, Struktur und Wirkungen des Klubs 'Deutsche Gesellschaft 1914,'" in M. Brobowsky and Wolfgang Langenbucher (eds.), *Wege zur Kommunikationsgeschichte* (Munich, 1987), pp. 636 ff., is the best study of the "German Society 1914." Eberhard von Vietsch, *Wilhelm Solf. Botschafter zwischen den Zeiten* (Tübingen, 1961), pp 142 ff., treats the topic briefly, as does Hellmut Weidmüller, "Die Berliner Gesellschaft während der Weimarer Republik," doctoral dissertation, Berlin, 1956, pp. 37 ff.; and Theodor Heuss, *Robert Bosch* (Stuttgart, 1946), pp. 305 ff.

[28] BA Koblenz, Nl Schiffer, no. 3, pp. 73 ff.

per cent of the club's members. More importantly, all of the club's 1855 members in January 1917 were prominent men in society – its membership list reads like a *Who's Who* of German political society. There were no workers and no women.[29] Even with its ability to stamp one a member of the German elite, not all were willing to join. The Conservative Party's parliamentary leader, Graf von Westarp, refused to join because of the club's Social Democratic members. The Free Trade Unions refused to allow their members to join because of the club's elitism.[30]

Inside its own doors, as the war progressed, the increasing internal tensions were mirrored in the "German Society of 1914." Every now and then a political discussion became too heated, and, as Wilhelm Solf reported, disgusted, in a letter to Walther Rathenau, some aristocrat would demand a duel. Even more than the FVV, the German Society of 1914 was an extraordinarily peculiar wartime development. In the middle of a mass war between England and Germany, German elites in Berlin founded a club modelled on English clubs, for the elites. Slowly but surely interest in the club declined. Only those who enjoyed the club's ambience and fine food remained. (And along these more humble lines, the club would remain until the National Socialists closed it in 1934.[31])

Similar attempts during the war to sustain a "spirit of 1914" by promoting social interaction, such as "1914" clubs in Bremen and in Königsberg, a "Council of Understanding for Internal Peace (*Verständigungsausschuss für einen inneren Frieden*)" organized by the Foreign Office, or the literary efforts of Friedrich Thimme, all ended in failure.[32] The problem, as a perceptive Hugo Preuss, the author of the

[29] Eugen Diedrichs in a critical article, "Der Geist des Schützengrabens nach dem Kriege," *Die Tat* 7, no. 10 (January 1916), pp. 876 ff., noted that its membership included only "important names." "Deutsche Gesellschaft 1914, Mitgliederverzeichnis, aufgestellt in Januar, 1916" (BA Koblenz, ZSG 1, E-71) listed approximately 600 to 700 members. "Mitgliederverzeichnis aufgestellt im Januar, 1917," BA Koblenz, ZSG 1, E-71, listed 1,855 members, 110 of whom were politicians. The vast majority of the politicians were from the National Liberal or the left-liberal parties.

[30] On the Conservative Party, see Westarp, *Konservative Politik im letzten Jahrzehnt des Kaiserreiches*, vol. II, p. 12. On the Free Trade Unions, see "Berichte des Büros für Sozialpolitik" (no. 2 – 8 January 1916), HStA Munich, GhStA, MA, no. 95735.

[31] The 8 May 1915 is reprinted in Vietsch, *Wilhelm Solf*, pp. 372–373. On the decline, see Alfred Grotjahn, *Erlebtes und Erstrebtes. Erinnerungen und Erstrebtes. Erinnerungen eines Sozialistischen Arztes* (Berlin, 1932), pp. 166–168; and Heuss, *Robert Bosch*, p. 305.

[32] For information on the "Bremen Society of 1914" (*Bremer Gesellschaft 1914*), see the "Jahresbericht der Bremer Gesellschaft von 1914, erstattet in der Jahres-Versammlung vom 18. Februar 1918 (Bremen, 1918)," in HStA Bremen, 3–V.2., no. 1112, no p. It had, however, at first, no rooms (and later only small rooms), and only 389 members at the end of 1917. Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (eds.), *Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland* (Leipzig, 1915), Friedrich Thimme (ed.), *Vom inneren Frieden des deutschen Volkes. Ein Buch gegenseitigen Verstehens und Vertrauens* (Leipzig, 1916). A protocol of the 8 July 1917 meeting in Cologne on "Die Notwendigkeit des inneren Friedens im Neuen Deutschland" is in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek, First World War collection. See also BA Koblenz, Nl Thimme, no. 38.

Weimar Constitution, noted in 1915, was that the demagogic, vitriolic rhetoric was a function of the Bismarckian constitution. Because the Bismarckian constitution provided parliament with control of the budget, conservative elites could only hope to sustain monarchical rule if parliament remained divided. Conservative elites therefore developed nationalism as a tool to keep the nation divided. Any attempts to sustain the social cohesion of the *Burgfrieden*, according to Preuss, could only succeed if the constitution, if the structures which kept a natural decency from developing, were reformed.[33]

The "politics of 4 August": Prussian suffrage reform

To many contemporaries the SPD's vote on 4 August for war credits was the most telling piece of evidence that in the August experiences social identities had changed. For on 4 August the SPD broke with its "revolutionary," "international" past, its rejection of the German/Prussian state, its discourse of class struggle and revolution.

Conservatives interpreted these days as the end of Social Democracy. As one pastor typically wrote:

> the patriotic enthusiasm was and is a powerful one . . . There are no longer any Social Democrats: "we were such, today we are no longer." All class differences have disappeared behind the awareness of our great commonness.[34]

The image conservatives had of the "August days" is best captured by an apocryphal story told by the bourgeois press at the end of August. According to this story the Social Democrats in Gelsenkirchen, after having assembled in front of the Free Trade Union building, marched to the War Memorial, where they burned their red flags. They then took out the German national flag and marched behind it back to the Free Trade Union building, singing the "Wacht am Rhein."[35]

Social Democrats responded to this story by pointing out that the 4 August vote was not a transformation of their social identity. SPD leaders had repeatedly promised that in a war against Russia, the "center of reaction," the working class would fight.[36] Furthermore, the SPD was well integrated into German society. Its welfare assistance, health insurance, and food co-operatives were an important part of German everyday life.

[33] Hugo Preuss, *Das deutsche Volk und die Politik* (Jena, 1915), pp. 9 ff.

[34] "Unsere Kirchengemeinden während der Kriegszeit. III. Das hessische Land und Frankfurt a. M. 1. Aus Schlitz, in der Nordostecke von Oberhessen," *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 11, 1. Kriegsheft (October 1914), p. 16.

[35] The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* article is reprinted in Buchner (ed.), *Kriegsdokumente*, vol. II, p. 305.

[36] Groh, *Negative Integration*, pp. 359, 376.

In its singing societies, gymnastic societies, and the like the party used the same set of cultural artifacts as the cultural elites.[37]

And yet the vote on 4 August was a profound break – for some a "betrayal" – of the party's collective discourse, its collective rhetoric and traditions. On 2 December 1914 Karl Liebknecht, voting in parliament against new appropriations, claimed that the government was fighting an aggressive war, that true Social Democrats remained committed to their international ideals. On 15 December 1916, twenty SPD parliamentarians joined him in voting against war credits, and another twenty-two abstained. In January 1917 the SPD expelled these people from the party. In April 1917 this opposition formed its own party, the Unabhängige Sozialistische Partei Deutschlands (USPD). For the rest of the war and well into the 1920s the "majority" SPD and the USPD (or, after 1919, the Communists) attacked each other with the heated fervor of those who believe the others have betrayed a noble dream.

The motivations behind the Social Democratic leaders' decision have been investigated in depth and need not be discussed in detail here. As Wolfgang Kruse and Friedhelm Boll have shown, it was not a case of the leaders following the masses. Indeed, given that the working class was by no means "enthusiastic," and that most SPD politicians were aware of this, SPD leaders could have taken a more critical position, abstaining as had August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht in 1870.[38] In spite of their later claims, party leaders seem not to have been much interested in the mood of the working class. Rather, for most SPD parliamentarians patriotic and "tactical" considerations prevailed. Social Democratic leaders genuinely desired a German victory against Russia and were well aware that, as Social Democrats such as Wolfgang Heine argued, "the strongest moral is given by the unity of the people. This has been proven since the beginning of the war."[39] Party leaders also hoped that by disproving one of the key assumptions of governmental political culture, that there were

[37] On the integration of the working class into German society, see especially Groh, *Negative Integration*; Guenther Roth, *The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany. A Study of working-class Isolation and National Integration* (Totowa, NJ, 1963); and Gerhard A. Ritter, *Staat, Arbeiterschaft und Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschand. Vom Vormärz bis zum Ende der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin, 1980).

[38] So Friedhelm Boll, *Massenbewegungen in Niedersachsen 1906–1920*, pp. 116, 152. Similarly, Wolfgang Kruse, "Krieg, Neuorientierung und Spaltung. Die politische Entwicklung der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 1914–1918 im Lichte der Vorstellungen ihrer revisionistisch-reformistisch geprägten Kritiker," *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz* 23, no. 1 (March, 1987), pp. 1 ff.; and Kruse, *Krieg und nationale Integration*. On the motivations see beside the works listed above: Groh, *Negative Integration*, Kuczynski, *Der Ausbruch des ersten Weltkrieges*, Miller, *Burgfrieden und Klassenkampf*, and Bieber, *Gewerkschaften in Krieg*.

[39] Wolfgang Heine, *Gegen die Quertreiber* (Dessau, 1915), p. 1.

"national" and "un-national" parties, they would inspire the government to reform the governmental political culture. In essence, the party hoped that if they rejected anti-militarism the German elites would give up their anti-socialism. In the words of Ludwig Frank, "instead of a general strike for Prussian suffrage we are fighting a war."[40]

The party chose to label this strategy the "politics of 4 August." The "politics of 4 August" may have been a change in tactics, yet it was a radical change. By self-consciously employing the "politics of 4 August" as a description of its politics, the party was suggesting that the August days were the beginning of something new and original. The most radical approach within the party to defining what was meant by the politics of 4 August was articulated by a group of theoreticians around Heinrich Cunow, Wolfgang Heine, Konrad Haenisch, and especially Paul Lensch. These theoreticians saw in the "spirit of 1914" the "revolution" that Social Democrats had long been predicting. The essence of this "revolution," Lensch argued, was the end of the individualistic era of history, the triumph of German organization, of organized "state" socialism over individualism. German organization, German planning, the German *Volksgemeinschaft*, would replace French *laissez-faire*, French individualism, and English capitalism.[41]

Some Social Democrats even employed the pathetic nationalistic rhetoric that had been characteristic of the "class enemy" before the war. Konrad Haenisch, for example, remembered in 1916 at the party conference the "August enthusiasm":

> The conflict of two souls in one breast was probably easy for none of us. [It lasted] until suddenly – I shall never forget the day and hour – the terrible tension was resolved; until one dared to be what one was; until – despite all principles and wooden theories – one could, for the first time in almost a quarter century, join with a full heart, a clean conscience and without a sense of treason in the sweeping, stormy song: "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles."[42]

[40] Ludwig Frank to Gustav Mayer on 27 August 1914, in Ludwig Frank, *Ludwig Frank, Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe* (Berlin, 1924), p. 358.

[41] The best introduction is Paul Lensch, *Die Sozialdemokratie. Ihr Ende und Ihr Glück* (Leipzig, 1916). See Robert Sigel, *Die Lensch-Cunow-Haenische Gruppe. Eine Studie zum rechten Flügel der SPD im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 1976), pp. 47 ff. See also the discussion in Gunther Mai, "'Verteidigungskrieg' und 'Volksgemeinschaft.' Stattliche Selbtbehauptung, nationale Solidarität und soziale Befreiung in Deutschland in der Zeit des Ersten Weltkrieges (1900–1925)," in Wolfgang Michalka (ed.), *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, p. 591.

[42] Konrad Haenisch, *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie in und nach dem Weltkriege* (Berlin, 1919), p. 33. I am using the translation of Carl Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905–1917. The Development of the Great Schism* (Cambridge, MA, 1955), p. 290. Bieber, *Gewerkschaften im Krieg*, p. 80, has noted that quite a few of the most "patriotic" SPD leaders came from bourgeois backgrounds.

The working-class poet, Karl Bröger, wrote similarly, "Always have we known our love for you. But never did we name you. When we were called, we all marched having not in our lips, but in our hearts the word: Germany." This new discourse did not go down well with most Social Democrats. The wartime economy – admittedly an economy of "state socialism," was unpopular. Rationing – introduced already in March 1915 for bread – scarcely increased "socialism's" popularity.[43] The exuberant nationalism, too, was widely criticized as being at odds with the SPD's ideology. Most party officials distanced themselves from Lensch and his compatriots. Instead, they argued that with the "politics of 4 August" the party had become in essence the representative of the little man within the existing German society. The party would call not for revolution but for reforms.

With the "new orientation" the government abolished much of its discriminatory laws and practices. Yet at the heart of the "politics of 4 August," as Ludwig Frank had noted, was the reform of Prussian suffrage. (Because the Prussian parliament was elected according to a proportional system based on wealth, the poorest 85 per cent of the population could elect only one-third of the legislators.) Already in late August 1914 Eduard David, an important SPD politician, in a discussion with the Imperial Interior Secretary, Clemens Delbrück, threatened that unless the government reformed Prussian suffrage the party would be forced to return to its pre-war opposition, to end the "politics of 4 August."[44]

Suffrage reform was supported by progressive liberals associated with the liberal minister Friedrich Naumann, the Progressive Party, as well as the so-called "socialists of the chair" (*Kathedersozialisten*). Before the war Naumann and compatriots had argued that a genuine national community could be achieved through a nationalistic socialism, that is, if workers became "national" and elites "social," if workers embraced nationalism

[43] Gunther Mai, "'Aufklärung der Bevölkerung' und 'vaterländischer Unterricht' in Württemberg 1914–1918. Struktur, Durchführung und Inhalte der deutschen Inlandspropaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg," *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte* (1977), p. 203; Daniel, *Arbeiterfrauen in der Kriegsgesellschaft*, p. 187; Gerald Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany 1914–1918* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 97 ff.

[44] The protocol of the meeting with Eduard David is reprinted in Kuczynski, *Der Ausbruch des ersten Weltkrieges*, pp. 207 ff. On Prussian suffrage reform see Stegmann, *Die Erben Bismarcks*, pp. 113 ff., Ludwig Bergsträßer, *Die preußische Wahlrechtsfrage im Kriege und die Entstehung der Osterbotschaft 1917* (Tübingen, 1929); and James Retallack, *Notables of the Right. The Conservative Party and Political Mobilization in Germany, 1876–1918* (Boston, 1988) , pp. 163 ff.

and elites social reforms.[45] In the August experiences they perceived a collective catharsis in which Germans had shed the false prejudices engendered in them by a patriarchal society. In 1914, the people discovered their natural feeling of brotherhood, compassion, community, and responsibility. In the words of Friedrich Naumann, in the First World War "subjects became citizens (*Untertanen werden Bürger*)."[46]

Yet Naumann's hopes that 1914 had brought about a "social Kaiser" remained just that, hopes. Conservatives responded, as they had before the war, that suffrage would weaken Germany by opening it up to the dangers of "mass rule." As the war continued Naumann, like the Social Democrats, turned his attention to constitutional reforms, arguing that only a democracy could bring about a true national community, only a democracy could create an identity between the people and the government and, with time, break down class prejudices.

Conservative intellectuals such as Friedrich Meinecke and Hans Delbrück and National Liberal politicians such as Gustav Stresemann came to embrace a "real-political" argument in favor of suffrage reform. According to Meinecke, the lesson of the war was that "only a state which is closely allied with its *Volk* and its masses can hope to stand up straight in our future world."[47] The *Obrigkeitsstaat* had to become a people's state (*Volksstaat*), and suffrage reform was the means to accomplish this. The "spirit of 1914" was synonymous with morale. Suffrage reform was thus not a political but a military necessity.

In 1916 and 1917 morale took a turn for the worse as a result of Verdun and the "turnip winter" of 1916/1917. In March and April 1917, worried about an upcoming reduction in the bread ration, and against the background of the Russian revolution, Bethmann Hollweg persuaded the

[45] On Friedrich Naumann, see Dieter Düding, *Der nationalsoziale Verein, 1896–1903: der gescheiterte Versuch einer parteipolitischen Synthese von Nationalismus, Sozialismus und Liberalismus* (Munich, 1972); and Peter Theiner, *Sozialer Liberalismus und deutsche Weltpolitik. Friedrich Naumann im wilhelminischen Deutschland* (1860–1919) (Baden-Baden, 1983). The historiography on the bourgeois parties during the war is very sketchy. On the Center Party see Klaus Epstein, *Matthias Erzberger and the Dilemna of German Democracy* (Princeton, 1959); and Manfred Koch, *Die Zentrumsfraktion des deutschen Reichstages im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Mannheim, 1984). On the liberal parties, see Friedrich C. Sell, *Die Trädogie des deutschen Liberalismus* (Stuttgart, 1953); and Thieme, *Nationaler Liberalismus in der Krise*.

[46] Friedrich Naumann in parliament on 15 May 1917, reprinted in Harry Pross (ed.), *Die Zerstörung der Deutschen Politik: Dokumente, 1871–1933* (Frankfurt/Main, 1959), pp. 203–204.

[47] Meinecke, *Die deutsche Freiheit*, p. 34. See also Friedrich Meinecke, "Am Vorabend der Revolution," *Nach der Revolution. Geschichtliche Betrachtungen über unsere Lage* (Munich and Berlin, 1919), p. 4. The best account of the development of this real-political argument in favor of suffrage refrom is in Herbert Döring, *Der Weimarer Kreis. Studien zum politischen Bewußtsein verfassungstreuer Hochschullehrer in der Weimarer Republik* (Meisenheim, 1975), pp. 44 ff.

Kaiser to proclaim on Easter 1917 that there would be a "revision" of Prussian suffrage after the war.[48] When in July 1917 the Chancellor convinced the Kaiser to proclaim his desire to have the Prussian Parliament enact equal suffrage, he did this, according to General Wilhelm Groener, the head of the military organization in charge of the economy, because he believed he would have "to feed the masses with ballots instead of meat and bread."[49]

What is most interesting about this proposed reform is the way it was couched. Suffrage reform was not a question of justice, but of political mobilization. In his speech in April 1917, in which he asked the Prussian parliament to undertake suffrage reform, the Kaiser said he did so because "never have the German people shown themselves so determined as in this war . . . To understand and unite the national and social spirit gives us our enduring strength."[50] But, of course, ballots could not do much to improve morale in the midst of the horror of the First World War.

Moreover, as Max Weber pointed out in a number of articles during the war, the logic of the real-political argument in favor of suffrage reform pointed not to suffrage reform but to parliamentarization. The goal of suffrage reform was to give some foundation, some form to the idea of what the German people were fighting for, a representation of the people's state. Only the parliamentary form of government, which assumed that all Germans were not only equal participants in public life but also in control of their own fates, could give a real foundation to the idea of a people's war. According to Weber the crucial question for those who asserted that German power was a function of German unity was "how can one transform the parliament, which according to its present internal structure is damned to a negative politics, into a carrier of political responsibility?"[51]

Weber suggested that parliament be given more power, that the lack of power had fostered the demagogy, as the parties had never been forced to make compromises. Yet parliament did experience a growth in power and status during the war. "Parliament," as the voice of the people, was often

[48] Ernst Deutelmoser, "Über Bethmann Hollweg," *Die Schaubühne* 17, no. 3 (1921), pp. 62/63. More generally on the chronology see Johannes Bredt, *Der deutsche Reichstag im Kriege* (Berlin, 1926), pp. 73 ff.

[49] Groener on 10 July 1917, quoted in Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor*, p. 369.

[50] Reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire 1914–1918*, vol. II, p. 317.

[51] Max Weber, "Die Lehren der deutschen Kanzlerkrisis," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 7 September 1917, no. 247 (Erstes Morgenblatt), p. 1. See also Max Weber, "Hemmnisse auf dem Weg zur Parlamentarisierung," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 17 July 1917, no. 356, (Abend), p. 1; Max Weber, "Wahlrecht und Demokratie in Deutschland,"in Max Weber, *Gesammelte politische Schriften* (Tubingen, 1921), pp. 272 ff.; Preuss, *Das deutsche Volk und der Weltkrieg*; and Bredt, *Der deutsche Reichstag im Kriege* (Berlin, 1926), p. 373.

invoked by both the right and the left in their efforts to influence foreign policy – by the right in favor of war aims and unlimited submarine warfare, and by the left in favor of suffrage reform and a peace without annexations. In the summer of 1917 Bethmann Hollweg called some leading parliamentarians into the government (although they had to give up their seat in parliament). And with the creation in April 1917 of a committee to investigate the possibility of a further parliamentarization, parliament seemed to be developing a will of its own.[52] Yet the appearances were deceptive.

The most powerful arguments against parliamentarization were supplied by parliament itself. On 4 August 1917 parliament held a memorial session which was in many ways more curious than the 4 August 1914 session it commemorated. After the spectators, the members of parliament, and the Chancellor took their seats members of student fraternities, dressed in their ceremonial sword-fighting uniforms, marched in, carrying the German colors. They represented the German youth, and to demonstrate that the youths were at that moment in the trenches, fighting, they remained seated at attention throughout the session. It is hard to imagine a less realistic representation of German youths at the front than these young, privileged German academicians dressed in their sword-fighting uniforms, with its archaic aura of aristocratic privilege.

All, standing, then sang a solemn religious hymn. The Reichstag's president, Kaempf, gave a short speech, in which he once again charged that unity and holy anger, the essence of the August "spirit," were the keys to victory.[53] Kaempf was the only member of parliament to speak that day. After him spoke representatives of the German occupations (*Stände*). General Freiherr von Freytag-Loringhoven spoke for the military, Graf von Schulenburg-Grünthal for agriculture, the Mayor of Berlin, Wermuth, for the cities, Max von Schinkel for tradesmen, Ernst von Borsig for industrialists, the plumber Plate for craftsmen, and Dr. Köhler for salesmen. Although it was the Social Democratic Party which had

[52] Reinhard Schiffers, *Der Hauptausschuß des deutschen Reichstags 1915–1918. Formen und Bereiche der Kooperation zwischen Parlament und Regierung* (Düsseldorf, 1979); Thieme, *Nationaler Liberalismus in der Krise*, pp. 135 ff. On the SPD's position on parliamentarization see Miller, *Burgfrieden und Klassenkampf*, pp. 320 ff. On German liberals' position on parliamentarization see Udo Bermbach, *Vorformen parlamentarischer Kabinettsbildung in Deutschland. Der Interfraktionelle Ausschuss 1917/18 und die Parlamentarisierung der Reichsregierung* (Cologne and Opladen, 1967), pp. 15 ff.; Klaus Epstein, "Der interfraktionelle Ausschuss und das Problem der Parlamentisierung 1917–1918," *Historische Zeitschrift* 191 (1960), pp. 562–584. The best overall discussion remains Dieter Grosser, *Vom monarchischen Konstitutionalismus zur parlamentarischen Demokratie. Die Verfassungspolitik der deutschen Parteien im letzten Jahrzehnt des Kaiserreiches* (The Hague, 1970).

[53] His speech is reprinted in "Gedenkfeier des Reichstags zum 4. August 1914," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 5 August 1917, no. 391, p. 1.

made the 4 August possible, the only Social Democratic member of parliament to speak that day, Carl Legien, spoke in his capacity as the leader of the Free Trade Unions, as the representative of the working class. Like the others, his speech made no reference to any political party. Rather, he promised that the workers desired a German victory and would fight until this victory had been achieved.[54]

Chancellor Georg Michaelis spoke last. He said:

> The 4 August will go down in the history of the German people as the day of the highest patriotism, courage, faith in victory . . . The men who have spoken before me have shown the world that our power has not been weakened, that our will is still strong, as it was on 4 August 1914, in order to accomplish what we desire.[55]

After his speech all rose to sing the Prussian national anthem, "*Heil dir im Siegerkranz*." (That the Bavarians agreed to the singing of the Prussian national anthem is an interesting example of how the "spirit of 1914" subsumed, at least officially, differences between north and south.) And then the parliament which had made 4 August a reality sent the Kaiser a telegram which began: "today, representatives of all occupations and classes (*Stände und Berufe*) have come together to commemorate the 4 August 1914."[56] The meeting closed with the singing of "*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*."

The German people, so the politicians themselves, were represented by their unpolitical associations, their trade associations, their clubs, their churches. The 4 August 1917 session was an admission that the political parties did not believe they represented a united will of the people. This was a realistic appraisal of the reality of the deeply divided German parliament in 1917. For in parliamentary political discourse, as the democrat Friedrich von Payer noted, as before the war, both the right and the left "considers his own opinion so infallible that he can attribute conflicting views on the part of an opponent only to faults of character."[57] But if parliament could not represent a united will of the people, who could?

The conservative image of the "spirit of 1914"

In the 4 August 1914 session Conservative Party politicians sat there "ice cold." This did not keep them from employing the "spirit of 1914," like

[54] "Die Kundgebungen im Reichstage," *Der Tag*, 5 August 1917, no. 393; "Gedenkfeier des Reichstags zum 4. August 1914," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 5 August 1914, no. 391, p. 1.

[55] Quoted in "Gedenkfeier des Reichstags zum 4. August 1914," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 5 August 1914, no. 391, p. 1.

[56] Quoted in *Schulthess' 1917*; p. 743.

[57] Payer's speech is reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire*, vol. II, p. 336.

the politicians of the other parties, as a metaphor for their ideology.[58] Conservatives charged not only that the war had proven the worth of Prussia's anti-democratic traditions but that in the 1914 "enthusiasm" the working classes had undergone a transformation experience, had embraced the monarchical system, the importance of leadership, had rejected the democratic idea. As the Regional Deputy Commander General in Stettin wrote in his report on the mood of the population in July 1917, "here the people as a totality has no interest in equal suffrage and in a parliamentary system. It has no desire other than to be ruled well and securely by the Hohenzollern house."[59]

By 1917 the government itself had largely given up on this narrative; the Kaiser played a minor role in public life. In other words, the Conservative Party employed a narrative of the August experiences that the monarchical government itself no longer employed. In 1917, when the government proposed suffrage reform, the party found itself in opposition to its monarch; indeed, local Conservative Party organizations, which had been inactive since the beginning of the war, began to rally their followers.[60] Given their majority in the Prussian parliament they were able in May 1918 to reject the government's proposed revision of the Prussian suffrage. (At the very end of the war, in response to a request from the German army, the Prussian legislature did began the process of widening the franchise. The revolution, however, intervened before they had made much progress.[61])

The vote had profound implications for the right. A Conservative Party which continually rejected its monarch's expressed wishes was in conflict with its own ideology. Many conservatives tried to get around this by arguing that as the monarch was presently incompetent, the monarchical idea required a principled opposition. A Conservative Party speaker at a meeting in Bielefeld on 21 December 1917, for example, stated that although the King had promised suffrage:

> we do not have absolutism such as we had before 1848. We have a constitutional state with three equal powers: the King, the House of Lords, and the parliament.

[58] We lack a good, modern study of the Conservative Party during the war. In many ways the best account remains the memoirs of the Conservative Party parliamentary fraction leader, Graf von Westarp, *Konservative Politik im letzten Jahrzehnt des Kaiserreichs*. But see also Hans Booms, *Die Deutschkonservative Partei. Preussischer Charakter, Reichsauffassung, Nationalbegriff* (Düsseldorf, 1954).

[59] "Auszüge aus der Zusammenstellung der Monatsberichte der stellv. Generalkommandos an das preußische Kriegsministerium betr. die allgemeine Stimmung im Volke," 3 August 1917, in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*, p. 801.

[60] Reinhard Patemann, *Der Kampf um die preussische Wahlreform*, pp. 50 ff.

[61] It passed the House of Lords; but it was not voted on in the Prussian legislature before the revolution. Thieme, *Nationaler Liberalismus in der Krise*, p. 120.

To be sure, we are true to the King to our bones, but this can not mean that we have to give up our differently felt convictions.[62]

Yet, even if the present monarch was incompetent, the reality of the war, the need to be able to represent the will of the people, to explain to the German people what they were fighting for, put the Conservatives at a disadvantage. Although the August experiences represented for the Conservatives the end of Social Democracy, they were in fact the end of traditional conservatism. Increasingly the Pan-Germans became the most important representative of the conservative idea.

The ideological differences on the right were one of emphasis; the Conservative Party supported the "monarchical," the Pan-Germans the "national" idea. Both believed that the nature of the state or the nation was power, and both were anti-democratic. Yet whereas Conservatives did not waver in their condemnation of the masses, the Pan-Germans believed that the people, the *Volk*, was the source of state power and legitimacy. Before 1914 Pan-Germans repeatedly asserted that ultimate authority in national questions was to be taken from the monarchy, from the bureaucracy, and vested in the *Volk*. As Geoff Eley has noted:

> an appeal to the will of the people was an organizing theme in the history of radical nationalism before 1914. At each point of serious conflict with the government or the political establishment the higher legitimacy of the people's purpose tended to be invoked. This was something quite new for the right.[63]

In August 1914 the Pan-Germans were perhaps the most enthusiastic of all Germans. In the last years of peace Pan-Germans had often called for a preventive war, both to increase German power, and to use the "war enthusiasm" to save the nation from degeneracy.[64] In 1914 the long desired war finally arrived. "What a pleasure it is to be alive," wrote the Pan-German leader, Heinrich Class, on 3 August 1914, "we have wanted

[62] Quoted in "Konservative Partei," *Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung*, 21 December 1917, BAL, RLB-Pressearchiv, no. 4328.

[63] Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right*, p. 188. Similarly, Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German. A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League 1886–1914* (Boston, 1984), pp. 222–223.

[64] Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*, pp. 285 ff. Pan-German demands for a preventive war are excerpted in Paul Rohrbach and Martin Hobohm, *Die Alldeutschen* (Berlin, 1919), pp. 31, 90 ff. On the Pan-Germans, see Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*; Mildred S. Wertheimer, *The Pan-German League 1890–1914* (New York, 1924); and Werner, *Der Alldeutsche Verband 1890–1918.* Michael Peters, *Der Alldeutsche Verband am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Frankfurt, 1992), offers no new material or analysis. The Pan-Germans were, of course, only the most prominent of a whole group of national pressure organizations. Eckart Kehr aptly characterized the Pan-German League as "a sort of political-ideological holding company, which provided the other agitation associations – the Colonial Society, the Navy League, somewhat later the Army League, and the like – with their intellectual weapons." Eckart Kehr, "Die Grundlagen der Tirpitzschen Flottenpropaganda," *Die Gesellschaft* 2 (1925), p. 225.

this hour – our friends know it – for we believe and know that alongside horrible suffering it will bring salvation and blessings. Now it is here, the holy hour."[65]

In August 1914 Pan-Germans not only felt the enthusiasm peculiar to militarists, they also felt the exaltation of people who believe that "history" has proven them correct. War, "the highest form of reality," wrote the Pan-German author Oscar Schmitz in 1914:

> has proven wrong the opinion that it is correct to protect the weak against the strong. It has namely once again been shown that the stronger is also the more industrious, the more courageous.[66]

A powerful *furor teutonicus* had carried along all Germans. The SPD had had its ears "boxed"; all Germans had become Pan-Germans.[67] The people had taken their destiny into their own hands. As one Pan-German journalist wrote, "the whole German people stands today on the stage of history as did earlier Frederick the Great. The whole has become the hero."[68] All Germans had become heroic, tragic, idealistic; all Germans had rejected egotistical individualism and subsumed their personalities in a collective German identity, "recognizing to the last man that the state is above all power," rejecting "the ideals of freedom, equality, and brotherhood" for "the German ideas of 1914: duty, order, and justice."[69] The August experiences had thus proven not only the value of militaristic ideals, the August experiences had proven the malleability of "public opinion," proven, as one Pan-German wrote in 1917, that "in reality public opinion is always a matter of direction,"[70] proven that Germany would be united if there was strong leadership, leadership that they could provide.

The war did privilege a militaristic vocabulary of glory and honor. The

[65] "Waffensegen!," *Alldeutsche Blätter* 24, Sondernummer (3 August 1914), p. 285. The article was written by the head of the Pan-German League, Heinrich Class. The mood of the Pan-Germans at the beginning of the war is briefly discussed in Chickering, *We Men who Feel Most German*, pp. 290–291; and at greater length in Werner, *Der Alldeutsche Verband 1890–1918*, pp. 197 ff.

[66] Schmitz, "Das wirkliche Deutschland," *Der Türmer* 17, no. 1 (October, 1914), p. 4; Oscar Schmitz, *Das wirkliche Deutschland. Die Wiedergeburt durch den Krieg* (Munich, 1915), p. 107.

[67] Hans von Liebig, *Die Politik von Bethmann Hollweg* (written in December 1915 and published after the war (Munich, 1918)), p. 261; Junius Alter (Fritz Sontag), *Das deutsche Reich auf dem Wege zur geschichtlichen Episode. Eine Studie Bethmann Hollweg'scher Politik in Skizzen und Umrissen*, second edition (Munich, 1919 – first published and immediately confiscated in 1916), pp. 69 ff.; and many, many more.

[68] "Das Heldische," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 16 August 1914, no. 413 (Morgen), p. 1.

[69] Dietrich Schäfer, "Der Sinn des Krieges," *Der Panther* 3, no. 1 (January 1915), p. 51.

[70] Hans von Liebig, *Die Politik Bethmann Hollwegs* (n.p., 1915), p. 92, quoted in Rohrbach and Hobohm, *Die Alldeutschen*, p. 46.

remark in August 1914 by Zimmermann, an Under-Secretary in the German Foreign Ministry, that "Pan-German is now trump," was apt.[71] "Pan-German" ideas were popular far beyond the Pan-German League, and could be found in many unexpected places, such as in Protestant churches. Yet in 1914 most Germans had not become Pan-Germans. The government, appalled at the claims the Pan-Germans were making of representing the will of the people, accused them of demagoguery, of a return to the worst habits of pre-war political defamation. In 1916 Bethmann Hollweg stated in parliament:

> I know that no party in this House approves of agitation which uses falsehoods or invective. But unfortunately the pirates of public opinion frequently abuse the flag of the nationalist parties . . . It is bitter to have to fight the lies of our enemies. Slander and defamation at home are just as shameful.[72]

Pan-Germans responded angrily. They charged that the government with its politics had accomplished "the murder of the spirit of 1914."[73] They charged that it would have been possible in August 1914 "to break the German worker away from their internationalist seducers and demagogues," and to bring them into the "*völkisch* camp."[74] (Class wrote after the war that the Kaiser's words were the "loss of the war internally," for the Kaiser's words brought the *Burgfrieden*, which "was nothing else than the freedom for all enemies of the empire to work at first in private and later in public against Bismarck's creation."[75]) They claimed that, if given the chance, they could reawaken the "spirit of 1914."

A united will of the people would be created and represented through a common belief, a shared "Germanness." The Pan-Germans would "increase the understanding of our Germanness, by taking care of our German nature."[76] They would set high and inspiring goals, propose vast territorial acquisitions, which would inspire the German people to ever greater accomplishments. They would teach Germans the importance of will as the means to a German victory, teach them that the German people had to remain united, that their national power was a function of

[71] Quoted by Wolff, *Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus*, p. 361.
[72] Quoted in Gatzke, *Germany's Drive to the West*, p. 130.
[73] Paul Franz, "Der Bankerottfriede," *Deutschlands Erneuerung* 2, no. 3 (March 1918), p. 162. As Gatzke, *Germany's Drive to the West*, pp. 126 ff., notes, three individual attacks on Bethmann Hollweg were of special merit: Hans von Liebig's *Die Politik von Bethmann Hollweg*; Wolfgang Kapp's May 1916 pamphlet (discussed below), and Junius Alter's (that is, Fritz Sontag's) *Das deutsche Reich auf dem Wege zur geschichtlichen Episode*.
[74] Kloss, *Die Arbeit des Alldeutschen Verbandes im Kriege*, p. 3.
[75] Class, *Wider den Strom*, pp. 17, 307.
[76] "Der Alldeutsche Verband, eine Stätte deutscher Gemeinschaftsarbeit. Aufruf," *Der Panther* no. 4 (April 1917), pp. 565 ff. The Pan-German motto was "Germans, recognize that you are Germans."

their unity.[77] They would end the *Burgfrieden*, remove the "party popes."[78] Opinions which differed, even private opinions, would not be tolerated, for, as one Pan-German wrote, the "opposite of Pan-German is not progressive, but anti-German."[79] In the harsh conditions of war the citizen could no longer be allowed to have a resigned, uninterested position. As the radical nationalist author Oscar Schmitz wrote in 1914,

> our strength today is our unity, that is, the best individuals in all our classes support the war and are determined to see it through to the end. Other "opinions" are not allowed. That in England there still exists freedom of thought concerning the war is England's weakness.[80]

And yet the government's most important criticism of the Pan-Germans, namely that they did not represent "public opinion," only a section of public opinion, hit home. The Pan-Germans were a small but highly influential pressure group, which had been founded in the 1890s in order to support the "national idea." Although the Pan-German League was composed of the most powerful members of society, with an especially strong following among bourgeois elites, especially among intellectuals, the League only had 15,000 members at the start of the war. On 29 June 1918 there were only 36,903 members in spite of a massive membership campaign to win members.[81] The logic of the Pan-German argumentation required that they be able to show popularity, be able to display a "public opinion" united behind them. In this mass war the radical nationalists had to produce evidence of popular support. They attempted to do this with the German Fatherland Party.

The German Fatherland Party

Immediately after parliament passed its "peace resolution" a disgusted Wolfgang Kapp formulated plans to form a "national" pressure group to oppose the parliamentary "peace" resolution.[82] Kapp, an important

[77] So, for example, the argument in the brochures of the German Army League. "Der deutsche Wehrverein vor, in und nach dem Kriege. Vortrag gehalten in der Hauptversammlung der Ortsgruppe Regensburg des Deutschen Wehrvereins am 21.5.1917 vom I Vorsitzenden Oberst z.D. Zeitz," HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, Stellv. GK I AK, 2380.

[78] Alter (Fritz Sontag), *Das deutsche Reich auf dem Wege zur geschichtlichen Episode*, p. 72.

[79] "Was ist alldeutsch?," *Deutsche Kurier*, 24 August 1917, no. 223.

[80] Schmitz, *Das wirkliche Deutschland*, pp. 68–69.

[81] BAL, 61 Ve 1 – ADV no. 119, p. 10.

[82] Annaliese Kapp, "Die Gründung der Deutschen Vaterlandspartei," *Ostpreußische Zeitung*, 31 December 1928, BA Koblenz, NL Traub, no. 48, pp. 5 ff. On the German Fatherland Party, see Hagen Hagenlücke, *Die deutsche Vaterlandspartei: Die nationale Rechte am Ende des Kaiserreiches* (Düsseldorf, 1996). Wolfgang Kapp's papers are in GhStAPK. See also BAL, RLB Pressearchiv, no. 8868, for an interesting collection of newspaper articles on the Party.

government official in East Prussia, had become known outside conservative circles on 20 May 1916, when he mailed his pamphlet, "The National Groups and the Imperial Chancellor," to a select group of influential conservatives. (He would later become infamous as the leader of the Kapp putsch.) This pamphlet is a superb compilation of the radical nationalist ideology. Kapp charged that "the outbreak of the World War forged a united and combatative people." This unity had been ruined by Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, whose weak prosecution of the war had produced "apprehension" among the German people.[83] Unity, he charged, was a function of leadership: "a determined political leadership would even today have behind it more than ever a united, self-sacrificing nation."[84]

In 1917 Kapp decided that if Bethmann Hollweg would not provide leadership he would do it himself. He set out to form a mass political organization. Recognizing that he was identified in the public mind with East Elbian Junkers, Kapp attempted to give the organization a bourgeois flavor. When the Hamburg citizens he approached rejected his advances he decided to transform the "East Prussian Society of 1914," an organization he had founded in Königsberg in 1915 in imitation of the "German Society of 1914," into the "Bismarck Party."[85] By the end of August, Kapp had written up the party statute, and held a few preliminary meetings. At one of them, on 28 August 1917, the name was changed to the German Fatherland Party. Although Kapp tried to get the former German Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow to lead the organization, Bülow refused. Kapp was able, however, to win over the former head of the German navy, Admiral von Tirpitz. A prominent Prince, Herzog Johann Albrecht zu Mecklenburg, agreed to be the organization's titular head.[86]

On 3 September 1917 the organization held its first "public" meeting. The meeting took place in the Yorck room in the city hall in Königsberg – evoking Yorck's 1813 call for the liberation of Germany. It took place on 3 September – in the press release and in newspaper accounts they stated that they had met on 2 September – in order to evoke the 1870 German victory over the French at Sedan. And finally, as if to complete the trilogy, the Party claimed that the essence of its ideology was to represent the "spirit of 1914." As one member wrote, the Party's only goal was that "the Germany of 1914 [should] resurrect itself from its grave."[87] A party

[83] Kapp's memorandum, "The National Groups and the Imperial Chancellor," is reprinted in Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire*, vol. I, pp. 81 ff. This quote is from p. 82.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 102. [85] Hagenlücke, *Die deutsche Vaterlandspartei*, pp. 138 ff.
[86] The information on Bülow is from "Notizen über die D.V.P. aus den Akten Kapps," GhStAPK, Rep. 92 Kapp, no. 609. Other names considered included the "Hindenburg Party." "Notizen über die D.V.P. aus den Akten Kapps," GhStAPK, Rep. 92 Kapp, no. 609. [87] Kaplan Schopen, *Das wahre Gesicht der Vaterlandspartei* (Bonn, n.d.), p. 8.

brochure claimed that "the German Fatherland Party is the unification of all German men and women on the basis of the Kaiser's words: 'I no longer recognize any parties, I see only Germans!'"[88]

The German Fatherland Party claimed to be above "politics," to be interested only in creating a will to victory. In their own minds this will to victory was associated with war aims. In its first proclamation on 9 September 1917 the party stated:

> Our military situation is good. Our armies are fighting successfully on all fronts . . . We will not allow anybody or anything to bring us away from our strong will to victory and to enjoy the fruits of our victory . . . We do not want a peace of hunger, which would burden us for many decades, we want a peace which allows us a free development and security for our new blood.[89]

It stated further that the German people opposed the present parliament:

> Large sections of the German public are not in agreement with the attitude of the present parliamentary majority . . . They do not consider that the parliament elected before the war any longer represents the will of the German people.[90]

As this proclamation produced a heated response, the party decided to call repeatedly for sustaining the *Burgfrieden* (although they did not use this hated word), to postpone any discussion of internal issues until after the war.

These goals and these claims had been made before. What made the German Fatherland Party different was that it hoped to show the popular support for the Pan-German ideology through the size of its membership. The party developed a large organization, held mass meetings, passed out innumerable pamphlets, posters, and books, supplied newspapers with articles, took out advertisements, and passed out applications for membership.[91] The party did win much support among conservative groups. The Conservative Party supported them, as did all existing war aims groups, including the Pan-German League, although, given the unpopularity of this organization, the German Fatherland Party was careful not

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[89] This was the so-called "small proclamation," and it was signed by Tirpitz and Johann Albrecht Herzog zu Mecklenburg. Reprinted in *Bremer Nachrichten* of 19 September 1917, Staatsarchiv Bremen 3–V.2., no. 1098. The wording here is slightly different than in the original "small proclamation," which is reprinted in Karl Wortmann, *Geschichte der Deutschen Vaterlands-Partei 1917–1918* (Halle, 1926), p. 37. The proclamations of the local organizations were similar. The pamphlets for Baden, Bayern and Württemberg are in GhStAPK, Rep. 92 Kapp, no. 443.

[90] This was from the so-called "large proclamation" (*Der Große Aufruf*). (The party prepared two proclamations for 9 September.) This proclamation is reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire*, vol. I, pp. 368–370.

[91] Hagenlücke, *Die deutsche Vaterlandspartei*, pp. 164 ff.

to publicize this relationship.[92] Many German intellectuals signed on and so, too, did many government officials. Many teachers handed out German Fatherland Party propaganda, and many ministers suggested in their sermons that church-goers should join. The military, too, offered support. Hindenburg stated in a September 1917 telegram to Johann Albrecht Herzog zu Mecklenburg: "The call of the east-Prussian men has filled me with joy . . . Yes, let us form a new *Burgfrieden*! . . . United internally we can not be defeated."[93] Such support was largely to be expected. The Party claimed to have won the support of the working class. For proof it cited its membership figure of 1,250,000 (September 1918), which made it the largest association in German politics.[94]

Yet the number was inflated. It was arrived at by adding up the corporate with the individual members. (Thus, when the "Independent Committee for a German Peace" joined the German Fatherland Party, its approximately 200,000 members were added to the list. As many of these people had – most likely – also joined the German Fatherland Party as individuals, they were counted twice.) According to their own statistics, in February 1918, the German Fatherland Party had 293,233 individual members and in September 1918 445,345 individual members. Kapp himself admitted in private that the party won few workers.[95] And many of these had probably been coerced. The SPD *Volkswille* suggested that many workers who had joined did so because they feared that otherwise they would be sent to the front.

Not only did the Party fail to achieve a mass membership, it provoked an angry response. With the exception of the Conservative Party, all political parties kept their distance. Liberal intellectuals, such as Max Weber, and liberal newspapers such as the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, and the *Münchner Neuesten Nachrichten* charged that the party was:

[92] When the German Fatherland Party was founded, Heinrich Class was a member of the "executive committee" (*engeren Ausschuss*). In a speech at a meeting of the board of the Pan-German League on 29 and 30 June 1918 Class noted that in the last couple of weeks the "*engeren Ausschuß*" had disappeared, being replaced by a new executive committee of which he was not a member. He noted, too, that many Pan-German members complained of exclusion from the German Fatherland Party at the local level. BAL, 61 Ve 1 – ADV no. 119, p. 9.

[93] Critically commented and quoted in "Wieder Burgfriede?," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 19 September 1917, no. 259 (zweites Morgenblatt), p. 1. On the participation of the intellectuals see the documents in GhStAPK, Rep. 77 CBS, no. 970n, especially p. 44.

[94] Hagenlücke, *Die deutsche Vaterlandspartei*, pp. 180 ff. The following statistics are also from here. It is interesting to note that the party had three sets of figures. One (the honest ones) for Kapp and a few others, one for the board of the party itself, and one for the public.

[95] So Kapp in a meeting of the "Reichsausschuss" of 12 January 1918. The protocol of the meeting in GhStAPK, Rep. 92 Kapp, no. 483, pp. 45 ff. *Volkswille* (Hanover), 6 October 1917, no. 234, GhStAPK, Rep. 77 CBS, no. 970n, p. 11.

an undoing of the unity, which in spite of the present heated discussions has continued in the German people in a defensive spirit. It is a renewal of the old, unhealthy methods of struggle, which we had hoped to have overcome through the war.[96]

Such opposition forced the government on 1 October 1917 to proclaim that government officials could not assist the party, although they could join it. Army members were forbidden on 30 November 1917 from joining the party.[97]

In order to organize opposition to the German Fatherland Party, German liberals founded yet another "spirit of 1914" organization, the "People's Association for Freedom and the Fatherland" (*Volksbund für Freiheit und Vaterland*). Like the FVV, the German Society of 1914, and the German Fatherland Party, the *Volksbund* claimed to be the incarnation of the "spirit of 1914." As one of its leaders, Martin Wenck, wrote, the *Volksbund für Freiheit und Vaterland*:

> knows no parties, only Germans, wants to bring together all Germans under its banner in order to hold alive the heritage of 4 August . . . a day of the spirit, out of which the organization itself has arisen, and the spirit which it wants to realize in our people.[98]

Unlike the other associations, the *Volksbund* supported equal suffrage and the "new orientation." It waffled, however, on war aims. Some members desired a peace without annexations, others a peace which would give Germany vast new territories.

Like the other liberal "spirit of 1914" organizations, the *Volksbund*, too, failed. Only approximately 1,000 people joined.[99] At the end of the war, as morale was declining and the "spirit of 1914" was invoked as a military necessity, the *Volksbund* even attempted to merge with the German Fatherland Party, hoping thus to contribute to German unity. The German Fatherland Party rejected the offer.[100]

Far more important to the German Fatherland Party than such weak opposition was the opposition of the working class and their representa-

[96] From a petition circulated at Heidelberg University and published by the *Heidelberger Neueste Nachrichten*, 22 October 1917.

[97] Wortmann, *Geschichte der Deutschen Vaterlands-Partei*, p. 44. In contrast, the Prussian Culture Ministry allowed its bureaucrats (including teachers) to join.

[98] Martin Wenck, "Zu 4. August," *Mitteilungen des Volksbundes für Freiheit und Vaterland* no. 1 (July 1918), GhStAPK, Nl Meinecke, no. 169. On the Volksbund, see Hagenlücke, *Die deutsche Vaterlandspartei*, pp. 362 ff.

[99] Fricke (ed.), *Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland*, vol. IV, p. 414.

[100] A protocol of the meeting between the German Fatherland Party and the Volksbund on 10 October 1918 is in Dirk Stegmann, "Zwischen Repression und Manipulation: Konservative Machteliten und Arbeiter- und Angestelltenbewegung 1910–1918," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 12 (1972), pp. 421 ff. See also the letters from Martin Wenck to Friedrich Meinecke in GhStAPK, NL Meinecke, no. 52, pp. 113 ff.

tives. The SPD and the Free Trade Unions asserted that the German Fatherland Party was trying to destroy the "spirit of 1914," to reintroduce the distinction between "national" and "anti-national."[101] Indeed, the common man – whom the Party was founded to represent – would come to haunt the Party. When on Sunday, 11 November 1917, the Bund der Kriegsbeschädigten (League of Wounded Veterans) held a meeting in Berlin on "*Kriegsbeschädigte, ehemalige Kriegsteilnehmer und Verständigungsfrieden*," the invitation sent to the German Fatherland Party received no response.[102] Adolf Grabowsky, a conservative journalist, disgusted, wrote to Kapp, saying that if the German Fatherland Party wished to win the working classes, it must interact with them; it must do more than just publish newspaper advertisements.[103] Axel Ripke, the editor of the *Tägliche Rundschau*, decided on his own initiative to invite some of the wounded veterans to the next German Fatherland Party meeting in Berlin in the first week of January. It was a mistake.

During one of the speeches, some of the wounded veterans booed and made cat-calls. The patriots then attacked the wounded veterans both verbally ("English agents") and physically – the wounded veterans were literally dragged out of the meeting – and the ensuing riot had to be broken up by the police. Similar events took place throughout Germany in December 1917 and January 1918.[104] To avoid this problem, in the party's meetings in late January 1918 the speakers first called on all wounded veterans to leave. When they did not, they asked the police to remove them, which the police usually did.[105] The sight of policemen forcibly removing wounded veterans was too much even for the very conservative Regional Deputy Commander Generals, who, in February 1918 simply forbade all future public meetings.[106] Accordingly, after late January 1918 the German Fatherland Party became quiet. The next public meeting was held on 17 June 1918 in Pomerania.

Measured against its own ambitions, the German Fatherland Party was

[101] See, for example, the speech by Landsberg in October 1917 in parliament, reprinted in Ralph Lutz (ed.), *Fall of the German Empire*, vol. I, pp. 132 ff.

[102] Based on documents in GhStAPK, Rep. 92 Kapp, no. 576.

[103] Letter of 12 November 1917 is in GhStAPK, Rep. 92 Kapp, no. 576, p. 22.

[104] The Berlin meeting is described in "Deutsche Vaterlandspartei und Kriegsbeschädigte," *Tölzer Kurier*, 10 January 1918, no. 5. The 21 January 1918 meeting is described in the police report by Georg Rauh in HStA Munich, GhStA, MInn, no. 73625, no p. For similar events in Frankfurt see "Wetterleuchten," *Volksstimme* (Frankfurt), 15 January 1918, no. 12; for Stuttgart see "Gesprengte Versammlung der Vaterlandspartei," *Schwäbische Tagwacht*, 23 January 1918, no. 18; and for Mannheim see the January 1918 report on the mood of the population prepared by the Regional Deputy Commander General in Landesarchiv Karlsruhe, 236/23079.

[105] Described for Bonn in the *Volkswille* (Hanover), 23 January 1918, no. 19; and for Dortmund in *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Dortmund), 23 January 1918, no. 20.

[106] Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*, p. 1145, footnote 5.

a failure. Yet it was a pregnant failure. In late 1917, some conservatives in Bremen, assisted by the Independent Association for a Germany Peace, and the local government, founded the "Free society for a German peace" (*Freier Ausschuss für einen deutschen Frieden*), under the leadership of the locksmith Wilhelm Wahl. The organization, a typical war-aims organization, printed its pamphlets at government cost and passed them out in factories.[107] The group claimed to work for a "German peace," for the "spirit of 1914," which was "the deepest experience of our generation . . . If we compare the present morale with the mood of those days, it is clear that the impression of those days has not had the unquenchable and lasting effect which was necessary."[108] The group was relatively unimportant and would scarcely be worth noting except that in June 1918 Anton Drexler participated at a meeting in Bremen as the representative from Munich. Drexler would later found the National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei (NSDAP).

The NSDAP would, of course, be a vastly different organization. The German Fatherland Party was not the first mass conservative political movement in Germany; it was the last of the old-style *Honoratorien* movements, more closely resembling the Navy League than the National Socialists. The party placed articles in newspapers, held mass meetings with intellectuals as speakers in the bourgeois part of town. They did not go into the working-class parts of town, nor try to find workers as speakers. They called for followers to be united, but offered little in the way of unity other than invoking the "spirit of 1914."

In 1914 the most common interpretation of the August experiences was that the liminal experiences had happened to others. In 1914 only the SPD and the left-liberals actually modified their political views, but even they insisted that the most important changes had taken place elsewhere. Although all political parties employed unity as a rhetorical device, the right hoped that the "spirit of 1914" signified the end of Social Democracy, the left that it signified the end of traditional conservatism, of class society, of class privileges. The only thing the parties agreed upon was the importance of unity for the conduct of the war, and that a narrative of the August experiences, of the "spirit of 1914," was the means to achieve this unity. Yet the political parties were able to contribute little to this unity. For one thing, as groups which represented the interests of a section of society, they were poor mediums for putting forward effective

[107] See Stegmann, "Zwischen Repression und Manipulation," pp. 381 ff. It said of itself that it had 300,000 members in January 1918, which seems unlikely.

[108] From an untitled pamphlet published at the beginning of the fifth war year (27 July 1918).

national myths. For another, the parties were interested primarily in the formulation of a social myth, a description of the German nation, the ideas the German nation shared as beliefs. Yet the issue in 1916 was not so much the nature of what was "German" as self-mobilization. What was needed was less a description of "Germany" than words to motivate. It was here, in the efforts to mobilize the population, that a transcendent myth of "spirit of 1914" would be developed, a narrative that differed both from the reality of 1914 and the narrative of the "spirit of 1914" put forward either by Bethmann Hollweg's government or by the political parties.

7 The myth of the "spirit of 1914" in German propaganda, 1916–1918

On 1 January 1917 Theodor Wolff attended a meeting called by the German War Press Office. It was a bitterly cold morning in a bitterly cold winter. There was not enough coal to keep most people comfortably warm. The blockade and poor harvests forced the population to eat turnips; this would later be known as the Turnip Winter. Most important of all, the war continued to extract its toll among loved ones at the front.

The meeting had been called to discuss morale, and, given the material conditions, it is not surprising that morale was dismal. Yet there was little the government could do to improve material conditions. All they could do to improve morale was to influence the way the German people read the news, the way they interpreted events. That they had few ideas, Wolff noted in his diary, was shown by the outcome of the meeting. The head of the German War Press office, Erhard Deutelmoser, called for all to work to reawaken the "spirit of 1914."[1]

The peculiarity of this moment would not have been lost on Wolff. An official narrative of the history of German public opinion in 1914, one which had been invented in 1914 as part of a discourse of legitimation, was now being employed as a means to win the war. This version of the "spirit of 1914" was told not so much to describe "Germany" to itself than as a vehicle for faith. The myth was a story one believed in, and by believing it, by this act of faith, one became stronger. The hopes of the propagandists at this meeting were well described by the theologian Reinhold Seeberg (in a different context), "if there is an area where faith moves mountains, then in politics; courage and victory are . . . identical."[2]

A healthy empiricism had inspired Wolff a couple of months earlier, on the second anniversary of the beginning of the war, to publish a scathing critique of this official narrative, a critique that had led to the prohibition of the newspaper. For the Berlin censors Wolff's article bordered on the treasonous; Wolff was harming the German chances for victory.

[1] Noted by Wolff, *Tagebücher*, vol. I, no. 490 (1 January 1917), p. 469.
[2] Reinhold Seeberg in the "Seeberg-Addresse," reprinted in Böhme (ed.), *Aufrufe und Reden deutscher Professoren im Ersten Weltkrieg*, p. 135.

The military's conceptualization of a "total war"

"War," the German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz wrote, "is not an independent phenomenon, but the continuation of politics by different means."[3] This meant, according to Clausewitz, that war was a function of politics, that the military had to accept the primacy of the civilian leadership in political affairs. Yet in the First World War the classical distinction between a political and a military sphere no longer applied. Clausewitz had called for all military action to be focused on the destruction of the enemy's armies. The experiences on the western front had shown that the enemy's armies could not be destroyed. In this war victory would come to the nation whose collective power – whose armies, industrial capacity, population, food supply, and morale – defeated the collective power of the enemy. The "glorious" war had become the absolute – or as Ludendorff would later term it – the "total war." Drawing his own conclusions after the war Ludendorff would charge that Clausewitz was obsolete, that instead of the war serving politics, now "all politics (*die Gesamtpolitik*) has to serve the war."[4]

The Allies had a clear superiority in industrial capacity, population, and food supply. German military leaders believed, however, that they enjoyed a superiority in the quality of the German army and, especially, in its morale. As the quality of the German army was not, however, markedly superior to the French and English opponents, it is not surprising that some German military men came to consider morale the deciding factor. Admiral Trotha, for example, wrote in a March 1917 letter to Admiral Tirpitz that "the closer we come to the end of the war that much more important is will; in the final analysis the stronger will decides."[5]

Morale had always been a part of German military thought; the discussion of morale is part of what made Clausewitz's book so famous. Yet whereas Clausewitz had concentrated on the morale of the army, as the war progressed military leaders came to view the mood at home as the essential weapon of this war. On 5 September 1917 the Regional Deputy Commander General in Munich proclaimed to his fellow officers that "the morale at home – in combination with the military success of the army, will determine the outcome of the war."[6] As morale at home was clearly worsening something had to be done. But what?

[3] Carl von Clausewitz in a letter to C. v. Roeder, 22 December 1827, quoted in Peter Paret, "The Genesis of On War," in Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, 1976), p. 7.

[4] Erich Ludendorff, *Kriegführung und Politik* (Berlin, 1922), pp. 23, 330. Ludendorff first introduced the term "total war" in *Kriegsführung und Politik*, pp. 99 ff. He developed it in his *Der totale Krieg* (Munich, 1936).

[5] Admiral von Trotha to Tirpitz, 20 March 1917, quoted in Pross, *Dokumente*, p. 212.

[6] His "Runderlaß" is in HStA Munich, Abt. IV-Kriegsarchiv, Stellv. GK I AK, no. 916, signed v.d. Tann.

The military's ideas about how to improve morale, especially those of Ludendorff and his political advisor, Colonel Bauer, were informed by their understanding of mass psychology. Ludendorff and Bauer believed that the "will of the people" was a slogan. The people had no will; they always followed. The August experiences, they charged, were evidence of this. In August, according to Colonel Bauer, "the party differences disappeared, the German worker felt . . . patriotic (*national*) and the Social Democratic leaders stood there, lonely and without power. They had no choice but to go along."[7] Ludendorff himself believed that in 1914 "it should not have been difficult to win the workers away from the influence of their Social Democratic leaders."[8] This could have been accomplished "through enlightenment concerning the nature of war, the intention of the enemy and the necessity of a total victory, and, where necessary, taking the necessary actions against those who were working against these goals."[9]

The existing poor morale was thus seen as a function of the weak leadership of Bethmann Hollweg, who allowed the masses to become the tool of fanatics, of foreign agents and their propaganda. Bavarian officials proclaimed in a poster in 1918 that "foreign agents and demagogues without a conscience" were responsible for "the disaffection you feel."[10] A report by the Regional Deputy Commander General in Berlin on the January 1918 strikes stated:

> Every attempt to bring Russian conditions to Germany must be suppressed. In our country the situation is much different than in Russia. Here the majority of the people are quite content. Where there is discontent, it is not because of the conditions, rather it is because of the successful demagoguery.[11]

These foreign elements were supported by the SPD leaders who, according to Colonel Bauer, "remained true . . . to their radical inner and foreign political phantoms."[12]

[7] "Entwurf einer Stellungnahme der OHL zur Denkschrift des preussischen Ministers des Innern über die innenpolitische Lage," 21 February 1918, in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*, p. 1193. Bauer made many such statements during these years. On Bauer see Martin Kitchen, "Militarism and the Development of Fascist Ideology. The Political Ideas of Colonel Max Bauer," *Central European History* 8 (1975), pp. 199 ff.

[8] Ludendorff, *Kriegführung und Politik*, p. 120. [9] *Ibid.*

[10] The poster was published by the Bavarian Stellv. GK des II. AK (Würzburg, Gebsattel), HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, Stell. GK des I. AK, no. 1372, no p. For Ludendorff's and Hindenburg's feelings see Hindenburg's letter to the Chancellor of 17 February, 1918, reprinted in Schwertfeger, *Politisch-militärische Verantwortlichkeiten*, pp. 149 ff. After the war Ludendorff expanded on this theme in his *Kriegführung und Politik*, pp. 55; and in his memoirs, Erich Ludendorff, *My War Memories 1914–1918* (London, 1919), pp. 392, 414.

[11] The report, dated 6 February 1918, is reprinted in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*, p. 1165.

[12] From "Entwurf einer Stellungnahme der OHL zur Denkschrift des preussischen Ministers des Innern über die innenpolitische Lage," of 21 February 1918, in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*, p. 1193.

The mood of the population was declining; the mood of the population was one of the central weapons of the war; therefore the military believed it had to do all it could to improve morale. In July 1917, admitting that this war "can no longer be fought in the purely military arena alone," Ludendorff and Hindenburg threatened to resign if Bethmann Hollweg was not fired.[13] Their style of argumentation is most clearly evident in a letter Ludendorff and Hindenburg sent to the Kaiser of 16 January 1918, in which they called for the removal of the chief of the civil cabinet, Valentini, whom they felt was too close to Bethmann Hollweg:

> the internal situation, which is forever taking a turn for the worse, is not the result of the war. The internal unity of the people at the beginning of the war was greater than ever. Rather, the increasing tensions between right and left, the increasing opposition of monarchical elements against the government, resulted from the weak leadership of Mr. Bethmann Hollweg, who always avoided conflicts, incapable of making decisions.[14]

Bethmann Hollweg and Valentini were let go, Bethmann Hollweg in July 1917 and Valentini in January 1918.

These were profound developments. In threatening to resign Ludendorff and Hindenburg placed the assumptions of the *Obrigkeitsstaat* in doubt. As Bethmann Hollweg's Under-Secretary of State, Wahnschaffe, noted in a letter to Ludendorff and Hindenburg, such threats "terribly shake the authority, even the very existence of this state."[15] But the legitimacy of the conservative idea was of secondary importance to Ludendorff; he would do all that was necessary to win the war. To achieve this he preferred a government that more closely resembled a total than a bureaucratic state.

Ludendorff seems to have conceptualized leadership as a technical problem. He seemed to think, as one *Zeitungs-Verlag* journalist complained, that "one only had to publish something in the press in order for it to have an effect."[16] At about the same time that he made his threat to resign, on 8 July 1917, Ludendorff established his own propaganda "ministry," the "Patriotic Instruction" program.[17] The "Patriotic Instruction"

[13] Ludendorff's letter is reprinted in Erich Ludendorff (ed.), *Urkunden der Obersten Heeresleitung über ihre Tätigkeit 1916–1918* (Berlin, 1922), p. 407.

[14] The letter, signed by Hindenburg (16 January 1918), is reprinted in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*, pp. 1124 ff.

[15] Quoted in Schwertfeger, *Die politischen und militärischen Verantwortlichkeiten*, p. 35.

[16] "Um einer besseren Zukunft willens," *Zeitungs-Verlag* 19, no. 41 (11 October 1918), pp. 1113–1114.

[17] We lack a good study of the "patriotic instruction" program, although there is ample material in the archives, especially in the archives in Stuttgart and Munich. On the propaganda at the front, see the materials in HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, Stellv. GK des I. AK, no. 2385 (including full texts of lectures given by the "enlightenment officers" to the troops). I will not discuss front propaganda here. Wilhelm Deist, "Der militärische Zusammenbruch des Kaiserreichs. Zur Realität der 'Dolchstoßlegende,'" in Ursula

program, born of the assumption that there had not been enough propaganda, was innovative neither in form nor content. Within Germany Ludendorff instructed each Regional Deputy Commander General to set up an "enlightenment" division; many of them had already done so.[18] The "enlightenment officers" organized more lectures, handed out even more books, pamphlets, brochures, and posters than before, yet most of these were still written and published by the War Press Office.

German propaganda continued to be run by men singularly unsuited for the job. The officers in the "enlightenment divisions" were most often officers called back out of retirement, men who haughtily believed themselves to be above public opinion.[19] They themselves chose academicians, schoolteachers, professionals, civil servants and ministers for their local "enlightenment" committees and speakers. Almost never did they select journalists or advertising professionals. (In contrast, the civilian agency in charge of advertising for the war loans did employ advertising professionals.)

The typical propaganda lecture was given by a "respectable citizen" on a "patriotic topic" in a meeting hall in the bourgeois part of the city. The audience was composed of respectable citizens.[20] The rare lectures in factories were given by factory owners or by soldiers; it is not surprising that few workers attended. For a lecture in Suhl at a factory with 1,200

footnote 17 (*cont.*)
Büttner (ed.), *Das Unrechtsregime. Internationale Forschung über den Nationalsozialismus. Band I. Ideologie–Herrschaftssystem–Wirkung in Europa* (Hamburg, 1986), p. 104, writes that the patriotic instruction program was a response to the peace resolution of parliament of 19 July 1917. This may be; it was, however, thought about long before the resolution.

[18] Indeed, the War Press Office had suggested in April 1917 that the Regional Deputy Commander Generals establish propaganda divisions and at least one had done so. Noted by Rittmeister Garnich, "Die in der Kriegsaufklärung bisher gesammelten Erfahrungen," *Bericht über die Tagung am 8. und 9. Juni 1917. Aufklärungsdienst in Württemberg* (HStA Stuttgart, J 150/509/4), p. 32 (of lecture). In Württemberg and Baden, outside of the control of the Prussian General Staff, the Deputy Regional Commander Generals had already established propaganda agencies. Mai, "'Aufklärung der Bevölkerung' und 'Vaterländischer Unterricht' in Württemberg 1914–1918," pp. 210–211; and the remarks of Geheimrat Flad (Vorsitzender des Arbeitsausschusses), *Beratung der Aufklärungsoffiziere im Bereiche des stellv. Generalkommandos XIV Armeekorps zu Karlsruhe am 28. Juli 1918* (Karlsruhe, 1918), pp. 13 ff; in HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, Stellv. GK des I AK, no. 2373.

[19] So the characterization of the men by Paul Landau, "Flugblatt und Flugschrift," in Adolf Behne, Paul Landau, and H. Löwing (eds.), *Das Politische Plakat* (Charlottenburg, 1919), p. 27.

[20] Mai, "'Aufklärung der Bevölkerung' und 'Vaterländischer Unterricht' in Württemberg 1914–1918," p. 216. There is interesting material on these meetings in "Winke zur wirksamen Veranstaltung vaterländischer Abende," published in June 1917 by the War Press Office, HStA Stuttgart, M 1/3, Bü 498, and in the various local reports, many of which are in the Berlin State Library.

workers only 70 workers picked up the free tickets, and even fewer came, even though they would have had a paid respite from the drudgery of factory labor.[21] Thus, the "patriotic instruction" failed to reach the groups whose morale was in the worst shape: the lower middle and the working classes.

Yet the "patriotic instruction" would not have won the minds of many workers even if it had reached them. The "enlightenment" was essentially a hotchptoch of traditional conservative and radical nationalist ideas. The Conservative Party's parliamentary leader, Graf von Westarp, wrote in his memoirs, that the "patriotic instruction" program followed essentially the same ideological program as the German Fatherland Party.[22] The propaganda had little to do with the everyday concerns of the people, who were hungry and tired, who saw their living standards cut by inflation and shortages while members of their families were dying at the front.

There were the usual attempts to instill confidence, to state that the war was going well, often in dry lectures full of facts and figures, proving that Germany could "hold out."[23] There were the usual calls for territorial acquisitions. Major Nicolai, the head of Abteilung IIIb (the department of the German army that was in charge of propaganda), wrote in a memorandum in June 1917 that "a German victory is necessary and possible and presents the only way to gain a peace which corresponds to the sacrifices made."[24] In response to his birthday congratulations in 1917, Hindenburg called for a peace "in which Germany would receive all that it needs so that the German oak has the air and the space required in order to develop fully."[25] Pamphlets directed toward the working classes generally stated that Germany needed "safe borders" and an indemnity. They praised the social welfare system and attempted to awaken fears of

[21] Noted by Leutnant Dix, in "Besprechungen über vaterländischen Unterricht mit den Obmännern, Vertrauensleuten und Unterrichtsoffizieren zu Cassel am 10. Juni 1918, zu Coburg am 12. Juni 1918, zu Erfurt am 14. Juni, 1918." Published by the Stellv. GK XI AK, p. 16.

[22] Westarp, *Konservative Politik im letzten Jahrzehnt des Kaiserreiches*, vol. II, p. 621. Heinrich Class noted on 7/8 July 1917 that "the politics and position of the Pan-German League have found complete support with the OHL." Protocol in BAL, 61 Ve 1–ADV, no. 114, p. 6.

[23] Indeed, the majority of the brochures published by the War Press Office treated the food situation. HStA Stuttgart, M 1/3, Bü 498. The "Richtlinien!" of the XVII Armeekorps, stellv. Generalkommando, Danzig, 25 May 1917, stated that "the enlightenment is to concentrate above all on food issues." GhStAPK, XIV/180/14833, no p.

[24] Quoted in Gatzke, *Germany's Drive to the West*, p. 188. For some examples of support for war aims from the War Press Office see Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*, p. 876, footnote 16.

[25] Quoted in "Die Bitte Hindenburgs," *Schwäbische Tagwacht* (Stuttgart), 4 October 1917, no. 232, GhStAPK, Rep. 77 CBS-425^{III}, p. 88. The Social Democratic newspaper disagreed.

poverty if England and France should win. The "patriotic instruction" appealed not to Germans' idealism but to their pocket books.[26]

There was the usual defence of the existing system, often reformulated as a defence of militarism, defined by General von Freytag-Loringhoven as the recognition that "only by subsuming oneself to the whole is one's well-being preserved."[27] As one enlightenment officer explained:

> man is a part of the state . . . Man is born into an orderly community, whose most noble characteristic is control. This community which establishes its will through control is the state, and the man who belongs to it is a citizen.[28]

Democracy was castigated as "the rule of capital and its paid demagogues and journalists," as a foreign "slogan" designed "to divide the German people."[29] The Germany of 1914 was "monarchical."

There was almost no mention of the "new orientation."[30] With one exception: the use of the "spirit of 1914."

The "spirit of 1914," 1916–1918

The "spirit of 1914" was at the heart of Ludendorff's propaganda strategy. Stripped to its basics, the propagandistic discourse on the "spirit of 1914" was a call to believe, a call to sustain the "spirit" that had made the German army victorious. Ludendorff wrote that "the German army is victorious over its opponents and offers its allies a strong backbone because of the spirit which lives in it."[31] In August 1914, wrote a propaganda officer in January 1918, "what we experienced was the mobilization of the German spirit. This mobilization is the secret of our victorious

[26] Two typical pamphlets often recommended by the various "enlightenment officers" were Franz Behrens, *Was der deutsche Arbeiter vom Frieden erwartet* (Berlin, 1917); and Wilhelm Wallbaum, *Warum müssen wir durchhalten? Ein Wort an die deutsche Arbeiterschaft* (Hagen i.W., 1917).

[27] Freiherr von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Mitteilungen für den vaterländischen Unterricht*, militärische Beilage, published by the stellv. GK XI Armeekorps, 10 April 1918, HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, Stellv. GK des I. AK, no. 2373.

[28] "Die staatsbürgerliche Arbeits- und Wehrpflicht," *Nachrichten-Blatt für den Bereich des XX Armeekorps* 1, no. 6 (16 December 1917), p. 62, HStA Munich, Abt. IV – Kriegsarchiv, Stellv. GK des I. AK, no. 1729.

[29] "Entwurf einer Stellungnahme der Obersten Heeresleitung zur Denkschrift des preußischen Ministers des Innern über die innenpolitische Lage," written by Bauer, 21 February 1918, in Deist (ed.), *Militär und Innenpolitik*, p. 1200; "Gegen das Schlagwort 'Demokratie,'" *Nachrichten über Aufklärung. Kriegsamtstelle–Leipzig*, no. 4 (20 September 1917), pp. 10–11, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford California, Moenkemoeller Collection, List 815/819. See, too, Ludendorff's various letters, reprinted in Ludendorff (ed.), *Urkunden*, pp. 290 ff.

[30] Mai, "'Aufklärung der Bevölkerung' und 'Vaterländischer Unterricht' in Württemberg 1914–1918," p. 229.

[31] "Leitsätze für den vaterländischen Unterricht unter den Truppen" (29 July 1917), in Ludendorff (ed.), *Urkunden*, p. 271.

struggle against a vastly numerically superior enemy as well as the precondition for all future military success."[32]

The argument that Germany was successful because of its "spirit" was a common one. The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* revealed the "secret" of the German superiority on 6 November 1916 as "the spirit that is at the heart of our troops."[33] The War Press Office stated in 1918 that "not the numbers, but our spirit has been responsible for our previous successes – the spirit and the will."[34] The military men largely conceptualized "spirit" as a function of "nerves"; the myth of the "spirit of 1914" was an appeal to strong nerves.

As the war continued propagandists would give this assertion special prominence, charging that Germany had won the war militarily, that the allies only kept fighting because they hoped that the Germans would eventually lose their spirit. In his directive setting up the "patriotic instruction" program Ludendorff explained that "the total size of our successes justifies our belief in our final victory . . . The decision has already fallen – for our side. It is our duty now to secure it forever."[35] The only reason other nations had not yet accepted the German victory, Ludendorff explained, lay in their hope that Germany would not hold out long enough to enjoy the fruits of its victory. Noting the increase in Allied propaganda directed against German troops, Ludendorff charged that the Allies had placed all their hopes for victory in German internal disunity: "[the enemies,] convinced of our military invincibility have placed their hopes on our economic and political collapse and on the disintegration of our alliances."[36]

Ludendorff was not exceptional. The Regional Deputy Commander Generals used almost exactly the same words in their directives to their "enlightenment officers." On 5 September 1917, for example, the Regional Deputy Commander General in Munich informed his "enlightenment officers":

> Our enemies may still have some hopes to win a military victory on the battlefield, but above all they hope to win through economic and internal political conditions, that is, through the food shortages, the lack of materials, through disunity,

[32] The officer was Lieutenant d. Res. Dr. Spickernagel, the director of the "enlightenment" division of the 10 army corps. This is from his 6 September 1917 speech, "Ziele und Wege der Kriegsaufklärung," Stanford, Hoover Collection Archives, Moenkmoeller collection, Box 3, Liste no. 833–837, p. 3 of brochure.

[33] "Das Geheimnis der deutschen Überlegenheit," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 November 1916, p. 1. Similarly, "Das Kriegsziel," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 February 1915, p. 1: "We shall win this war through the power of our inner unity in all thoughts and actions."

[34] "Anregungen," *Mitteilungen für den vaterländischen Unterricht*, no. 5 (3 January 1918).

[35] "Leitsätze für den vaterländischen Unterricht," in Ludendorff, *Urkunden* (ed.), p. 274.

[36] *Ibid.* See Gatzke, *Germany's Drive to the West,* pp. 254, 277 ff.

dissatisfaction and the victory of the radical Social Democrats . . . As long as our enemies have these hopes there can be no peace.[37]

Indeed, in the last two years of the war the military even developed a series of amazing lies suggesting an imminent victory. Propagandists repeatedly stated that the military situation is fantastic, that the English were almost finished:

The need in England is great . . . England is about to starve . . . In the near future England will lie on the ground: unconscious, hungry, beaten with the same weapon with which it attempted to defeat the dutiful German people.[38]

England's only weapon, they claimed, was propaganda, to spread discontent in the German people, to make the German people less united.

Propagandists called for the people to sustain the "spirit of 1914." As late as the middle of October 1918 some "enlightenment" officers stated that Germany had won the war and all she had to do now was to sustain the "spirit of 1914" in order to reap the fruits of victory.[39] An appeal to sustain the "spirit of 1914" as the key to victory had been made from the very beginning of the war. In the 4 August church service opening parliament the minister, Dryander, closed by quoting Max von Schenkendorf: "the German empire will never be destroyed if you are united and true to one another."[40] On 6 August the Kaiser proclaimed to the German people that they should sustain the present mood, that "Germany has never been defeated when it was united." The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote on 20 February 1915:

We shall win this war through the power of our inner unity in all thoughts and actions. We must sustain this unity both internally and externally until after a fast and violent defeat of the enemy there can once again be parties, and not just Germans.[41]

On 31 July 1915 the Kaiser proclaimed that one year ago a:

miracle occurred: the struggle of political opinions became quiet, old enemies began to understand and respect one another, the spirit of true community filled

[37] HStA Munich, Stellv. GK I AK, no. 916, signed v.d. Tann.

[38] *Nachrichtenblatt der Ausschüsse für volksttümliche Belehrung und Unterhaltung im Bereich des II. Armeecorps*, Stettin, no. 5 (7 June 1918).

[39] Gatzke, *Germany's Drive to the West*, pp. 286–287. Interesting in this regard is an article "Irrige Schlußfolgerungen," *Nachrichtenblatt*, published by the A.O.K.4, Abt. XXVIII, no. 17 (21 August 1918). The author attempts to argue that the English truly are at their wits' end, and close to starving, in spite of the vast quantities of food found at the enemy lines in the offensive of 1918. These supplies of food, the author argues, only prove that the English army has taken everything away from the home front (which, he argues, is starving), whereas the German army shares with the home front!

[40] Dryander, "Ist Gott für uns, wer mag wider uns sein?," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 6 August 1914, no. 365 (Morgen), pp. 2–3.

[41] "Das Kriegsziel," *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 February 1915, p. 1.

all members of the community (*Volksgenossen*) . . . Inner strength and a united national will in the spirit of the creator of the empire will give us victory.[42]

In a 1916 poster, "Hindenburg's words," put up across Germany, Hindenburg was quoted as saying:

United internally we can not be beaten. The unity of all of the different classes and professions of our society, unshakable, has brought us our successes, and will secure us the final victory (*Endsieg*.)[43]

The parliamentary peace resolution itself charged that as in 1914, "in its unity the German people is unconquerable."[44] The Imperial Minister of the Interior, Helferrich, responded to Erzberger's July 1917 speech (in which Erzberger justified the "peace resolution") with the statement that the enemies, unable to defeat us militarily, hope for internal disunity. We have to convince the English that we will fight united forever.[45] On 31 July 1917 Chancellor Michaelis charged "our goal, a quick and honorable peace, can only be achieved if all who speak publicly follow the dictum: 'in all important things united and not nervous.'"[46] On 2 October 1917, when Hindenburg had his seventieth birthday, he proclaimed to the German people:

we have been been able to fight off the attacks of enemies more numerous than us – with God's help and with German power – because we were united, because everyone did what was necessary. This is how it must remain.[47]

On 2 August 1918 the Bavarian War Minister von Heiligrath said that:

we must still convince [the enemy] that we have a stronger will if we wish to force them to be willing to make peace. This is the most important task facing us as we enter the fifth year of the war – to awaken and strengthen this united, unshakable will in all Germans.[48]

Even at the end of the war, on 2 September 1918, when the generals knew that the German army could not attain victory, Hindenburg publicly proclaimed that:

[42] *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1 August 1915.

[43] These words were often quoted. See, for example, "Die innere Politik der Woche," *Kreuz-Zeitung*, 29 April 1917 (Morgen), no. 215, pp. 1–2: "Now we must collect the power of all the people for the final battle," wrote a *Kreuz-Zeitung* journalist in 1917. "We must remember and enact the words of Hindenburg, who said that what matters the most now is whose nerves last the longest."

[44] Quoted in Nippold, *The Awakening of the German People*, p. 22.

[45] Bredt, *Der deutsche Reichstag im Kriege*, p. 74.

[46] Quoted in *Schultheiss' 1917*, pp. 736–737.

[47] Quoted in "Die Bitte Hindenburgs," *Schwäbische Tagwacht* (Stuttgart), 4 October 1917, no. 232, in GhStAPK, Rep. 77 CBS, no. 425[III], p. 88. The author of this article (in an SPD newspaper) noted that the SPD disagreed that all the people had to do was to "trust."

[48] "Eine Rede des Kriegsministers in der Reichsratskammer," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 21 August 1918, no. 386 (Abend), p. 1.

5. Drawing of troops at a train station by Felix Schwormstädt for the *Leipziger illustrierte Zeitung*, 13 August 1914

the enemy knows that Germany and its Allies can not be defeated with weapons alone. The enemy knows that the spirit which our troops feel makes us invincible. Therefore he has taken up the battle against the German spirit alongside his battle against the German weapons. He wishes to poison our spirit and believes that the German weapons will also become silent when the German spirit is torn apart.[49]

On 14 October 1918, Hindenburg sent a public telegram to the Chancellor stating that, "our enemies find the power to attack in our internal disunity and our depressed mood," and called on the Chancellor to create a "united patriotic mood," to sustain the German spirit.[50]

But what did that mean – to sustain the "spirit" of 1914? In the words of the author of a popular schoolbook, Max Reiniger, "the best means to awaken the feeling of belonging together and to strengthen our present consciousness of unity will be the memory of the great times of a common thinking, feeling, and desire."[51] Yet the nature of the memory of the "Great Times" changed over the course of the war. This is most easily seen by examining the visual imagery associated with the "spirit of 1914."

[49] Reprinted in *Schulthess' europaeischer Geschichtskalender 1918* (Munich, 1922), pp. 267–269. [50] HStA Stuttgart, M 1/3, Bü 562.

[51] Max Reiniger, *Welche Verpflichtungen erwachsen der deutschen Schule aus dem Weltkriege. Mit einem Lehrplan für den Geschichtsunterricht in der Kriegszeit, einer Zeittafel 1914–1918 und Unterrichts-Entwürfen* (Langensalza, 1918), p. 36.

6. Graphics from the leaflet "To the German People (*An das Deutsche Volk*)," published by the government in December 1916

The images of the August enthusiasm published at the beginning of the war depict a moment of great festivity. (In 1914 the visual imagery of the August enthusiasm was developed independently of the government; it was the result of the effort of publishers, especially those who printed postcards, to make money out of the Great Times.[52] The government, charging that such advertising methods were beneath it, did not become involved in visual propaganda until 1916.) There are happy soldiers parading, happy soldiers on trains leaving (see illustration 5). Seldom is there any depiction of grim determination, except in an allegorical form, in the imagery of the *furor teutonicus*. Yet, as with the popular plays

[52] I have discussed the development of visual propaganda in my "'Helft uns siegen' – Die Bildersprache des Plakates im Ersten Weltkriegs," in Bernd Ulrich and Rolf Spilker (eds.), *Der Tod als Maschinist. Der industrialisierte Krieg 1914–1918* (Osnabrück, 1998), pp. 165–175.

depicting the "August experiences," these images were consumed only as long as the war seemed to be an adventure. When the war became real the "enthusiasm" could not be sustained and such images disappeared. By 1916 there would no longer be any "realistic" depictions of the August experience, indeed, of an enthusiastic people.

The "people" remained a popular subject. Their "enthusiasm" was replaced by a grim determination. In a typical poster of 1916, "An das deutsche Volk" (see illustration 6), an iron-clad Germania is leading the whole German nation, worker and *Bürger*, mother and child. (Beginning in 1916 the government published its first posters employing visual imagery. It was telling that the organization that did this was not the military but the National Bank, the civilian division in charge of advertising for the war loans. After the National Bank broke the ice, the military, too, started publishing posters with visual imagery. This poster was published by the War Press Office.) The massed people evoke memories of the 1914 crowds, yet all here are serious. The text beneath the image, the Kaiser's official response to the Entente's rejection of his December 1916 peace appeal, is also somber and determined.

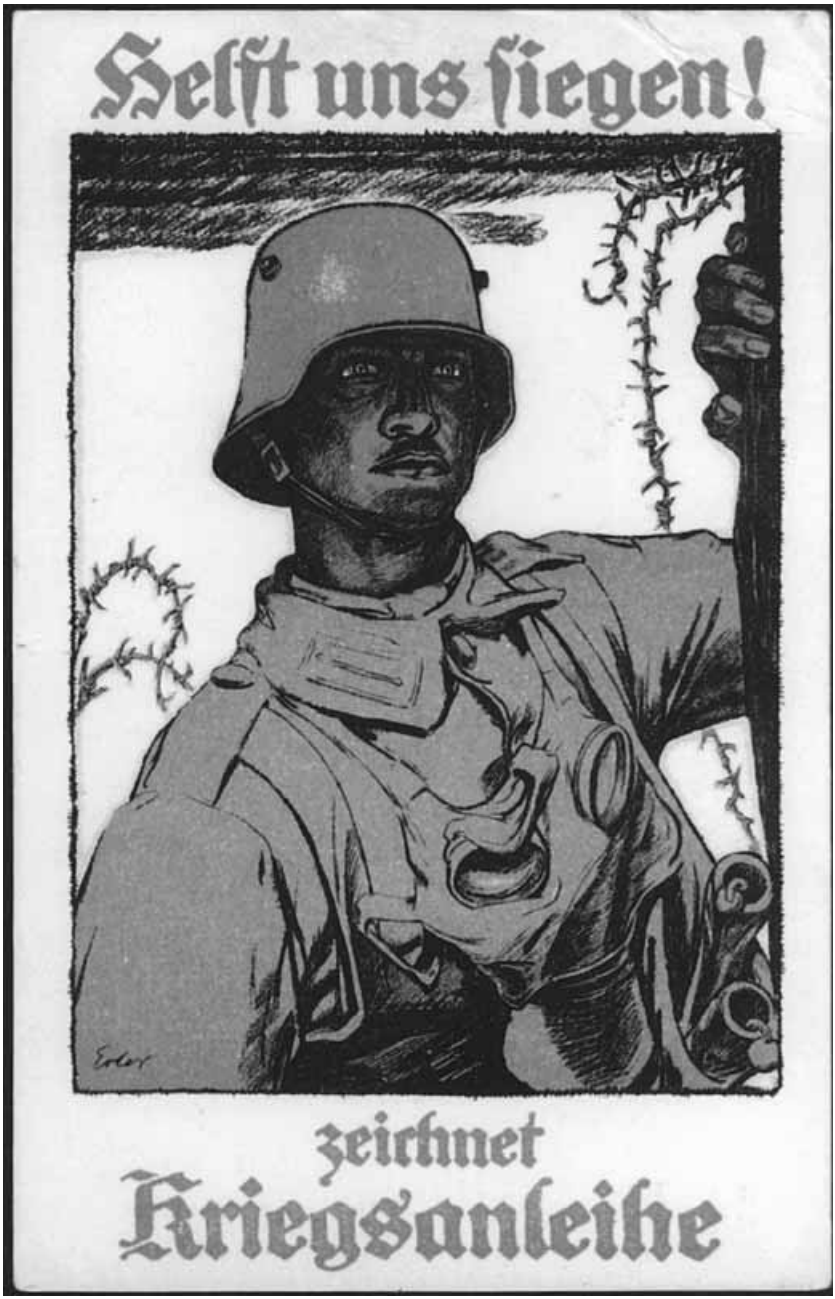
In some posters the *Volksgemeinschaft* would be reduced to its basic elements, to the soldier and the worker, as in a 1918 poster by A. M. Cay (see illustration 7). In what is probably an appeal to the workers not to strike Cay makes effective use of dark muted colors to emphasize the sobriety of the struggle.

In 1917 and 1918 the visual representations of the soldiers are also characterized by a grim determination. The most famous and most effective of these is a superb example of these traits: Fritz Erler's poster for the sixth war loan[53] (see illustration 8). The poster depicts an infantryman with a steel helmet, a gas mask on his chest, and two potato-masher grenades in his pouch. His determined face suggests a will to fight and the emotional appeal is the call to stand by him. This is the soldier of Verdun, the idealized depiction of the man without nerves.

In short, the memory of the August experiences, as expressed in the visual imagery of the war propaganda, shifted from an idealized, yet "realistic" depiction of the actual "experiences" of 1914, the crowd experiences, to an idealized depiction of a people united in a grim determination to fight. In the various articles in newspapers and magazines in 1918 commemorating the 1 August, 1914 is never referred to as a moment of

[53] This poster is discussed in my "'Helft uns siegen' – Die Bildersprache des Plakates im Ersten Weltkrieg," pp. 165 ff. See also D. Hoffmann, "Der Mann mit dem Stahlhelm vor Verdun. Fritz Erlers Plakat zur sechsten Kriegsanleihe 1917," in *Die Dekoration der Gewalt. Kunst und Medien im Faschismus* (Geißen, 1979), pp. 101–114; Dieter Vorsteher, "Bilder für den Sieg. Das Plakat im Ersten Weltkrieg," in Rainer Rother (ed.), *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 149–162; and Herman Reckendorf, "Kunst und Künstler im 'Dienste der 6. Kriegsanleihe," *Das Plakat* 8 (1917), p. 214.

7. "Through Hard Work to Victory. Through Victory to Peace." Poster by A. M. Cay, published by the government in 1918



8. "Help us Win. Subscribe to War Loans." Poster by Fritz Erler for the sixth war-loan campaign in 1917

"enthusiasm," but as a moment of "determined spirit."[54] With this emphasis on will the "spirit of 1914" attained a transcendent mythic quality. For the means to this grim determination was faith; "faith" was, in the words of the theologian Arden Buchholz, equivalent to "power."[55] In this propagandistic usage the "spirit of 1914" was employed not as a collective narrative, a social memory, but as a myth, as something people believed in. The "spirit of 1914" was not only a metaphor for morale; the narrative of the August experiences became a myth which, if the German people believed in it, would give them the power of faith.

"Propaganda" became a "weapon" that could decide the war. Nowhere was this more clearly expressed than in a January 1918 memo which Major von Haeften, the head of the War Press Office, wrote for Ludendorff and which Ludendorff "urgently recommended" to the Chancellor:

> the decisive military battle between Germany and England lies ahead of us, the degree to which the English home front is willing to resist will decide the outcome of the battle . . . The right words are victorious battles and the wrong words are lost battles.[56]

The 8 June 1918 memorandum had an interesting epilog. The Chancellor's Press Secretary, Erhard Deutelmoser, pointed out in a memorandum prepared for the Chancellor and the Foreign Minister that Haeften's memorandum had "a distinct similarity with the basic ideas of the parliamentary resolution of 19 July 1917," and that the most startling aspect of Haeften's memorandum was that Germany's military leaders now seemed to doubt that the war could be won by mere military means.[57] Deutelmoser pointed out further that for the OHL (Oberste Heeresleitung) to be successful in propaganda it must involve the parliament, and it must be willing to undertake internal reforms.

On 24 June 1918 the Foreign Minister, Kühlmann, gave a speech in parliament inspired by Haeften's remarks. In his speech, Kühlmann stated that the military no longer believed that it could win the war militarily, and that Germany should therefore consider a peace with lesser

[54] Here: "Zum 1. August," *Der vaterländische Unterricht. Hinweise und Anregungen*, Leipzig, 27 Juli 1918, (published by the Stellv. Generalkommando 19), in HStA Munich, Stellv. GK I AK, no. 2373.

[55] Arden Buchholz, *Glaube ist Kraft!* (Stuttgart, 1917). Similarly, Chamberlain, *Ideal und Macht*, J. Kessler, *Unser Glaube ist Sieg* (Dresden, 1915), and Prellwitz, *Durch welche Kräfte wird Deutschland siegen?*

[56] The two memorandums are reprinted in "Zwei Vorschläge zu einer deutschen politischen Offensive im Jahre 1918," in Ludendorff (ed.), *Urkunden*, pp. 472, 477.

[57] Deutelmoser's memorandum was quoted by Bernhard Schwertfeger on 11 July 1923 before the parliamentary committee investigating the causes of the German collapse in 1918: Germany. Reichstag. Untersuchungsausschuss, 4 Reihe, vol. I: *Die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruchs im Jahre 1918* (Berlin, 1927), p. 122; and is quoted in Bernhard Schwertfeger in *Politisch-militärische Verantwortlichkeiten*, pp. 197–198.

war aims. In the next few days conservatives and the General Staff savagely attacked Kühlmann, accusing him of weakening the will to victory. The German Fatherland Party, for example, published a press release on 25 June 1918 which stated that any doubt of a German victory "does not fit with the statements from our Kaiser and our OHL that victory is certainly ours . . . [Moreover, the opinions of Kühlmann] are in sharp contrast to the devoted will to victory of the vast majority of the *Volk*."[58] The military leaders sent a Major Würz to parliament to state: "I am here on the express orders of the OHL. to inform you that the OHL. is still convinced that we shall win this war militarily."[59] This was a lie; they did not think this. Yet they were not willing to say so publicly. Kühlmann was dismissed.

The "spirit of 1914" in the revolution of 1918

In March 1918 Ludendorff began what he hoped would be the final offensive.[60] Although initially successful the offensive soon ground to a halt. When in July and August the enemy counter-attacked Ludendorff recognized that the war was lost. On 14 August 1918 he informed the government that Germany would not be able to force its will upon the enemy. In September the government informed a parliamentary committee that Germany had to sue for peace, that it might be only a matter of hours before the enemy armies broke through.

In this dire situation some contemporaries once again called for the German people to recreate the conditions of 1914, once again invoked the "spirit of 1914" as a solution to their problems. The *Deutsche Tageszeitung* wrote on 24 October 1918, "our strength is not broken. If the enemy rejects the armistice then we will hold our positions. But the spirit of 1914 must rise again."[61] The "Organization of German-National Students" called for the rebirth of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, "this living feeling of our common belonging to a people which was a part of the souls

[58] Quoted in Wortmann, *Geschichte der Deutschen Vaterlands-Partei*, p. 53.

[59] Quoted in L. Herz, "Geschichte, Sinn und Kritik des Schlagwortes vom 'Dolchstoss,'" in Germany. Reichstag. Untersuchungsausschuss, 4 Reihe, vol. I: *Die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruchs im Jahre 1918* (Berlin, 1927), vol. VI, p. 209.

[60] The best discussion of these events can be found in the works prepared for the parliamentary committee investigating the causes of the German defeat, Germany. Reichstag. Untersuchungsausschuss, 4 Reihe, *Die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruchs im Jahre 1918*. See especially the monographs by Kuhl, vol. III, and by Bernhard Schwertfeger, "Die politischen und militärischen Verantworlichkeiten im Verlaufe der Offensive von 1918," vol. II.

[61] "Aufruf," *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 24 October 1918, no. 541 (Morgen), p. 1. The article closes incredibly with "mit Gott für König und Vaterland."

of all Germans in the powerful August days of 1914."[62] Nor was it only the right that called for a renewal of the "spirit of 1914." On 6 October 1918, Walter Rathenau wrote in the *Vossische Zeitung* that Germany needed a *levée en masse* as in 1914.[63] The Minister of the newly formed Public Relations Ministry, the *Zentralstelle für Heimatdienst* Matthias Erzberger, proclaimed in one of his first declarations that now, "as on 4 August 1914 joy, pride, and enthusiasm must rise up around the new people's government."[64]

The military was more realistic. Recognizing that a national uprising had no chance of military success, it called on the civilian government to sue for peace. After the Allies put forward harsh terms Ludendorff did call for a *levée en masse*, for the rebirth of the "spirit of 1914."[65] Yet this had the purpose of saving face. It was rejected by most Germans. For after it was clear that the military leaders no longer believed victory to be possible the calls for holding out through will alone seemed to many Germans to mean little more than having them commit personal sacrifices for false ideals. It was exactly this rejection of the noble ideal of sacrifice as a value in itself that led the sailors at Kiel to revolt and their revolt spread throughout Germany, becoming a "revolution."[66]

The revolution of 1918 was essentially negative; its immediate goal was to end the war. In positive terms many liberals, such as Theodor Wolff on 10 November 1918, saw the revolution as a rejection of "lying," even identifying a program of deception with the aristocratic political culture.[67] Many on the left set out in 1918 to expose the lies. Hans Delbrück charged that the propaganda had "taught the clear falsehood that England had begun this war against us out of economic envy." Others pointed out that the government had lied about the Marne, about the

[62] "Aufruf des Bundes deutsch-nationaler Studenten," *Deutschlands Erneuerung* 2, no. 11 (November 1918), pp. 737–738.

[63] Walter Rathenau, "Ein dunkler Tag," *Vossischen Zeitung*, 7 October 1918.

[64] "Richtlinien für den Heimatdienst," written by Erzberger, 22 October 1918, HStA Stuttgart, M 1/3, Bü 562. The ministry was founded on 1 October 1918, according to the proclamation of 11 October 1918, BAL, Reichskanzlei, no. 2440, p. 97. See also the "Leitsätze für die Aufklärungsarbeit in der Heimat (Geheim)" of 1 October 1918, GhStAPK, XIV/180/15377.

[65] At the same meeting the War Minister stated "a determined German will will lead to an honorable peace." Quoted in *Reichs- und Staatsanzeiger*, 25 September 1918, GhStAPK, I/90/2430.

[66] On the revolution of 1918 see especially Ulrich Kulge, *Die deutsche Revolution 1918/19* (Frankfurt/Main, 1985); Reinhard Rürup, "Problems of the German Revolution 1918–1919," *Journal of Contemporary History* 3 (1968), pp. 109 ff.; and Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Die deutsche Revolution 1918–1920. Politische Revolution und soziale Protestbewegung," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 4 (1978), pp. 362–391.

[67] Theodor Wolff, Untitled, *Berliner Tageblatt*, 10 November 1918, no. 534 (Morgen). Similarly, Haussmann, *Schlaglichter* (diary entry of 6 October 1918), pp. 241–242; and E. E. Hermann Schmidt, *Das politische Werbewesen im Kriege. Vortrag* (Berlin, 1919), pp. 3–4.

extent of the submarine successes, about the number and quality of the American troops, and about the proximity of victory.[68] As a Prussian official wrote in 1919, "one can not grasp . . . how certain places always proclaimed – until close before the final collapse – the 'near final victory' as the reward for holding out (*Durchhalten*)."[69] The military even lied about the responsibility for the call for peace. On 16 October, Major Würz instructed the press that,

> under all conditions one must avoid suggesting that the move toward peace came from the military. The Chancellor and his government have taken the responsibility. The press must not destroy this impression. The press must emphasize that it is the government . . . which decided to take this step.[70]

Certainly, the German government had lied a good deal during the war. As one of the government's most important propaganda officials, Erhard Deutelmoser, admitted in 1919: "Germany has been deceived by its leaders concerning its fate. No one can deny that German public opinion was led in the wrong direction, with grave consequences."[71] Yet the revolution was not the triumph of empiricism that many liberals had hoped it would be. The problem was, as Erhard Deutelmoser noted, that "it takes two for someone to go down the wrong path: one, who points in the false direction, and one who allows himself to be guided."[72] Most Germans who had believed the lies had wanted to be lied to, and, indeed, called those Germans traitors who employed reason to cast doubt upon the veracity of the propaganda.[73] The War Press Office only reflected the people's desire not to know the truth. Even the SPD did little to break the system of lies. As one liberal noted, "the German people are responsible for their own downfall because they not only accepted the dictatorship of

[68] Hans Delbrück, "Front und Heimat," *Krieg und Politik 1914–1918*, vol. III (Berlin, 1919), p. 211. Karl Lange, *Marneschlacht und deutsche Öffentlichkeit 1914–1939. Eine verdrängte Niederlage und ihre Folgen* (Düsseldorf, 1974). On the submarine issue, see "Anhang 1: Die Irreführung der öffentlichen Meinung," in Ludwig Herz, "Geschichte, Sinn und Kritik des Schlagwortes vom 'Dolchstoss,'" in Germany. Reichstag. Untersuchungsausschuss, 4 Reihe, *Die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruchs im Jahre 1918*, vol. VI, p. 206. On the American troops, see "Anhang 1: Die Irreführung der öffentlichen Meinung," in *ibid.*, p. 208.

[69] Otto Baumgarten (ed.), *Die Schuld am deutschen Zusammenbruch. Tagebuchblätter eines höheren preußischen Verwaltugnsbeamten* (Tübingen, 1919), p. 27.

[70] Quoted in Ludwig Herz, "Geschichte, Sinn und Kritik des Schlagwortes vom 'Dolchstoß,'" in Germany. Reichstag. Untersuchungsausschuss, 4 Reihe, *Die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruchs im Jahre 1918*, vol. VI, p. 110.

[71] Erhard Deutelmoser, "Die amtliche Einwirkung auf die deutsche Öffentlichkeit im Kriege," *Die deutsche Nation* 1, no. 10 (1919), p. 21. Similarly in his *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen. Politische Anregungen* (Berlin, 1919), p. 70.

[72] Deutelmoser, "Die amtliche Einwirkung," p. 22.

[73] See, for example, Karl Heldmann's description of his experiences during the war: *Kriegserlebnisse eines deutschen Geschichtsprofessors in der Heimat* (Ludwigsburg, 1922).

lies, they themselves carried out this dictatorship."[74] Not surprisingly, there was no historical work on the myth of the "spirit of 1914," no demythologizing of the myth of the spirit of 1914, indeed of any of the war propaganda, during the revolution.

Writing after the war, Ludendorff would blame the German defeat on the failure of German propaganda and the success of foreign propaganda.[75] Certainly, his own propaganda was unsuccessful, yet not for the reasons Ludendorff gave in his memoirs, namely that there was not enough of it. It failed because of its organizational structure and its content. German propaganda at the end of the war reached the converted. Even where it did speak to those whose morale needed improving – the soldiers and the working classes – it failed to offer a compelling vision of a future German society. Ordinary soldiers especially disliked the emphasis on will.[76] For, of course, Ludendorff was incorrect. Whereas the English were a long way from starving, the Germans were quite near starving, and the troops at the front and the people at home knew it. No amount of propaganda could change these facts. When these facts could no longer be denied except by the most determined act of will their truth brought forth a revolution.

And yet the propaganda was not a complete failure. Certainly mere will power could not overcome all obstacles, yet the propaganda had strengthened the German will. The German people fought for four long years, against overwhelming odds. More importantly, after the war, the essential elements of the war propaganda, especially its usage of the "spirit of 1914," of the nature of German unity, couched now as the *Volksgemeinschaft*, would be at the heart of political debate. The propaganda narrative of the spirit of 1914 remained a powerful utopian vision against which the reality of Weimar politics and society could and would be judged.

[74] Dr. Frhr. von Schoenaich, "Diktatur der Lüge," *Die Welt am Montag* 29, no. 31(30 July 1923), p. 2.

[75] Hans Thimme, *Weltkrieg ohne Waffen. Die Propaganda der Westmächte gegen Deutschland ihre Wirkung und ihre Abwehr* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1932), p. 160.

[76] On the soldiers' dislike of the propaganda at the front see Martin Hobohm, *Soziale Heeresmißstände als Teilursache des deutschen Zusammenbruchs von 1918* (Berlin, 1931), p. 340; Hans Thimme, *Weltkrieg ohne Waffen*, p. 200; Erich Otto Volkmann, *Der Marxismus und das deutsche Heer im Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 1925), p. 171; and the remarks of General Groener during the "stab-in-the-back" trial in Munich in 1925, quoted in Hans Herzfeld, *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und die Auflösung der nationalen Einheitsfront im Weltkriege* (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 368–369.

8 The "spirit of 1914," 1919–1945

In the Weimar Republic there was little interest in the history of the "August experiences." Very few of the 1914 plays were performed. Very little of the 1914 poetry was republished. The majority of First World War novels written in the 1920s did not include an account of the "August experiences," although they did refer to them in a vocabulary full of pathos.[1] There was a great deal of interest in the history of the beginning of the war, but it concentrated on the responsibility for the outbreak of the war. In this huge literature the "spirit of 1914" seldom appeared, and when it did appear it was only as the argument that as all Germans had willingly and enthusiastically come to the defence of their country, and as they would have done this only if they had believed that this was a just, a defensive war, then it must have been a defensive war.[2]

The heyday of the "spirit of 1914" as a metaphor, a political slogan, had also passed. Some of the liberal clubs founded to sustain and uphold the "spirit of 1914" survived the revolution, but dropped the "1914" from their name. In 1919, in the elections for the Constitutional Assembly, the Deutsch Nationale Volks-Partei (DNVP), the reincarnation of the Conservative Party, proclaimed: "Vote DNVP. We are the Spirit of 1914." To my knowledge they never used this slogan again. Even the National Socialists, who in 1933 would claim that their "revolution" was a renewal of the revolution begun in 1914, never employed the "spirit of 1914" as a campaign slogan.

Yet if there was little interest in the history of the "August experiences," if the "spirit of 1914" was not an important political slogan, this was not because the narrative of the "spirit of 1914" was unimportant. How was

[1] On German First World War novels see Karl Prümm, *Die Literatur des Soldatischen Nationalismus der 20er Jahre (1918–1933). Gruppenideologie und Epochenproblematik* (Kronberg, 1974); Hans-Harald Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller. Der Kriegsroman der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart, 1986); and Stickelberger-Eder, *Aufbruch 1914*, pp. 156 ff.

[2] So, for example, Paul Rohrbach, *Politische Erziehung* (Stuttgart, 1919), pp. 55 ff. For a superb discussion of this enormous literature see Jäger, *Historische Forschung und politische Kultur in Deutschland.*

the memory of the 1914 experiences employed and appropriated during the Weimar Republic?[3]

Remembering and commemorating the "August experiences" during the 1920s

In 1915 Johann Plenge called for 2 August, the first day of mobilization, to be commemorated as a holiday. Plenge and others who had made similar suggestions during the war were to be disappointed.[4] With the exception of 1924, the Weimar Republic did not officially commemorate the anniversary of August 1914, fearing that any official memory would only further polarize an already divided public. The one official ceremony in 1924 offered ample evidence for this thesis.[5]

In early 1924 Edwin Redslob, the government's artistic director, reminded the government of the upcoming tenth anniversary of the beginning of the war. Redslob suggested an official ceremony, asserting that such a ceremony would itself increase public support for the Republican idea, would help endow the Republican idea with legitimacy. In a report he prepared a few months later he argued that national symbols and ceremonies themselves create unity – for national symbols are, by definition, something all Germans share. The government should attempt to identify the Republican idea with the "spirit of 1914." Redslob called for the ceremony not only to speak to "the living spirit of those who had fallen," he also asked all speakers to identify the revolution of 1918 with 1914, to describe the new constitution as the "beginning of a new unity, a new community among the people."[6]

Sceptics within the government, such as the Prussian Interior Minister Carl Severing, pointed out that an official ceremony by itself would not increase public support for the Republican idea. There were, Severing asserted, no uncontested national symbols, no symbols that the nation as a whole embraced. Symbolic politics could not create something that did not exist; it could only hope to identify the democratic idea with existing

[3] There is an enormous literature on the impact of the First World War on post-war German political culture. See especially George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, esp. pp. 154 ff.; and Richard Bessel, *Germany after the First World War* (Oxford, 1993), esp. pp. 254 ff.

[4] Johann Plenge, *Der Krieg und die Volkswirtschaft* (Münster, 1915), pp. 187–188. Similarly, Philipp Zorn, "Zum 4. August 1917," *Der Tag*, 4 August 1917, no. 180, p. 1; Dietrich Traub, "Eine einzige Bitte. Zum 1. August, 1918," *Der Tag*, 1 August 1918, no. 388, Beiblatt.

[5] Accordingly, 1 or 4 August is not discussed in Lehnert and Megerle (eds.), *Politische Identität und nationale Gedenktage*.

[6] Reichskunstwart (Redslob), "Denkschrift über die Grundgedanken zur Feier für die Gefallenen des Deutschen Vaterlandes am 3. August 1924," Berlin, 6 June 1924, BA Koblenz, R 32, no. 221, p. 134.

national symbols. Accordingly, a democratic symbolic politics in the Weimar Republic would most probably have the opposite effect, for it would remind the people of their differences. It would be better, Severing argued, simply to accept that only over time would the people as a whole come to accept the Republic, as they grew accustomed to it.[7]

The fears that the commemoration would turn into a fiasco were well founded. In the weeks leading up to the ceremony the preparations were accompanied by dissonance, and it was this dissonance more than the unity which was reported in the press. Jewish leaders complained that a Priest and a Minister but no Rabbi had been invited to participate. Pacifists deplored the fact that this was officially an "army" (*Reichswehr*) ceremony, charging that the army did not represent the German people, and that the "living" spirit of the dead served an anti-democratic militarism, not the Republican ideal.[8] Conservatives claimed that a Social Democratic President (Friedrich Ebert) could not stage a ceremony dignified enough to do justice to those who had given their lives for Germany.

On 2 August 1924 the government proclaimed in posters throughout Germany: "To the German People": "Ten years ago the people came forward in unforgettable unity and strength to arm themselves in order to fight for the freedom and protection of the fatherland."[9] Early the next day, on 3 August, crowds gathered in Berlin in front of parliament, one of the places where ten years earlier there had been "war enthusiasm." Now, however, not the statue of Bismarck but the Reichstag was the center of attention. The building was bedecked with flowers; over the entrance hung a banner with the words: "for the living spirit of our dead (*den lebenden Geisternunserer Toten*)." On one side of the building stood the flag of the new Republic (black, red, and gold); on the other stood the flag of the old Germany, the flag for which the soldiers had fought and died (black, white, and red). Both were at half-mast.

The ceremony began with a military parade. A Protestant chaplain gave a short speech. A choir sang some religious hymns and then a Catholic chaplain spoke. After more songs the German President, Friedrich Ebert (SPD), spoke for about ten minutes. In his speech Ebert remembered the dead, those disabled by the war, those who had lost their homes in the peace treaty. He stated that German soldiers had not fought

[7] See Behrenbeck, *Der Kult um die toten Helden*, pp. 282 ff.

[8] Hellmut von Gerlach, "Die Friedens-Demonstrationen. Die Lunte am Pulverfaß," *Die Welt am Montag* 30, no. 31 (4 August 1924), pp. 1–2; and Hermann Schützinger, "Der Anfang und das Ende. Zum Tage des Kriegsbeginns," *Vorwärts*, 2 August 1924, no. 361, p. 1.

[9] Reprinted in "Ein Ehrenmal für die Opfer," *Vorwärts*, 3 August 1914, no. 362 (Sonntag).

an aggressive but a defensive war.[10] Invoking the theme of the day, he asked that "the spirit of the dead remain alive in our people, so that it can be born once again: the free Germany." Ebert did not, however, mention the revolution or the constitution; indeed, he made no attempt to identify the "spirit of 1914" with the revolution of 1918.[11]

The ceremony ended at 12:00 noon with two minutes' silence. Or at least it was supposed to. During these two minutes, however, Communists shouted "down with war" and sang the "Internationale." Patriots responded with the "Wacht am Rhein." At 12:02, when the two minutes' silence ended, the flags were raised from half mast and the military band began playing a religious hymn. By all accounts few noticed, as the two groups continued to sing their own songs.

There were similar ceremonies throughout Germany, with the exception of Bavaria, almost always at some official location, such as churches, the city hall, or the local war memorial. (The Bavarian government refused to have anything to do with this "defeatist," "Republican" commemoration.) Pacifists staged their peace demonstrations elsewhere. Most ceremonies were characterized by a quiet sobriety. In a few cities Communists attempted to upset the official ceremonies. In Dresden a Communist parade carried a poster with the slogan "Never again War" through the middle of the Republican crowd during the two minutes' silence. The Republicans immediately began singing the national anthem, and a fist-fight ensued. In Jena, Dresden, and in Leipzig there were also fist-fights.[12]

In his commentary the next day, the liberal journalist Hellmut von Gerlach pointed out that the government had been naive to believe that an official commemoration of the beginning of the war could unite the German people. "1914," he claimed, was identified in the popular mind

[10] Discussed in Robert Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War 1914–1919* (Ithaca, 1984), pp. 32 ff. See also the report by the Sächsische Gesandtschaft, Berlin, 3 July 1924, Staatsarchiv Bremen 3–D.G., no. 48.

[11] Quoted in "Totenfeier in Berlin," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 4 August 1924, no. 210, p. 5.

[12] On the absence of such ceremonies in Bavaria see "Opfergedenktag," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 24 July 1924, p. 3. On the pacifist demonstrations see Reinhold Lütgemeier-Davin, "Basismobilisierung gegen den Krieg. Die Wieder–Krieg–Bewegung in der Weimarer Republik," in Karl Holl and Wolfrom Wette (eds.), *Pazifismus in der Weimarer Republik* (Paderborn, 1981), p. 70. The Leipzig ceremony is described in "Die Feiern im Reich," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 4 August 1924, no. 210, p. 5. Many of the other festivals are described in "Die Gedenkfeiern im Reich," *Vorwärts*, 4 August 1924, no. 363, pp. 2–3. The fist-fights in Dresden are described in "Zusammenstöße in Dresden," *Vorwärts*, 4 August 1924, no. 363, p. 3. On the 1924 anti-war protest by the KPD around Düsseldorf see the report by the *Regierungspräsident*, HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düsseldorf no. 16884, pp. 52 ff.

with the war experience, and the German people were divided along a militarist/pacifist line over the meaning of the war experience.[13] In the first years after the war liberal and Social Democratic newspapers and magazines used the occasion of the anniversary of the "August experiences" to invoke the memory of war's horror, to blame the militarist system for the defeat, and the defeat for the present economic and social hardships. Every year on the anniversary of the beginning of the war the left staged massive anti-war demonstrations ("Never again War": "*Nie wieder Krieg*"). On 31 July 1921 over 500,000 people protested in 200 to 300 German cities against militarism.[14] In Berlin over 200,000 people gathered at the same public squares where seven years earlier conservative newspapers had seen large "war-enthusiastic" crowds; the *Lustgarten* in front of the palace was filled to overflowing.[15]

In the articles and speeches accompanying these demonstrations pacifist authors and speakers tried to deconstruct what was left of the militarist aura. War, they wrote, was brutal, violent, and dehumanizing.[16] The *Berliner Volkszeitung* published a special edition on 3 August 1919 with the title: "Never again War." Hermann Schützinger wrote in *Vorwärts* on 2 August 1924 that this day must remind Germans of war's horrors, break the "scraps of fog surrounding the romanticism of war."[17] Kurt Tucholsky asserted that the "enthusiasm" of 1914 was not the honorable enthusiasm of a people who felt that they were fighting for a just cause, but a "hurrah patriotism," a "beer-festival mood," evidence of the degeneracy of the German elites and the German educational system.[18]

The right, in contrast, defended the "enthusiasm" as noble and profoundly moving. At the heart of what George Mosse has termed the conservative "myth of the war experience" was the so-called Langemarck legend.[19] The Langemarck legend stated that in October 1914 the young German volunteers – Germany's best and brightest – went over the top at Langemarck singing "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" – and were gunned down. (As it turns out, this narrative, too, was not historically

[13] Gerlach, "Die Friedens-Demonstrationen. Die Lunte am Pulverfaß," pp. 1–2.

[14] Lütgemeier-Davin, "Basismobilisierung gegen den Krieg," p. 59. See also Gerlach, "Die Friedens-Demonstrationen. Die Lunte am Pulverfaß," pp. 1–2.

[15] "Massendemonstration 'Nie wieder Krieg!,'" *Die Welt am Montag* 27, no. 31 (1 August 1921), pp. 1–2.

[16] *Mit Gott für Kaiser und Vaterland. Erlebnisse deutscher Proletarier während der 'Grossen Zeit' 1914–1918* (Berlin, 1924).

[17] Hermann Schützinger, "Der Anfang und das Ende. Zum Tage des Kriegsbeginns," *Vorwärts*, 2 August 1924, no. 361, p. 1.

[18] Kurt Tucholsky, "Der Geist von 1914," *Die Weltbühne* 20/2, no. 38 (7 August 1924), pp. 204 ff.

[19] George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, pp. 7 ff.

accurate – at least not as it was told.[20]) The popular author Rudolf G. Binding wrote about Langemarck, "this event does not belong in the realm of history, where it would become stiff and buried, but in the realm of myth, that forever creating, forever youthful, forever living power."[21]

And yet, as Bernd Ulrich and Bernd Hüppauf have pointed out, it was not the war volunteer but the storm trooper who represented the right's ideal of the German soldier. What Bernd Hüppauf has termed the "myth" of Verdun, the vision of the heroic man without nerves, the man of steel, came to be more important than the legend of Langemarck, the account of enthusiastic heroism.[22] Not the willingness to approach war with enthusiasm but the ability to fight without nerves was the touchstone of human conduct.

In the years immediately after 1918 the pacifist identification of the memory of 1914 with the horrors of war held the more prominent position in German public opinion. The French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 changed this. Recognizing that in this climate of opinion there would be little public support for anti-militarist demonstrations, indeed, that public demonstrations would likely lead to fist-fights, the left staged its 1 August 1923 anti-war demonstrations inside.[23] In contrast, in 1923 the right began organizing public militarist demonstrations on 1 August.[24]

Yet although the right became more active their attentions lay elsewhere. Beginning in 1925 the anniversary of the August experience was most often simply neglected. Newspapers – of all political directions –

[20] See Reinhard Dithmar (ed.), *Der Langemarck-Mythos in Dichtung und Unterricht* (Luchterhand, 1992); Bernd Hüppauf, "Langemarck, Verdun and the Myth of a *New Man* in Germany after the First World War," *War and Society* 6, no. 2 (September 1988), pp. 70–103; Helmut Kopetzky, *In den Tod, Hurra!: deutsche Jugend-Regimenter im Ersten Weltkrieg: ein historischer Tatsachenbericht über Langemarck* (Cologne, 1981); Karl Unruh, *Langemarck. Legende und Wirklichkeit* (Koblenz, 1986); and George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, pp. 70 ff.

[21] Rudolf G. Binding, "Deutsche Jugend vor den Toten des Krieges," in Werner Kindt (ed.), *Grundschriften der deutschen Jugendbewegung* (Düsseldorf, 1963), p. 431.

[22] Ulrich, "Die Desillusionierung der Kriegsfreiwilligen von 1914," p. 122; Bernd Hüppauf, "Schlachtenmythen und die Konstruktion des 'Neuen Menschen,'" in Gerhard Hirschfeld and Gerd Krumeich (eds.), *Keiner fühlt sich hier als Mensch* (Essen, 1993), p. 43.

[23] Lütgemeier-Davin, "Basismobilisierung gegen den Krieg," pp. 66–67.

[24] Such demonstrations in Munich are described in "Gedenkfeier für die alte Armee," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 5 August 1923 (no. 210), p. 3; "Armee-Feier des Frontkriegerbundes," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 5 August 1914, no. 211; "Flieger-Gedenktage. Der Begrüßungsabend," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 6 August 1923, no. 211, p. 3; and "Armee-Festabende der Bayerischen Volkspartei," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 5 August 1914, no. 211. The 1928 Munich demonstrations are described in "Im Zeichen des Reichskriegertages," *Völkischer Beobachter* (Munich), 23 July 1929, no. 168.

tended to skip over the day in silence. From 1925 till 1928 there were few public demonstrations of any sort associated with the anniversary of 1 August. Only in 1929, with National Socialism lurking on the horizon (the National Socialists staged their *Parteitag* to coincide with the fifteenth anniversary of the beginning of the war), did the Social Democrats and the Communists once again stage public anti-war protests on 1 August.[25] As expected, these protests were accompanied by fist-fights. Yet at the end of the Weimar Republic there were many fist-fights, and those that took place over the true meaning of the memory of the August experiences paled in comparison to those over more pressing issues.

Both the Langemarck myth and the Verdun myth of the war experience offered consolation that the war had had a purpose – its purpose being not to have increased German power but to have created a new man. At the opposite end was the pacifist interpretation that the war had been in vain. Between these two poles the vast majority of Germans had a more ambivalent view of the meaning of the war. The artist Käthe Kollwitz, whose son Peter was one of those who had volunteered and died in Flanders in 1914, spent much of the rest of her life coming to grips with her son's death and her own bereavement. Kollwitz in some sense felt responsible for her son's death – it was she, after all, who had convinced her husband to allow their son to volunteer. Her story can be considered typical of a more personal, quieter way of coming to grips with the war, with the "spirit of 1914."[26] Her diary is a moving account of her pain, of her effort to find solace, of her desire not to betray. In 1916 she wrote in her diary, "is it a break of faith with you, Peter, if I can now only see madness in the war?"[27] She never found an adequate answer. After years of struggling, in 1932 she gave voice to her sorrow in two magnificent statues in Belgium, next to Peter's grave. The two statues, self-portraits of Käthe and Karl Kollwitz, are representations of mourning. Both figures are kneeling, turning inward to their own pain, unable to communicate their loss.

In the 1920s there were many war memorials – none as compelling as

[25] Lütgemeier-Davin, "Basismobilisierung gegen den Krieg," p. 73. The anti-war demonstrations in Berlin in the Lustgarten, with "many demonstrators," are described in "Die Demonstrationen in Berlin," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 2 August 1929, no. 208, p. 1. In Munich, the police forbade any communist demonstrations, and there were none. "Demonstrations-Versuche in München unterdrückt," *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 2 August 1929, no. 208, p. 1.

[26] See Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge, 1995), chapter 4. See further Regina Schulte, "Käthe Kollwitz' Opfer," in Christian Jansen, Lutz Niethammer, and Bernd Weisbrod (eds.), *Von der Aufgabe der Freiheit. Politische Verantwortung und bürgerliche Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Festschrift für Hans Mommsen zum 5. November 1995* (Berlin, 1995), pp. 647–672.

[27] Quoted in Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 110.

Kollwitz's, but all in some way speaking to the absence, to the loss, all trying to offer solace to the living. In Germany almost every family was in mourning, almost every family had to come up with its own interpretation of the meaning of their sacrifice, had to discover its own version of "they have not died in vain." In this interpretive endeavor they fell back on the language, vocabulary, narratives, and patterns which had been used during the war to give meaning to the struggle at hand.

Herein lay much of the power of the narrative of the "spirit of 1914" in the Weimar Republic. It was a certain narrative of the "spirit of 1914," German unity, for which many of these young men had died. As one letter written during the war by a young student and published in 1919 stated, "I can not become enthusiastic about a war without a purpose. The only thing that speaks for this war is the unity."[28] This "unity" would be held on to tenaciously as the explanation of what they had died for. In the 1920s the narrative of the "spirit of 1914" was itself no longer at the center of German political discourse. Yet it was a part of the assumptions of the two most important political legends of the Weimar Republic: the "*Volksgemeinschaft*" and the "stab-in-the-back" legend. Both made little sense without the "spirit of 1914."

The *Volksgemeinschaft*

Volksgemeinschaft, meaning literally "people's community," was a word of uncommon appeal in the 1920s and 1930s. The *Volksgemeinschaft* was embraced throughout the political spectrum, by Anarchists, Catholics, Jews, Protestants, Social Democrats, Liberal Democrats, Conservatives, and National Socialists.[29] Although the "spirit of 1914" was seldom used as a slogan in the 1920s political groups employed much the same lexicon, the same key-words when discussing the *Volksgemeinschaft* that they had employed earlier to describe the "spirit" of 1914. Indeed, many contemporaries saw the two symbols as the same thing. As the Bavarian politician Karl Scharngl (who played a leading role in the CSU, the Christlich-Soziale Union, the most important political party in Bavaria

[28] The letter by Arthur Zimme is reprinted in Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze (ed.), *Ver sacrum: was die im Kriege gefallenen Mitarbeiter der sozialen Arbeitsgemeinschaft dem deutschen Volk zu sagen haben: Mitteilungen und Aufzeichnungen* (Berlin, 1919/1920), p. 116.

[29] We lack a good etymological history of *Volksgemeinschaft*. The best introduction is probably Mai, "'Verteidigungkrieg' und 'Volksgemeinschaft,'" p. 590. I have benefited especially from the newspaper clippings on *Volksgemeinschaft* collected by the Deutsche Arbeitsfront, BAL, 62 DAF 3, no. 17362, 17323. On the popularity of the idea of *Volksgemeinschaft* see especially William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power. The Experience of a Single German Town, 1922–1945*, second edition (New York, 1984); and Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, second edition (Boston, 1989), p. 141.

after 1945), wrote in 1932 in the left-liberal *Vossische Zeitung*: "for years many different groups have put forth the call for a *Volksgemeinschaft*, with varying rationales . . . The meaning and the nature of a true *Volksgemeinschaft* was experienced in the August days of 1914."[30]

In 1918 and 1919 many left-wing intellectuals hoped that the 1918 revolution would bring a "renewal" of the "spirit of 1914." They hoped not so much for a rebirth of the war enthusiasm or of the carnivalesque aspects of the crowd experiences but of the social unity of that time. In the words of Theodor Heuss, the Republic would "open the door to a new feeling of community."[31] In one of the first pamphlets published by the Weimar Republic's political education agency, the Zentralinstitut für Heimatdienst, *The Spirit of the New Volksgemeinschaft*, the author writing the introduction claimed, "the revolution is the birth of a new human being. It is the beginning of the community of the people (*Volksgemeinschaft*)."[32] But how would the left bring the *Volksgemeinschaft* about?

Many in the DDP (Deutsche Demokratische Partei), the Center Party, and the DVP (Deutsche Volkspartei) hoped to create the *Volksgemeinschaft* through the new constitution, with its democratic structures.[33] (Social Democrats, in contrast, largely employed the *Volksgemeinschaft* as a description of society after the socialist revolution. "Democracy" was – at least officially – but a step on the path toward socialism.[34]) Hugo Preuss, the author of the Weimar constitution, charged in a number of books and articles that as democracy was a government of and by the people it would necessarily create an "identity"

[30] Karl Scharngl, "1932 zur Volksgemeinschaft?," *Vossische Zeitung*, 31 December 1932, no. 614 (BAL, 62 DAF 3, no. 17362).

[31] Theodor Heuss, *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen* (Stuttgart, 1919), p. 51. See Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik. Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationlismus zwischen 1918 und 1933* (Munich, 1968), p. 23, pp. 97 ff.; Lothar Albertin, *Liberalismus und Demokratie am Anfang der Weimarer Republik. Eine vergleichende Analyse der Deutschen Demokratischen Partei und der Deutschen Volkspartei* (Düsseldorf, 1972), p. 39; and Jürgen C. Hess, *"Das ganze Deutschland soll es sein"; Demokratischer Nationalismus in der Weimarer Republik am Beispiel der Deutschen Demokratischen Partei* (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 46 ff.

[32] "An das deutsche Volk!," in Zentralstelle für Heimatdienst (ed.), *Der Geist der neuen Volksgemeinschaft. Eine Denkschrift für das deutsche Volk* (Berlin, March 1919), pp. 1 ff.

[33] Hess, *"Das ganze Deutschland soll es sein"*, p. 330.

[34] There is an enormous literature on the SPD's approach to political culture during the 1920s. See Franz Walter, *Nationale Romantik und revolutionärer Mythos. Politik und Lebensweisen im frühen Weimarer Jungsozialismus* (Berlin, 1986); Detlef Lehnert, *Sozialdemokratie und Novemberrevolution. Die Neuordnungsdebatte 1918/19 in der politischen Publizistik von SPD und USPD* (Frankfurt, 1983); and, more generally, the monumental synthesizing work by Heinrich A. Winkler, *Von der Revolution zur Stabilisierung: Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik, 1918–1924* (Berlin, 1985); and *Der Schein der Normalität: Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik, 1924–1930* (Berlin, 1985).

between the government and the people. Of course, Preuss recognized that not all citizens would agree on all issues, yet he hoped, much as liberals had during the war, that a foundation of mutual respect would produce a "community" of discussion: "*Volksgemeinschaft* and party struggles are not mutually exclusive if the . . . participants always keep in mind that the other has an equal right to speak, to participate in public life."[35] The jurist Gustav Radbruch interpreted these democratic efforts to create a *Volksgemeinschaft* not just as a product of the revolution of 1919, but also of the experiences of 1914.[36]

Democrats such as Theodor Heuss and Paul Rohrbach recognized, however, that this was not enough. They called for democrats to develop national legends, as a means of representing the identity of the people and the nation.[37] This was after all what had led Redslob to suggest an official celebration for the tenth anniversary of the "spirit of 1914." Yet democratic liberals had trouble with symbolic politics. There were no "ideas of 1918," no experiences which could serve as a new collective narrative. As Sabine Behrenbeck has noted, political myths are not so much created as inherited. Republicans worked with the inheritance they had – staging public ceremonies to commemorate the birth of the democratic constitution, yet there was no denying the awkwardness of their efforts.[38]

Conservatives found it easy to criticize the democratic attempts to create community. They pointed out that "community" was not produced by structures such as constitutions but was something lived. Community exists where community happens. They warned that modern mass politics tended toward oligarchy, that in modern bureaucratic democracies the people were still the object and not the subject of political decisions. They argued further that the equality of a modern, democratic civil society "atomized" the people, forcing them to concentrate on their particular interests and not on the good of the whole,[39] that a modern capitalistic democratic mass public realm, that is, a public realm dominated by mass media, tended toward sensationalism, toward calumny, and not toward any rational discussion of self-interest in pursuit of an enlightened compromise.[40] Instead, conservatives claimed that a

[35] Hugo Preuss, "Volksgemeinschaft?," in *Um die Reichsverfassung von Weimar* (Berlin, 1924), p. 19. See Mai, "'Verteidigungskrieg' und 'Volksgemeinschaft,'" p. 593 and especially Hess, *"Das ganze Deutschland soll es sein"*, pp. 35 ff.

[36] For example, Gustav Radbruch, *Verfassungsrede gehalten bei der Feier der Reichsregierung am 11. August 1928* (Berlin, 1928), p. 4.

[37] Theodor Heuss, *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen* (Stuttgart, 1919), pp. 7 ff.; and Paul Rohrbach, *Politische Erziehung* (Stuttgart, 1919), pp. 16 ff.

[38] Behrenbeck, *Der Kult um die toten Helden*, pp. 282 ff.

[39] See, among others, Hans Freyer, *Der Staat* (Leipzig, 1925), p. 61.

[40] Carl Schmitt's *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* (Cambridge, 1985 – first published in 1923), is the most brilliant version of this critique.

Volksgemeinschaft was only possible on the basis of a spiritual and ideological national union, only possible if all Germans shared similar ideas, values, hopes, aspirations, and beliefs.[41]

The democratic efforts to identify their program with the *Volksgemeinschaft* spoke to the power of "unity" as the symbolic meaning of the war. The right, too, shared this interpretation. Yet, unlike the left, the right did not see the *Volksgemeinschaft* solely as a description of the future national political culture, but, as in the propaganda discourse on the "spirit of 1914" during the war, as the foundation of national power, as the means out of the present difficulties. In 1926, the government's press agency, after defining the *Volksgemeinschaft* as the recognition of a common bond, a common fate, and a healthy nationalism, claimed that "the reawakening and growth again of Germany depends upon the unity of the empire and the whole German people."[42] The *Volksgemeinschaft* was thus not just a question of political culture but of national destiny. In their conceptualizations of how to achieve the *Volksgemeinschaft* conservatives drew on the lessons of the war, and especially, as Heide Gerstenberger has noted, on the lessons of 1914. Indeed, many conservative descriptions of how to achieve the *Volksgemeinschaft* read like variations on the theme of how to recreate and sustain the conditions of 1914.[43]

One possibility was a common enemy.[44] Hitler asserted in 1927:

> There was one place in Germany where there was no class division. That was at the front . . . Why could one do it at the front? Because the enemy lay opposite us, because one recognized the danger. Thus, if I want to bring our people together, to unite them, I have first to build a new front, which has a common enemy, so that everyone knows: we have to be united, then this enemy is our common enemy.[45]

Another possibility was a common culture, shared ideas, a shared national character. In the 1920s, many conservatives developed the

[41] On this "subjective" understanding of the nature of a nation see Stefan Breuer, *Anatomie der konservativen Revolution* (Darmstadt, 1993), pp. 81 ff. There is an enormous literature on the "conservative revolution." Besides Breuer, I have relied upon Klaus Fritzsche, *Politische Romantik und Gegenrevolution. Fluchtwege in der Krise der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft: Das Beispiel des 'Tat'-Kreises* (Frankfurt/Main, 1976); and Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*.

[42] *Grundsätze der Volksaufklärung* (Berlin, n.d [1926]), pp. 6–7, HStA Stuttgart, J 150, Bü 12a/2.

[43] Heide Gerstenberger, *Der revolutionäre Konservatismus. Ein Beitrag zur Analyse des Liberalismus* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 16 ff.

[44] See Rolf Kraft, "Die jungdeutsche Bewegung," *Deutschlands Erneuerung* 5, no. 4 (1921), p. 236; and especially Carl Schmitt, "Totaler Feind, totaler Krieg, totaler Staat (1937)," in *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar-Genf-Versailles, 1923–1939* (Hamburg, 1940). More generally, Gerstenberger, *Der revolutionäre Konservatismus*, p. 41.

[45] Adolf Hitler, *Hitler in Franken. Reden aus der Kampfzeit* (n.p., 1939), p. 83.

themes of Plenge's work, seeing the essence of 1914 in the blending of nationalism and socialism. Oswald Spengler, for example, writing in 1920, stated that the revolution of 1918 was not a revolution, rather:

> the German socialistic revolution occurred in 1914. It occurred in legitimate and militaristic forms. The revolution will in its meaning – for the common man – slowly overtake the realities of 1918 and become a decisive factor in our future development.[46]

Others, especially National Socialists, carried the cultural argument to its *völkisch* extreme, seeing the essence of German culture in racism and blood.

Yet for many conservatives, the war experiences, especially the experiences with propaganda, had shown that a shared ideology was less important in creating a *Volksgemeinschaft* than a shared belief. Community was less a function of a shared national ideology than of a shared national faith; community would be created through the collective act of believing in the myth. In the words of the playwright Hans Johst, later an important National Socialist author, "the need, the despair, the poverty of our people calls out for help . . . and help can in the final analysis only come . . . from the rebirth of a community of belief."[47] So couched, the question of Germany was "a question of will."[48] "Conservative revolutionaries" openly called for a new political myth as a means of creating a *Volksgemeinschaft*. They often quoted Mussolini's famous remark in a speech in Naples in 1924: "the myth is a faith, it is a passion. It is not necessary that it shall be a reality. It is a reality by the fact that it is a goal, a hope, a faith, that it is courage."[49]

Among political parties, as Martin Broszat has noted, the National Socialists were best able to speak to this conservative understanding of how to achieve the *Volksgemeinschaft*, in spite of the fact that their description of the *Volksgemeinschaft* was in many respects vague and

[46] Oswald Spengler, *Preußentum und Sozialismus* (Munich, 1932 [first published in 1920]), p. 12.

[47] Hans Johst, *Von Glauben* (1928), quoted in Frank, *Gott im Exil*, p. 96. Similarly, Curt Hotzel, "Wege zum Mythos," *Deutschlands Erneuerung* 4, no. 5 (May, 1920), pp. 323–325; and Ernst Michel, *Der Weg zum Mythos* (Jena, 1919); among others.

[48] Erich Lilienthal, "Deutschland, eine Willensfrage!," *Deutschlands Erneuerung* 8, no. 12 (1924), p. 719. Similarly, Edgar J. Jung, *Die Herrschaft der Minderwertigen, ihr Zerfall und ihre Ablösung durch ein Neues Reich*, second edition (Berlin, 1930), p. 65; among others.

[49] Quoted in Herman Finer, *Mussolini's Italy* (London, 1935), p. 218. There is an excellent discussion of the difference between the intellectual's discourse on "myth" during and after the war in Stickelberger-Eder, *Aufbruch 1914*, p. 100. See also Theodore Ziolkowski, "Der Hunger nach dem Mythos," in Reinhold Grimm and Johst Hermann (eds.), *Die sogenannten Zwanziger Jahre* (Bad Homburg, 1970), pp. 169 ff.; and Martin Greiffenhagen, *Das Dilemma des Konservatismus in Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Main, 1986), p. 281.

inconsistent.[50] Hitler himself charged that "the concept of *völkisch* was not a possible basis for a movement." Rather, he said this use of *völkisch* was similar to the religion in a religious faith, which is also "not an end in itself, but a means to an end: it is the unavoidably necessary means for reaching that end at all."[51] In his speeches Hitler often enjoined his listeners to seek out the power of faith:

> Rest assured, with us, too, faith is the most important thing and not a rational understanding of things . . . Faith alone creates the state. What is it that allows men to go into a struggle and die for their religious ideas? Not a rational approach to things, only blind faith.[52]

On 1 January 1933 Hitler wrote in the *Völkischer Beobachter*:

> the foundation of any rebuilding of Germany is the overcoming of all internal differences. For the power of every nation is not a function of its theoretical ability or its external armaments but a function of its completed internal armament, which finds expression in the unity of will and in the determination of its will.[53]

Democrats attempted to defuse these arguments by pointing out that this conceptualization of community was only possible within a total state, with the loss of individual freedom. Yet the democratic arguments did not take hold. Part of what gave the conservative arguments their peculiar power in the 1920s was the position within the public sphere of the vast Hugenberg press empire.[54] More importantly, the conservative discourse on the *Volksgemeinschaft* spoke to a real need among many Germans both for knowledge as to the meaning of the war, the nature of the "Germany" they had fought for, as well as the hope that with faith they could accomplish things that were otherwise impossible.[55] As Sabine Behrenbeck has suggested, the "faithful are receptive to a myth because

[50] Martin Broszat, "Zur Struktur der NS-Massenbewegung," in *Vierteljahresheft für Zeitgeschichte* 31 (1983), pp. 59 ff.; Martin Broszat, "Soziale Motivation und Führerbindung des Nationalsozialismus," in *Vierteljahresheft für Zeitgeschichte* 18 (1970), pp. 392 ff. Similarly, Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, p. 141.

[51] Quoted in Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler"s World View. A Blueprint for Power* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 81.

[52] Quoted in Wolfram Wette, "Ideologien, Propaganda und Innenpolitik als Voraussetzungen der Kriegspolitik des Dritten Reiches," in Wilhelm Deist, Manfred Messerschmidt, Hans-Erich Volkmann, and Wolfram Wette, *Ursachen und Voraussetzungen des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Stuttgart, 1979), p. 101.

[53] "Adolf Hitlers Neujahrsbotschaft," *Völkischer Beobachter* (Munich), 1 January 1933, no. 1, p. 1.

[54] Heidrun Holzbach, *Das 'System Hugenberg.' Die Organisation bürgerlicher Sammlungspolitik vor dem Aufstieg der NSDAP 1918–1928* (Stuttgart, 1980); and John A. Leopold, *Alfred Hugenberg. The Radical Nationalist Campaign against the Weimar Republic* (New Haven, 1977).

[55] See the perceptive remarks of Ernst Bloch, "Gespräch über Ungleichzeitigkeit," *Kursbuch* 39 (April, 1975), p. 3; and Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Zurich, 1935). Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, pp. 360 ff.

they expect to gain something from it."[56] Myths are a way of overcoming fear, and are needed when social life appears irrational. In the 1920s, many people felt the power of fate, felt that they no longer had much control over their own destinies. The stab-in-the-back legend spoke directly to these hopes; indeed the stab-in-the-back legend makes little sense without these hopes.

The stab-in-the back legend (*Dolchstosslegende*)

The so-called "stab-in-the-back legend" was, in the words of the Social Democrat Rolf Barthe, "the most important part of the fascist demagogic campaign against Germany and the Republic."[57] The legend asserted that Germany had lost the war not because of the enemy's military but because of the enemy's psychological superiority. The enemy had possessed the better "nerves," the stronger will. In 1918 the nerves of the German civilian population (but not those of the army) broke, producing the revolution of 1918 and the German defeat. The civilian population had "stabbed" the army in the back.

The origins of the "legend" lay in the myth of the "spirit of 1914." For the myth of the "spirit of 1914," as employed in First World War propaganda, charged that victory was a function of will, that the military successes had been produced by German unity, by the German will to victory, by German nerves. The implication, of course, was that the opposite was also true. Already on 6 October 1918 the German Fatherland Party's executive committee asserted that the present peace offer, with its acknowledgement of defeat, was "the necessary result of a weak and unclear political leadership since the beginning of the war."[58] Bethmann Hollweg had been unable to sustain the "spirit of 1914."

[56] Behrenbeck, *Der Kult um die toten Helden*, p. 45.

[57] Rolf Barthe, *Der Zusammenbruch* (n.p., n.d. – published by the SPD), p. 1. The best discussion of the "stab-in-the-back legend" remains Friedrich Freiherr Hiller von Gärtringen, "'Dolchstoss' – Diskussion und 'Dolchstosslegende' im Wandel von vier Jahrzehnten," in Waldemar Besson and Friedrich Freiherr von Gärtringen (eds.), *Geschichte und Gegenwartsbewußtsein* (Göttingen, 1963), pp. 122–160; but see also Joachim Petzold, *Die Dolchstosslegende. Eine Geschichtsfälschung im Dienst des deutschen Imperialismus und Militarismus* (Berlin, 1963); Anneliese Thimme, *Flucht in den Mythos. Die Deutschkonservative Volkspartei und die Niederlage von 1918* (Göttingen, 1969), pp. 68 ff.; and my "Some Lessons of the War." More generally, see Ulrich Heinemann, *Die verdrängte Niederlage. Politische Öffentlichkeit und Kriegsschuldfrage in der Weimarer Republik* (Göttingen, 1983).

[58] Quoted in Wortmann, *Geschichte der Deutschen Vaterlands-Partei*, p. 59. Mai, in "'Aufklärung der Bevölkerung' und 'Vaterländischer Unterricht' in Württemberg 1914–1918," p. 233, has noted that such sentiments were especially strong among propaganda officers. All the same, it is interesting to note that although the "spirit of 1914" myth is one of the key assumptions of the "stab-in-the-back" legend, it was rarely mentioned in this context by the right during the 1920s.

The actual phrase "stab-in-the-back" was made popular by Hindenburg and Ludendorff at a hearing on the causes of the war and the defeat held in parliament on 18 November 1919.[59] At this hearing Hindenburg read a statement written by Ludendorff which included the famous sentences:

> a secret, planned demagogic campaign in the fleet and in the army began [in early 1918] which was similar to those before the war . . . Our operations were doomed to failure. The collapse had to come. The revolution represented only the final stage of this process. An English general said correctly: the German army was stabbed in the back.[60]

In other words, after the war the leading military figures claimed that in their propaganda they had not lied. They did not claim to have portrayed reality objectively. Rather, "reality," they maintained, was a slippery thing. In his memoirs, Erich Ludendorff, while admitting that the enemy had vastly outnumbered and outgunned Germany, asserted that up till 1918 this material inferiority had been compensated by a greater German "will to victory." Defeat came not because the enemy's material superiority had finally grown to the point where it produced victory but because the German will to victory had declined to the point where it produced defeat. According to Ludendorff, Germany had lost the war not because of the enemy's military but because of their psychological superiority. The enemy had had the better nerves, the stronger will. Not the military but the civilian leadership and the defeatist and enemy propaganda were responsible for the decline in German morale.[61]

It was a small step to take to identify one's political enemies, the SPD and left-liberals, as those who had "stabbed the army in the back." If in 1918 many conservatives still concentrated on the poor leadership of Bethmann Hollweg, already in the 1919 campaign for the elections for the National Assembly the Conservative DNVP not only claimed "we are the spirit of 1914," but also asked the German people not to vote for the so-called "November criminals," – the left-liberals and the Social Democrats – who, they asserted, had taken the will out of the German

[59] Hans Thimme, *Weltkrieg ohne Waffen*, p. 160; Ludendorff, *Kriegführung und Politik*, p. 331.

[60] Quoted in Johannes Erger, *Der Kapp–Luttwitz–Putsch. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Innenpolitik* (Düsseldorf, 1967), pp. 71–72. Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War, 1939–1945: Organizations, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany* (London, 1979), p. 9, has noted that General Maurice's article in the *Star* of 30 November 1918 did not say that the German army had been stabbed in the back.

[61] Erich Ludendorff, *Ludendorff's Own Story. August 1914–November 1918*, vol. II (New York, 1919). Similar remarks can be found in the postwar writings of many leading military figures such as Ernst von Wrisberg, *Der Weg zur Revolution 1914–1918* (Leipzig, 1921); Oberst Bauer, *Konnten wir den Krieg vermeiden, gewinnen, abbrechen? Drei Fragen* (Berlin, 1918); and Hans von Kuhl, *Ursachen des Zusammenbruchs* (Berlin, 1925).

people.[62] Throughout the Weimar Republic conservative authors repeated the legend in all the media open to them: in newspapers and magazines, in numerous pamphlets and books, in libel trials, in parliamentary committees, and, of course, in campaign speeches. Protestant ministers gave their version of the myth in their sermons (often stating, for example that Germany lost because it did not keep faith with the spirit of 1914).[63] Indeed, during the 1920s it was almost impossible to find a nationalist narrative of the war that did not include the "stab-in-the-back legend" in some form.

In the latter half of the Weimar Republic the National Socialists were the most vocal and able proponents of this legend, especially in the critical period between 1929 and 1932. Adolf Hitler began his first speech as Chancellor on 1 February 1933 with the words:

> fourteen years have passed since those unfortunate days when the German people, blinded by various internal and external promises, forgot the highest values of our past . . . The promised equality and fraternity have not appeared. But we have lost our freedom. Because of the loss of the unity of the will of our people we have lost our political position in the world.[64]

The 1933 election campaign between 1 February and 5 March was largely a negative campaign against the "November criminals," against the Marxists, charging that now these criminals will pay for their crimes. Yet the legend was not just conservative propaganda. The legend, at least a version of it, even made it into the republic's own history textbooks.[65]

This legend served two functions for conservatives. First, it gave the right a weapon with which to attack their political enemies. Second, the legend helped make the illogical aspects of the conservative political ideology popular, even plausible. For the stab-in-the-back legend only made sense within the framework of a conservative epistemology, a mythic approach to truth. The charge that the war had been lost because of will only made sense if one believed that will was the deciding factor in human history, believed that, in the words of the popular *völkisch* author, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, "we human beings create ourselves the

[62] Gärtringen, "'Dolchstoss' – Diskussion und 'Dolchstosslegende' im Wandel von vier Jahrzehnten," pp. 134–135.

[63] Pressel, *Die Kriegspredigt 1914–1918*, p. 22 ff; 300 ff. Similarly, Gärtringen, "'Dolchstoss' – Diskussion und 'Dolchstosslegende' im Wandel von vier Jahrzehnten," p. 158.

[64] "Aufruf der Reichsregierung von Adolf Hitler im Rundfunk verkündet," *Völkischer Beobachter* (Munich), 3 February 1933, p. 1. Gerhard Paul, *Aufstand der Bilder. Die NS-Propaganda vor 1933* (Bonn, 1990), has an excellent account of the importance of the "stab-in-the-back" legend in the National Socialist propaganda of the late 1920s and early 1930s.

[65] Ralph H. Samuel and R. Hinton Thomas, *Education and Society in Modern Germany* (London, 1949), pp. 73 ff.

world in which we live."[66] According to Oswald Spengler, this was the lesson of the "spirit of 1914."[67] Heinrich Class claimed that this was the lesson of the war, ending his history of the First World War with the words "knowledge is much, but the will is everything (*Erkennen ist viel, der Wille ist aber alles*)."[68] Some on the right, with extraordinary hubris, even corrected Bismarck, who had stated that "politics is the art of the possible," charging that "politics is the art of making the necessary possible."[69]

The left, in their newspapers, in speeches, in brochures, in books, even in a series of libel trials, pointed out how ridiculous the legend was as history. It was not the morale at home, they charged, which had caused the morale at the front to worsen; the morale of the soldiers had collapsed on its own – because of the soldiers' experience of the hierarchical structures of Prussian militarism or because of the soldier's recognition of the ever-growing material superiority of the enemy.[70] They pointed out, too, that morale at home was damaged not by the Social Democrats or by the liberal press but by the poor social and economic conditions and by the actions of the right, especially when the right set forth vast war aims, suggesting to many Germans that the war would last forever.[71] Finally, they pointed to the anti-democratic motivations of those putting forward the stab-in-the-back legend, pointed out that their vision of society was premised upon an understanding of human nature in which the masses were manipulated by elites as if they were puppets on strings.

The democrat's response to the conservative legend was often characterized by that tone of disbelief rational people feel when faced with profound irrationality. Hans Delbrück, for example, wrote about Ludendorff's memoirs: "one simply pulls out one's hair when one reads

[66] Houston Stewart Chamberlain, "Kultur und Politik," *Deutschlands Erneuerung* 7, no. 1 (January 1923), p. 2.

[67] Oswald Spengler, "Zum 4. August 1924," *Süddeutsche Monatshefte* (July 1924), p. 229.

[68] Heinrich Class, *Das deutsche Volk im Weltkrieg* (Leipzig, 1920), p. 302.

[69] Kloss, *Die Arbeit des Alldeutschen Verbandes im Kriege*, p. 18.

[70] Otto Lehmann-Russbüldt, *Warum erfolgte der Zusammenbruch an der Westfront?*, second edition (Berlin, 1919); Rolf Barthe, *Der Zusammenbruch* (Berlin, n.d. – 1930?); Georg Gothein, *Warum verloren wir den Krieg?*, second edition (Stuttgart, 1920); and Adolf Koester, *Fort mit der Dolchstosslegende! Warum wir 1918 nicht weiterkämpfen konnten* (Berlin, 1922). This is, of course, the position of most modern historians. See Wilhelm Deist's "Der militärische Zusammenbruch des Kaiserreichs. Zur Realität der 'Dolchstosslegende,'" pp. 101 ff., and Wolfgang Kruse, "Krieg und Klassenheer: Zur Revolutionierung der deutschen Armee im Ersten Weltkrieg," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 22, no. 4 (1996), pp. 530–561.

[71] Paul Rohrbach, "Demokratie und Führung," *Deutsche Politik* 3, no. 49 (6 December 1918), p. 1542; "Entlarvung der Alldeutschen," *Vorwärts*, 26 July 1919, no. 372, p. 1; Georg Gothein, *Warum verloren wir den Krieg?*, second edition (Stuttgart, 1920); and Herman Jordan, *Wie kam es. Krieg und Zusammenbruch in ihren inneren Zusammenhängen* (Berlin, 1919).

such thoughts. Every sentence is either an absurdity or historically false."[72] Yet it did not work. Perhaps, as many historians have charged, the left did not put enough energy into its efforts to expose the stab-in-the-back legend as poor history.[73] But the deeper problem was that the debate over the stab-in-the-back legend was less a debate over history than over anthropology, over psychology and belief. If one accepted that wars were largely decided by a superiority of material and men, then clearly Germany had lost the war militarily. If one, however, believed that "the world was will,"[74] if one believed that "where there is a will there is a way,"[75] then the defeat was a failure of will.

Nietzsche once observed, "memory said this is what I have done. My pride says, but I could not have done that, and remains stubborn. My memory gives in." The stab-in-the-back legend was believed because people wanted to believe in it. It fulfilled the same psychological function as had the myth of the "spirit of 1914" in war propaganda during the First World War. The legend suggested that, as Germany had lost because of a loss of will, the way back to a control of one's own destiny was to increase one's will. The National Socialists were the ones who profited most from the assumption that, through the power of self-determining will, Germany could undo the defeat in the First World War.

The "spirit of 1914" in National Socialism

On the evening of 30 January 1933, the evening after Hitler had been appointed Chancellor, large parades of Sturm-Abteilung (SA) men marched through the Brandenburg Gate and down the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin, the sites of "war enthusiasm" in 1914. The Prussian Interior Minister, Hermann Goering, shouted into a radio microphone that "outside hundreds of thousands are crowding in front of the Chancellor's windows – a mood which can only be compared with that of 1914."[76] As in 1914, these enthusiastic crowds seemed to many to represent public opinion. The *Völkischer Beobachter* wrote, "our memory drifts back to the

[72] Hans Delbrück, *Ludendorff, Tirpitz, Falkenhayn*, p. 17, quoted in Tönnies, *Zur Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung* (Berlin, 1922), pp. 547–548. On the parliamentary investigation into the causes of the German defeat see Ulrich Heinemann, *Die verdrängte Niederlage. Politische Öffentlichkeit und Kriegsschuldfrage in der Weimarer Republik* (Göttingen, 1983).

[73] So Sontheimer, *Anti-Demokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*, pp. 98 ff.; and Dörner, *Politischer Mythos und symbolische Politik*, p. 55.

[74] "Rückblick," *Süddeutsche Monatshefte* 20 (1922/23), p. 318.

[75] Erich Kuhn, "Bild der Lage," *Deutschlands Erneuerung* 5, no. 1 (1921), p. 62.

[76] Quoted in "Pg. Minister Goering und Dr. Goebbels im Rundfunk," *Völkischer Beobachter*, 1 February 1933 (Munich), no. 32, p. 1.

inspiring days of August 1914. Then, as today, the signs of a people rising up. Then, as today, no more holding back, the people are rising up."[77]

In 1933 National Socialists often claimed that their revolution was a part of the revolution of 1914, that their "revolution" had been, in Goebbels' words, "in the air since August 1914,"[78] or in the words of Robert Ley, that the National Socialist "revolution . . . began in the August days."[79] This claim was one of their most effective strategies to win public opinion in 1933. For many educated elite also viewed the 1933 experiences as a reenactment of the experiences of 1914. On the so-called "Day at Potsdam" on 21 March 1933, the ceremonial opening of the parliament, when Hitler and Hindenburg publicly shook hands, symbolizing the unity of the old Prussia and the new Germany, many remembered back to 1914. The ceremony began, as customary, with evangelical and Catholic church services (which were not attended by Hitler or Goebbels). The Protestant minister, Generalsuperintendent Dr. Dibelius, chose as the text for his sermon Romans 8, verse 31: "If God is for us, who can be against us." This was the same text Generalsuperintendent Dryander had chosen for his sermon at the opening of parliament on 4 August 1914. In his sermon Dibelius remembered the halcyon days of August 1914 when "the call went through the masses: one empire, one people, one God (*ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Gott*)." In the years that followed, he said, the unity and spirit of those days had been lost, but now it has returned, now "we all want to be once again what God has created us to be, we all want to be Germans."[80]

The Catholic Teachers' Association wrote on 1 April 1933, that "as in the August days of 1914, a feeling of national and German emotion has seized our people. The status quo has been overthrown and new objectives have been set for a new, developing German nation and a new German state."[81] In a ceremony on 3 August 1934 in the Lustgarten, commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the war, Catholic and Protestant ministers stated that: "the inner German

[77] "Die Reichshauptstadt huldigt Hindenburg und Adolf Hitler," *Völkischer Beobachter*, 1 February 1933 (Munich), no. 32, p. 1.

[78] "Dr. Goebbels über die politische Lage. 'Wir sehen bereits vor uns das Ergebnis unserer Revolution,'" *Völkischer Beobachter* (Munich), 3 August 1933 (no. 93), Beiblatt.

[79] Quoted in Timothy Mason, *Sozialpolitik im dritten Reich. Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*, second edition (Opladen, 1978), p 26. Similarly, "Der 2. August 1914 – der Tag des großen Anfangs," *Völkischer Beobachter*, 5 August 1934 (Munich), no. 217: in National Socialism "the spirit of the August 1914 days has found its fulfillment . . . We have reconquered the spirit of 1914, as the foundation of our future, as the beginning of our new will."

[80] *Stenographische Berichte des Reichstages*, volume 437, p. 3. On the "Day at Potsdam" see Anneliese Thimme, *Flucht in den Mythos*, pp. 61 ff.

[81] Quoted in J. Noakes and G. Pridham (eds.), *Nazism. A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts 1919–1945* (New York, 1983), p. 163.

Volksgemeinschaft was born on that 2 August 1914. That was also the birth of National Socialism."[82]

The National Socialist efforts in 1933 to identify 1933 with 1914 were not disingenuous. Many National Socialists looked back upon the August experiences as their moment of political awakening. Adolf Hitler, for example, wrote in *Mein Kampf* that in August 1914:

> to me those hours seemed like a release from the painful feelings of my youth. Even today I am not ashamed to say that, overpowered by stormy enthusiasm, I fell down on my knees and thanked Heaven from an overflowing heart for granting me the good fortune of being permitted to live at this time.[83]

Not only had many National Socialists undergone such a transformation experience in 1914, as Timothy Mason has noted, National Socialist ideology and practice were informed by their interpretation of the August experiences. Nationalist Socialist policies:

> can in part be understood as an attempt to reproduce the experiences of August 1914 as a permanent condition and to consolidate the utopia of a society held together by commitments based purely on similar views into political consciousness.[84]

National Socialists claimed that "enthusiasm" was the means toward achieving a "total mobilization," which would tear the masses away from their false leaders.[85] Similarly, the mass assemblies that played such an important role in the National Socialist conceptualization of propaganda can be understood as attempts to recreate the mass soul of the enthusiastic crowds of 1914.[86]

In negative terms, the Nazis believed that in August 1914 the Kaiser had had the chance to liquidate the SPD and had not used it. Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf* that in August 1914:

[82] "Die große militärische Gedenkfeier im Lustgarten," *Völkische Beobachter* (Munich), 4 August 1934 (no. 216).

[83] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston, 1943), p. 161. On Hitler's "August experience," see Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, pp. 305 ff.

[84] Mason, *Sozialpolitik im dritten Reich*, p. 26.

[85] There is a good discussion of the conservative discourse on total mobilization in Jutta Sywottek, *Mobilmachung für den totalen Krieg. Die propagandistische Vorbereitung der deutschen Bevölkerung auf den zweiten Weltkrieg* (Opladen, 1976), pp. 13 ff. The term was, of course, made popular by Ernst Jünger, *Die totale Mobilmachung* (Berlin, 1931). There is a very interesting discussion of "total mobilization" from a National Socialist standpoint in Ernst Rudolf Huber, *Der Kampf um die Führung im Weltkrieg* (Hamburg, 1941).

[86] On these mass assemblies see Martina Schöps-Potthoff, "Exkurs: Die veranstaltete Masse. Nürnberger Reichsparteitage der NSDAP," in Helge Pross and Eugen Buss (eds.), *Soziologie der Masse* (Heidelberg, 1984), pp. 148–170. On the role of mass assemblies in Hitler's conception of propaganda, see Gerhard Paul, *Aufstand der Masse*, pp. 120 ff. All the same, although there are many indirect references in this vast literature, I have never come across a direct reference to the August experiences.

the German worker had made himself free from the embrace of this venomous plague (Marxism) . . . It would have been the duty of a serious government, now that the German worker had found his way back to his nation, to exterminate mercilessly the agitators who were misleading the nation. If the best men were dying at the front, the least we could do was to wipe out the vermin . . . All the implements of military power should have been ruthlessly used for the extermination of this pestilence.[87]

They would not make the same mistake. Hitler's "liquidation and extermination" of the November criminals, those who had "stabbed" the nation in the back – in Hitler's mind Jews and Marxists – was not just revenge, but a prescriptive plan for the future.[88] When on 2 May 1933 the Nazis dissolved the Trade Unions, they charged that this was necessary because today, "Marxism is lying low so that it can rise up again at a more opportune moment in order to stab us in the back. Just like 1914."[89]

In 1933, as a part of their efforts to "coordinate" German society (*Gleichschaltung*), the Nazis also closed the liberal German Society of 1914, after the organization refused to replace the first paragraph of its statute. In place of a commitment to admit all citizens regardless of party the Nazis insisted on a paragraph stating the importance of the Aryan race. Rather than do this, the leader of the organization, Wilhelm Solf (who had been the society's founder), disbanded it. In May 1934 Solf wrote to the members of the club explaining why he did so:

that which the founders of this society wished to achieve, above all with the first paragraph, sprang from the highest patriotic feelings and the need for tolerance which a people has earned who in all of its classes gladly and with enthusiasm went to war. We now have different times, and we have had the experience that the present generation does not find the same pleasure with this radiating spirit which the founders desired.[90]

(In contrast, in Bremen a similar 1914 organization decided to accept the Aryan paragraph and became the "House of the Hansa in Bremen." It became "a community of men who have come together to talk and learn from each other and to exchange ideas in all aspects of intellectual, economic, and cultural life. These activities will of course take place in the

[87] Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 168–169.

[88] Timothy Mason, "The Legacy of 1918 for National Socialism," in A. J. Nicholls and Erich Matthias (eds.), *German Democracy and the Triumph of Hitler: Essays in Recent German History* (London, 1971), pp. 220–221; and Mason, *Sozialpolitik im dritten Reich*, p. 20.

[89] "Aufruf des Leiters des Aktionskomittees zum Schutze der deutschen Arbeit zur Besetzung der Gewerkschaftshäuser am 2. Mai 1933," reprinted in Axel Friedrichs (ed.), *Die Nationalsozialistische Revolution 1933*, seventh edition (Berlin, 1942), p. 168.

[90] Letter from Solf to the "Mitglieder des Vorstandes der Deutschen Gesellschaft von 1914," 12 August 1934, BA Koblenz, Nl Solf, no. 141, p. 131.

sense of the teachings of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist movement that he leads."[91])

And yet there was an ambivalence among National Socialists toward the enthusiasm of 1914. After 1933 the "spirit of 1914" as a slogan was almost completely absent in National Socialist propaganda. Only on 2 August 1934 did the National Socialists officially celebrate the anniversary of the beginning of the First World War. But they did it quietly. They ordered all government officials not to fly the national flag. In 1935, the National Socialists celebrated on 2 August the anniversary of Hindenburg's death. There was nothing in 1936 and 1937 on the beginning of the war.

The August experiences were not nearly as important to the National Socialists as the war experiences. (Accordingly, when Johann Plenge, in a number of pathetic letters, asked to be admitted to the *Bund Schlageter*, claiming he was the intellectual father of National Socialism, the National Socialists responded harshly that he had contributed little to their ideology.[92]) It was the war and not the August crowds that had created a genuine community. It was at the front, in the *Frontgemeinschaft*, according to one Nazi, "where the farmer became acquainted with the worker, the employee with the boss, the intellectual with the tradesmen and where all knew what they were: only Germans."[93] In spite of the National Socialist use of the Langemarck myth, it was not the war volunteer but the storm trooper, such as Ernst Jünger described him, the man without nerves, the man of steel, who represented their ideal of the German soldier in First World War.[94] It was the war and not the August experiences that had created the "new man:" "people were forced to come around to a simple, heroic form of life . . . this tense heroic accomplishment became the meaning of all life."[95]

[91] Satzung des "Hauses der Hanse zu Bremen," in Bremer Staatsarchiv 3–V.2. no. 1112.

[92] Johann Plenge, *Meine Anmeldung zum Bund Schlageter e.V. Mit der Verkündigung der Volksgenossenschaft der Arbeit am 31. Juli 1914, der Verheissung des "nationalen Sozialismus" aus den "Ideen von 1914" in meinen Kriegsschriften (1914 bis 1918) und dem Verlagsprogramm von Juli 1919 mit dem ersten Symbol für "Das dritte Reich"* (n.p., als Handschrift für Gesinnungsgenossen), n.d. (1934?); Johann Plenge, *Moeller van den Bruck's Bekehrung zur Idee. Unser Briefwechsel von September, 1918. Zweiter Nachtrag "Meine Anmeldung zum Bund Schlageter e.V."* (Münster, n.d. (als Handschrift gedruckt)).

[93] Otto Riebicke, *Vom Frontgeist zum Volksgeist. Die Kriegervereine im Dritten Reich* (n.p., n.d.), HStA Stuttgart, J 150/3901/2, p. 14 of pamphlet.

[94] J. P. Stern, *Ernst Jünger: A Writer of Our Time* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 21. There is now a vast literature on Jünger. Stern's book remains in many ways the best introduction to Jünger's work. See also Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, pp. 184 ff.

[95] Karl Troebs, "Deutsche Mobilmachung. 2. August 1914," *Völkischer Beobachter* (Munich), 2 August 1934 (no. 214), p. 1. On the significance of the "new man" for the National Socialist ideology, see especially Bernd Hüppauf, "Schlachtenmythen und die Konstruktion des 'Neuen Menschen,'" pp. 72 ff.

The end of the myth of the "spirit of 1914"

On 2 August 1939, one month before the Second World War began, the German nation celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the First World War. The National Socialist leadership used the occasion to try to whip up enthusiasm. Wilhelm Weiss wrote in the *Völkischer Beobachter* that it was a mistake to believe that the First World War had ever ended.[96] The Commander of the Armed Forces wrote in his proclamation for that day: "We want peace. If, however, we are forced once again to fight, our army will do so with the same internal unity, courage, and daring as in 1914."[97] And yet, the ceremonies were subdued. There was no one national ceremony, as there had been in 1924.

One month later the war began. On 1 September 1939 troops marched through the Berlin streets on their way to the front. In spite of this staging – it was not necessary to have the troops march through the streets – there was little public enthusiasm, nothing like 1914.[98] There were no large curious crowds. Even Adolf Hitler driving to the Kroll Opera House in an open automobile (as had the Kaiser in 1914) to give a speech to the Reichstag brought out few curious Berliners. Contemporaries often compared the lack of enthusiasm in 1939 with the enthusiasm of 1914, just as in 1914 journalists had compared the lack of enthusiasm in 1914 with the enthusiasm of 1870.

Party leaders attempted to put the best face on this by criticizing the concept of "enthusiasm." In speeches and writings they charged that the "enthusiasm" of 1914 had been a sign of nervousness. A good soldier, the "new man" of National Socialism, the man of steel, had no emotions, no nerves, only will. The official history on the outbreak of the Second World War claimed that:

> in contrast to the enthusiasm, with its intoxicating demonstrations, that we saw in the first days of August 1914, the German people took up the long desired response to the Polish provocations and the English and French declarations of war with a silent and iron commitment.[99]

[96] Wilhelm Weiß, "1914–2 August-1939," *Völkische Beobachter* (Munich), 2 August 1939, p. 1.

[97] "Der Oberbefehlshaber zum 2. August. Die Wehrmacht von 1939 gedenkt der Armee von 1914," *Völkische Beobachter* (Munich), 3 August 1934 (no. 215), p. 1.

[98] The lack of war enthusiasm is well documented in Sywottek, *Mobilmachung*, pp. 233 ff.; as well as in Marlis Steinert, *Hitler's War and the Germans. Public Mood and Attitude during the Second World War* (Athens, 1977); Jörg Bohse, *Inszenierte Kriegsbegeisterung und ohnmächtiger Friedenswille. Meinungslenkung und Propaganda im Nationalsozialismus* (Stuttgart, 1988), pp. 28 ff.; and Wolfram Wette, "Ideologien, Propaganda und Innenpolitik als Voraussetzungen der Kriegspolitik des Dritten Reiches," in Wilhelm Deist, Manfred Messerschmidt, Hans-Erich Volkmann, and Wolfram Wette, *Ursachen und Voraussetzungen des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Frankfurt/Main, 1989), pp. 25 ff., and pp. 139 ff. More generally, on Europe as a whole, see Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, pp. 201 ff.

[99] *Deutschland im Kampf vom September 1939*, quoted in Sywottek, *Mobilmachung*, p. 236.

Max Simoneit, a member of the Psychological Warfare division of the German General Staff, wrote that the 1914 enthusiasm had deluded many people.[100] Hitler himself in 1940 ridiculed the "hurrah-patriotism" of August 1914, stating that in 1939:

> thanks to the National Socialistic education the German people have not gone into this war with the superficiality of a hurrah-patriotism, but with the fanatical seriousness of a race which knows the fate that will befall it should it lose.[101]

In various speeches and proclamations accompanying the beginning of the war, National Socialist leaders repeatedly emphasized that the Germany of 1939 was better prepared than the Germany of 1914, not just in armaments but also in spirit. When on 3 September 1939, after England had declared war on Germany, Hitler spoke to the German nation he charged that the lack of enthusiasm was evidence that a "different Germany stood up than that of 1914." He warned the English "that the British government is deceiving themselves . . . the Germany of 1939 is no longer the Germany of 1914."[102] Above all, Hitler repeatedly emphasized throughout the war, the will was sufficient to ensure that there would be no stab-in-the-back.

Such efforts were not fully honest. As Wolfram Wette has pointed out, in 1938 and 1939 the NSDAP did begin a propaganda campaign designed to produce a war enthusiasm similar to that of 1914.[103] And on 1 September 1939 the National Socialists staged the outbreak of the war in such a way that a spontaneous enthusiasm could have appeared. Moreover, the Nazis did not have the negative opinion of "enthusiasm" that such statements suggested. Much of their propaganda aimed at whipping up enthusiasm, not only as a means of creating the united mass soul, but also as a means of strengthening will. "Enthusiasm" in their vocabulary meant much the same as "fanatic"; it was a means to a German victory, a means of increasing one's faith, one's commitment. When Goebbels asked the audience at the *Sportpalast* if they wanted "total war," and the audience enthusiastically responded yes, it was in many ways a ritualized pattern of question and answer similar to a confession of faith in a church. In the context of National Socialist discourse Goebbels was asking them if they were willing to make a total commitment as a means to achieving victory.

[100] Max Simoneit, *Deutsches Soldatentum 1914 und 1939* (Berlin, 1940), p. 12.
[101] Adolf Hitler, *Reden des Führers* (Munich, 1967), p. 254.
[102] "Deutschlands Antwort auf die englische Herausforderung. Der Führer an das deutsche Volk. Der Führer an die Soldaten der Ostarmee und an die Soldaten der Westarmee," *Völkische Beobachter* (Munich), 4 September 1939 (no. 247), p. 1. This quote is from the proclamation to the western army.
[103] Wette, "Ideologien, Propaganda und Innenpolitik," p. 141.

And yet the Nazis were not fully disingenuous in their criticisms of the "enthusiasm" of 1914. The Nazis were well aware that, although their glorification of militaristic ideals, of the heroic life, may have been popular, the war itself was not.[104] They believed, however, that it did not matter that the population was not enthusiastic if it was determined. In the Second World War Hitler often repeated the same words with which German politicians tried to sustain morale in the First World War:

> if we form a community closely bound by sacred oath, ready for every decision, never willing to capitulate, then our will shall be master of every affliction. I close with the credo which I spoke when I first took up my struggle for power in the Reich. This is what I said: if our will is so strong that no affliction can subdue it, then shall our will and our German state overcome every affliction and triumph over it.[105]

This propaganda message could and would be disproven by a bitter reality. Although in the years after the Second World War one could still read in many books and articles descriptions of the "enthusiasm" of 1914, although the form of history in the myth lived on, it was as a historical curiosity, not as a holy past or a possible future.

[104] Wilhelm Deist, "Überlegungen zur 'widerwilligen Loyalität' der Deutschen bei Kriegsbeginn," in Wolfgang Michalka (ed.), *Der Zweite Weltkrieg. Analysen – Grundzüge – Forschungsbilanz* (Munich, 1989), pp. 225.

[105] Quoted in J. P. Stern, *Hitler. The Führer and the People* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 62–63.

Conclusion: The myth of the "spirit of 1914" in German political culture, 1914–1945

The myth of the "spirit of 1914" was first articulated in articles in conservative newspapers on the enthusiastic crowds in the larger German cities on 25 July 1914. Conservative journalists claimed that these crowds spoke for public opinion, that in August 1914 all Germans felt "war enthusiasm," that the enthusiasm was a spiritual experience which had transformed a materialistic, egotistical German "society" into an idealistic, fraternal, national German "community." These were extraordinary articles, in part because the events were themselves extraordinary, in part because the conservative journalists' interpretation of these events did not apprehend the historical reality, and in part because of the uses that would be made of these and similar interpretations of these events, of the myth of the "spirit of 1914," over the course of the next thirty years.

Germans experienced the outbreak of the war as a moment of powerful intensity and sharpness. Some experienced it as a moment of great adventure such as few generations are given. In the words of one soldier: "for a moment my heart stood still. I feel that I am a witnessing an immensely powerful moment. This is a piece of history which is happening here."[1] Some Germans, especially German intellectuals, experienced the August days as a liminal experience, as a moment when individual and collective identities were transformed, as a miracle, a renewal of oneself, a liberation, a rebirth. They rejoiced at the feeling of being one with their fellow Germans, claimed that German culture had been rejuvenated, purified, that Germany had become more idealistic, more noble, more religious.

And yet much of the "enthusiasm" of these days was a naive, carnivalesque enthusiasm. For many youths and students, August 1914 was a time when they could sing boisterously late at night in the streets. The young boys who marched like soldiers believed war to be glorious, chivalrous, and heroic. The spectators who placed flowers in the guns of the soldiers marching off to the front imagined a gentle, heroic war. German women who showed kindness to foreign prisoners of war (especially the

[1] Grenadier St., quoted in Strunk, *Mobilmachung und Aufmarsch der Heere auf dem westlichen Kriegsschauplatz*, p. 7.

French, and sometimes the English, but never the Russians) understood war as chivalrous, and the enemy as honorable. A poster by the famous German graphic artist, Ludwig Hohlwein (see illustration 9), for a contemporary movie on the war enthusiasm, *The Daydreams of a Reservist*, captures well the Walter Mitty quality of this aspect of the August experiences. This sort of enthusiasm was a daydream; it was not meant to be real. If the war had been short perhaps the August experiences would have been remembered in the imagery depicted by this poster or in the immediate descriptions of the "August experiences" in popular literature and in popular theater: as "Great Times." But the war was not short. And this narrative of the August experiences, like the naive "enthusiasm," faded as Germans grasped the reality of this war.

The myth of the spirit of 1914 did not fully apprehend the historical reality. The conservative articles on public opinion failed to take account of the naive, carnivalesque aspects. They also failed to look beyond the "enthusiastic" crowds. Germans experienced the outbreak of the war differently according to their class, gender, age, location, and disposition. Germans felt pride, enthusiasm, panic, disgust, curiosity, exuberance, confidence, anger, bluff, fear, laughter, and desperation. All of these emotions may have been felt by the same person. The only shared emotion of the August experiences was not enthusiasm but excitement, a depth of emotion, an intensity of feeling. Although people were perhaps not fully capable of explaining their excitement – many of their emotions were ambivalent and contradictory, the August experiences did not produce any noticeable changes in attitudes and beliefs. The working class accepted the war, hoped that Germany would win, but remained unenthusiastic and skeptical.

Changes in mentality, when they came, were less a product of the "August experiences" than of the "war experiences."[2] The war would force Germans to reexamine their most cherished assumptions. At the end of the war the narratives which had previously upheld the values and norms of Wilhelmine political culture were so threadbare that a revolution no one seemed to desire easily pushed them away. In their place came new myths, new narratives. Although there was no one "national" August or war experience, no one experience which in itself could provide the foundation for a new national consciousness, although the "August experiences" themselves were ephemeral, the nation was to be created in the myths of these experiences, in the myth of the "spirit of 1914."

Part of what gave the myth of the "spirit of 1914" its peculiar power was

[2] See the insights on the role of "catastrophe" for "culture" in Jay M. Winter, "Catastrophe and Culture. Recent Trends in the Historiography of the First World War," *Journal of Modern History* 64 (1992), pp. 525–532.

9. "The Day-Dreams of a Reservist." Poster by Ludwig Hohlwein for a film with this title from late 1914

that the government and all political parties, with the exception of the USPD, subscribed to the broad outlines of the narrative that in the 1914 experiences German society had become a German community. All recognized that national unity was a precondition for the successful conduct of the war. All realized as well that the war was a collective experience; the German people needed to know what they were fighting for, what they were dying for. All agreed that a narrative of the "spirit of 1914" was the best existing representation of the German nation. This was in part because of the profound events of 1914, in part because it was the only narrative representation of the nation that they could agree upon. German unity would be conserved by subscribing to a shared memory of the August experiences, that is, the myth of the "spirit of 1914" was both a story that described the group to itself and the means by which that group, by holding the story sacred, sustained its community.

In political discourse the "spirit of 1914" was employed as a metaphor for one's own political ideology. All attempted to inscribe in the memory of the 1914 events their political norms and values, and to make their narrative of the "spirit of 1914" the representation of the "common sense" of the German political culture, recognizing that if they were able to identify their ideology with this social myth they might be able to give their ideology the most prominent position in German political culture. Accordingly, the debate over the true meaning of the August experiences was rarely conducted as a historical debate – there was, indeed, little interest between 1914 and 1945 in the reality of German public opinion in 1914. Rather, the debate was a moral one, a debate over which values and norms should constitute the "German" national identity, and a political one, a debate over the nature of the state, over the nature of the structures which would shape the political culture. At the heart of the debate lay differing conceptualizations of what the people (*Volk*) and the public sphere should be, not differences concerning the nature of the national community that had – perhaps – appeared in 1914.

The conservative myth of the "spirit of 1914," first expressed in the newspaper articles, was born of the hope that an "enthusiasm," such as is common in wartime, and such as had been a part of the German war experiences of 1813 and 1870, would make "Germans" out of Social Democrats. Conservative newspapers as well as the government claimed that in 1914 all Germans had rallied around the Kaiser; the crowds were interpreted as walls of acclamation; the monarchical idea had taken root in the soul of every German; the Kaiser and his people had become one. The left charged that in 1914 the German people, of their own free will, had come to the defence of their nation. The people had proven their maturity, and should have the same rights and duties; there should be no

more aristocratic privileges. Their narrative of the "spirit of 1914" was thus couched in the past and future tense; it was a description of a past experience and a future goal. The radical nationalist right charged that the "spirit of 1914" was the triumph of the Pan-German ideology. In the August experiences, they claimed, all Germans had become Pan-Germans. Unity could be sustained by preserving the conditions of 1914, through a forceful leadership and through eliminating – at least censoring – the demagogues waiting to deceive the people.

As J. P. Stern has noted, "all representation – whether in the arts or in politics – contains an element of fiction which, exploited for its political effects becomes a myth, a lie."[3] In the narratives of the "spirit of 1914" the memory of the 1914 events was purified of its naive, carnivalesque, or oppositional aspects. These narratives had little to do with the real 1914 experiences, with the excitement, fear, and exuberance of August 1914. If the discussion of the meaning of the "spirit of 1914" had taken place in peacetime it is likely that participants would have expended more energy into debunking their opponent's myth of the "spirit of 1914." In the First World War, however, only Theodor Wolff attempted to point out that the myth of the "spirit of 1914" was a myth in the sense of being a lie. The wartime context gave the myth of the "spirit of 1914" a special poignancy.

For in the First World War the myth of the "spirit of 1914" spoke not only to a need to understand the origins and nature of the German collective; it was also, as a means to mobilize the population, a part of the strategy to win the war. The most effective propaganda version of the myth of the "spirit of 1914" was put forward by the military. In 1914, so the propagandistic myth-makers, the German people did not so much discover a set of shared norms and values as a common faith, a belief in Germany, and what they were capable of if they were truly committed. This narrative of the "spirit of 1914" was not only a representation of the nation but also a representation of the belief that the army possessing – in Fichte's words – "holy enthusiasm" would defeat the army lacking it: "it is not the power of the army nor even of the weapons, it is the strength of the will which achieves victories." In this discourse the images of smiling enthusiasm disappear; they are replaced by the storm trooper, by grim determination.

During the war the propaganda was partly successful. The myth of the "spirit of 1914," however flawed as history, was a crucial part of the wartime identity many Germans adopted for themselves; a self-image deliberately fostered by officialdom but just as deliberately adopted by the "people" themselves. Germans continued to fight for as long as they

[3] J. P. Stern, *The Führer and the People*, p. 20.

believed there was a chance for victory. Yet the propaganda was only partly successful. The military's efforts were hampered by the fact that their message included unpopular ideas culled from the traditional conservative and radical nationalist ideology, such as war aims or the hierarchical nature of society.

In November 1918 the war ended. The myth of the spirit of 1914 was no longer needed to sustain the "morale" of citizens and soldiers. Yet the myth did not die. It remained a powerfully evocative collective narrative. As during the war, during the Weimar Republic all political groups attempted to appropriate this myth, now clothed as the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The left saw in democracy the possibility for the fulfillment of the hope for a German community. The right saw 1914 as a suspended revolution. Unfortunately, the right was more successful in popularizing their version of the myth. Indeed, their myth of the "spirit of 1914" not only came to explain social reality, it became a constituting element of that reality. Why was the right better able to profit from the memory of the "spirit of 1914?"

For one thing, the right had better access to the public sphere, and a greater status within it. More importantly, things fell apart. The war not only intruded upon the routines and habits of everyday life, it also tore people out of traditional moral relationships. One possible response was to reject all universal moral constructions. "God has it worse," wrote a young volunteer home from Verdun. "God must justify this; I only have to experience it."[4] Few, however, were willing to go this far. The First World War may have been the end of a certain sort of innocence, the end of the belief in a benign God, yet for most Germans this did not lead to an acceptance of the celebrated death of God, but raised more poignantly the question of his true nature. As Hans Blumenberg has noted, the intellectual and emotional needs that give rise to myth are part of "a question . . . of the reason for being."[5] The myth of the "spirit of 1914" spoke to the need to understand what it had all been for.

The myth not only provided an ontological explanation, it also offered solace and hope. As Carl Schmitt has noted, wars are mythic times, times in which people not only feel the power of fate, the inadequacy of reason to shape their individual destinies, but also the importance of will in

[4] Quoted in Benno Schneider and Ulrich Haacke (eds.), *Das Buch vom Kriege, 1914–1918. Urkunden, Berichte, Briefe, Erinnerungen* (Eberhausen, 1993), p. 239.

[5] Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*, p. 287. This is also the explanation of the need for myth put forward by William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Harmondsworth, 1982; first published 1902), p. 75. The Nazis were especially good at appealing to this need. Some of their most famous posters depicted soldiers from the First World War with the slogan "Vote NSDAP. Or else it would all have been in vain."

helping them overcome existential crises.[6] For many Germans the war did not end in 1918; the 1920s remained a time of crisis, remained "mythical times." An appeal to a mythological epistemology in times of crisis has a long tradition in Germany. As Otto Baumgarten, a liberal theologian who during the war had fought the Pan-German League, noted in 1924, German idealism all too "easily jumped over the boundaries of reality, and judged possibilities and probabilities not inductively, according to empirical evidence, but deductively, according to the demands and directives of reason and mood."[7] During the First World War all rational discussions of the German situation and of possibilities to end the war were defeated through such an appeal to spirit and willpower. This "weakening of the ability to see reality" was:

> one of the most significant moral effects of the war. We were only able to fight this war against a world of enemies for four years by becoming accustomed to an idealistic, illusionary perception of the real state of affairs, possibilities, and probabilities. This left deep and lasting effects in the German soul (*Volkspsyche*).[8]

It was in this epistemological sense that the myth of the "spirit of 1914" was most successfully invoked in the 1920s. When the Nazis proclaimed that their "revolution" began in 1914 they were less interested in the ideology of 1914 than in 1914 as a moment of fanatical will, an example of the German ability to create its own world through its will. Thus, the debate over the nature of the "spirit of 1914," over the nature of German culture became an epistemological debate, a debate over the method – mythical or critical – by which Germans should arrive at their truths.

The left found it difficult to make headway against this propaganda. Some on the left, recognizing that such hubris could be dangerous and even lead to a greater catastrophe than in 1918, argued that Germany had to come to accept its limitations. Others, such as Thomas Mann, argued that Republicans had to develop their own myths: "we must take the myth away from the intellectual fascists and transform it into something human. I have not been doing anything else for a long time."[9] Those who did acknowledge the importance of political myths as a means of representing hope were not, however, up to the aesthetic challenge of popularizing them. By the end of the Weimar Republic many Germans found the social-psychological aspects of National Socialism appealing. Many

[6] Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism* (Cambridge, MA, 1986 – first published in 1925), p. 160.

[7] Otto Baumgarten, "Der sittliche Zustand des deutschen Volkes unter dem Einfluss des Krieges," in Otto Baumgarten, Erich Foerster, Arnold Rademacher, and Wilhelm Flitner, *Geistliche und sittliche Wirkungen des Krieges im Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1927), p. 6.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[9] Thomas Mann in a letter to Karl Kerenyi, 14 November 1941, quoted in Manfred Frank, *Der kommende Gott. Vorlesungen über die Neue Mythologie* (Frankfurt/Main, 1982), p. 31.

embraced 1933 as a recreation of 1914, not as an explanation of the past, but as a description of their hopes for the future.

The belief in a self-determining will, the belief that one can shape one's own fate, so much a part of the myth of the "spirit of 1914," is a very human hope, and an especially poignant one in a mass war, where the individual had little control over his own destiny. The choice for myth is in many ways a rational response to the horrors of war, an attempt to run away from fate by grasping at the straw that through a greater will one can create one's own world. Yet in the course of their efforts to transcend such boundaries many Germans lost their ability to distinguish between what is real and what is fiction, and came to believe in the reality of their own myths. Such instances of man-made truth contain an element of hubris, which carries with it the seeds of its own tragedy.

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