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THE POLITICAL POETRY
OF THE THIRD REICH:
THEMES AND METAPHORS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1968

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PREFACE

To my adviser, Prof. Dieter Cunz—the German "Doktorvater" seems much more appropriate—I can only insuffi­
ciently express my gratitude. Actively interested in this study from its inception to its completion, he gave generously of his time and offered suggestions and constructive criticisms mixed with encouragement in time of need. For this I thank him as friend and mentor.

In the final stages of writing I have incurred a debt of gratitude to my second reader, Prof. Charles W. Hoffmann. If this work has any stylistic merit, it is due solely to his sensitivity of style. For his efforts "above and beyond the call of duty," I express my sincere thanks.

A year of residence in Munich was made possible by a Fellowship granted in 1964 by the Germanistic Society of America. I am grateful to the Society for the financial assistance without which this work could not have been undertaken.

The bulk of the material in this study was obtained at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek and at the Library of Congress. To both Libraries I express my appreciation and gratitude.
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INTRODUCTION

Of the vast number of books which have been written about the Third Reich, only a very few concern themselves with its literature. German as well as foreign historians, psychologists and sociologists flooded the market with books and articles within a few years after the close of the second World War; not so the literary scholars or historians. They for all practical purposes ignored the literature which had been written between 1933 and 1945.

It was not until 1960 that the first books began to appear. Two which deserve mention are Dietrich Strothmann's Nationalsozialistische Literaturpolitik\(^1\)

\[^1\text{Bonn: H. Bouvier und Co. Verlag, 1960.}\]

and Josef Wulf's enormous volume, Literatur und Dichtung im Dritten Reich.\(^2\)

\[^2\text{Gütersloh: Sigbert Mohn Verlag, 1960.}\]

Wulf's book is primarily a documentary which offers a great number of texts and letters but very little if any commentary. Strothmann is not so much interested in the literature as he is in the Nazi apparatus which controlled it. His book contains much valuable information, but it is more useful to the historian or political scientist than to the literary scholar.
In the same year the first article dealing with Nazi poetry appeared: Werner Hamerski's "'Gott' und 'Vorsehung' im Lied und Gedicht des Nationalsozialismus." \(^3\)

\[^3\text{Publizistik, V. (1960), 280-300.}\]

As the title indicates, however, Hamerski deals only with two specific topics or motifs, and those two of a decidedly religious nature.

In 1961 Franz Schonauer's \textit{Deutsche Literatur im Dritten Reich} was published. \(^4\)

\[^4\text{Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter Verlag, 1961.}\]

Schonauer intended to be controversial in order to spark discussion. His book can in no way be considered an objective presentation; its polemic-didactic intent precludes this. Schonauer can also be criticized for the lack of systematic continuity which is evident in his chapter titles: the first two, "Die Vorläufer" and "Der neue Staat und die Intellektuellen" suggest historical categories while the last five deal with specific themes: "Glorifizierung des Krieges," "Die nordische Renaissance," "'Blut und Boden'-Mythos und 'Volkhafte' Dichtung," "Die Parteidichtung" und "Innere Emigration." As it turns out, the time before 1933 is treated historically, the time after, thematically.
Schonauer often deals in generalities, with the result that the problems upon which he touches are treated superficially. Especially is this true of poetry. In each chapter the poems are used as supporting evidence to show that the themes which existed in prose works were present in the poetry as well. Only in a few instances does he analyse the poetry independent of the prose. The book, moreover, contains an overabundance of prose quotations with only episodic commentary or interpretation. Yet in spite of its shortcomings, Schonauer's book deserves credit for attempting to discuss Nazi literature at all.

Ernst Loewy's Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz is a more balanced book than Schonauer's.5

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5 Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1966.

When in the future other histories of Nazi literature are written, Loewy's will certainly have to be reckoned with, if only because it is comprehensive. Yet for the purposes of this investigation one of its weaknesses lies precisely in this comprehensiveness. Loewy goes to great lengths to show how literary trends existing before 1933 are manifested in the literature under the Nazis. Much of his book is devoted to prose quotations; poetry is added when it fits one of his four categories: "Taube Blüte der Romantik," "Triumph der Provinz," "Der militante Nationalismus" and "Die braune Bataillon."
Loewy investigates the authors of "schöneistige Literatur" during the Nazi period. The dominant trends in their works yield the above categories. To justify his method of beginning with the authors rather than their works, Loewy argues that in either case the results will be the same. The statement is open to debate; and we consider the method unacceptable for dealing with poetry, still more so for prose, for it contains pitfalls which are not easily avoided. And Loewy does not avoid them. If he investigates an author, then one should expect him to discuss enough works by that author to be representative. Loewy or the reader would then be able to draw conclusions about the author. But to quote random selections out of context—an especially great danger when dealing with prose works—does not seem to lead to an objective analysis. On the contrary, the works of the chosen author too often become the subject of a witchhunt and passages are chosen which fit pre-established categories.

The only study dealing specifically with poetry is Albrecht Schöne's slender volume, Über Politische Lyrik im 20. Jahrhundert.  

Schöne does not limit himself to the political poetry of the Nazis; the latter part of his study deals with the postwar Socialists as well.
No extant work thus deals with the writings or the Nazi poets in any great detail. It is this gap which the present work hopes to fill.

The poems in this investigation are a selection, the harvest of numerous anthologies. Certainly it has not been possible to go through all of the anthologies published between 1933 and 1945, all the more since many are no longer available. Nor would it be fruitful to do so, for an increase in the number of poems would add little by way of variation. We feel that the poems presented here are representative and that the sampling is large enough to catch the mainstream of ideas and motifs in all of the poetry.

We have confined ourselves to that poetry which by its choice of subject matter is primarily political and propagandistic and which was published to espouse the cause of National Socialism.

While Loewy begins his study by selecting authors and then subjecting their works to scrutiny, ours has been the opposite approach: we regard the poetry and not the authors as our proper subject. We feel that this is the only tenable approach, for a poem must stand by itself and be able to be understood as an entity.

But we have already overreached ourselves, for the use of the words "poetry" and "Nazi poet" confronts us with difficulties.

One cannot deny that the works in this study are poetry.
Much of it may be bad poetry, but it is poetry nevertheless. Something needs to be said at this point, however, about the difference between political poetry and lyric poetry.

Because it espouses a cause of a political nature, the impact of political poetry is usually restricted in time. When the cause is won or lost, when the poem is taken out of its historical situation, it loses its relevance if not its effect. There are exceptions, to be sure, but they will be treated later. If the cause for which the poem was written no longer exists, then the poem too has no reason for existence, since its object is political, limited in time and transitory by its very nature. By way of contrast, lyric poetry written centuries ago maintains its appeal even today because it deals with basic human conditions and emotions which, since man has not basically changed, are still relevant. Lyrical qualities are timeless. Who today--except for historical interests and reasons--would be inspired by the ideals of the political poetry written in Germany during the reign of Napoleon when the object, Napoleon, is no longer a threat and the issues no longer pertinent?

Political poetry differs from lyric poetry also in that the writer of the former is not primarily interested in lyrical expression. He attempts to solve a problem or to champion a cause; hence his poetry is by nature didactic and propagandistic. He is what Werner Neuse, writing about German poetry in 1938, calls the "Rufer" as distinct from
the "'Dichter' who is in complete control of poetical forms, poetical language and symbolical expression. The "Rufer" are political poets whose verse inspired their comrades at the time of the struggle for power and whose task is still that of the inspiring herald. They are the genuine mouthpieces of the 'movement.'"


And it is the poetry of the "Rufer" which is the primary subject of this study. That the poet of these lyrics is more interested in the "message" than in lyrical expression endangers the artistic quality of his work, for propaganda is not easily made into good poetry.

Political poetry rarely achieves lyric stature; that does not mean, conversely, that lyric poetry cannot deal with political subject matter. But if a poem is to be both political and lyric, then the political aspect must be subordinate to the lyric. And that happens only when the poem has incidental political applicability. The author of a lyric poem may also be politically engaged. But he does not subordinate his artistry or the aesthetic quality of his work to the cause he espouses. Such a poem, as Albrecht Schöne points out when he discusses Bertolt Brecht (p.54), can be understood independently of the historical situation.

It is a well-documented fact that during the Hitler years literary activity was strictly controlled by an
ordered, limited publication of books and magazines. The
government closely watched the literary marketplace; and
though there was no pre-publication censorship, neither
author nor publisher could afford to risk the Party's dis-
pleasure. The literature of the opposition to Nazism which
had to circulate surreptitiously constitutes an exception.8

8See Charles W. Hoffmann, Opposition Poetry in Nazi

No doubt many of the texts offered in one chapter
could have been used in another; many times too, one poem
may contain more than one motif or metaphor. We have in
each case tried to find the clearest expression of the point
under consideration.

A search through the available anthologies for central
topics, metaphors and comparisons leads one again and again
into the religious sphere. Indeed, poems with religious
overtones, religious words and implications exist in great
profusion. One does not have to look far for the reason, for
much of the Nazi Weltanschauung was tinted with a religious
hue. It would therefore seem natural that an investigation
which restricts itself to the devices of poetry would bring,
among other things, words having religious connotations to
the foreground.

That the Nazis used existing religious and traditional
and historical religious symbols as a springboard for their
own Weltanschauung is not only evident in the poetry. Several examples can show this clearly.

The Nazis used the word "propaganda" in a positive sense only if the particular information helped or furthered their cause; if one spoke against them, they used the word "hetzen." ⁹


"Propaganda" originally had a decidedly religious connotation. It was an abbreviated form of Collegium de propaganda fide, an organization established under Gregory XV and made effective by Urban VIII in 1627 for the purpose of exercising jurisdiction over missionary territories. The term had secular connotations by the beginning of the 20th century, yet only Nazi Germany used it as a designation for an official branch of government.

The term "Das Dritte Reich" is also an essentially religious and philosophical concept denoting the age of the Holy Spirit, which was to come after that of the Father and the Son. The direct link between the old concepts of eschatological fulfillment of utopian expectations and the political catchword of "The Third Reich" is Arthur van den Bruck (1876-1925). His ideology did not in all parts coincide with the Nazi program; however, with his book, Das dritte Reich (1923), he furnished the Hitler movement with its most effective political slogan.
We do not imply that the average Nazi was aware of the religious origins of these terms. The word "propaganda" had long been used and understood in its strictly secular sense in the commercial sphere. The great masses of the people also did not know of the theological roots of the term "Das Dritte Reich." Yet these terms had mythological-eschatological overtones which the Party ideologists like Goebbels and Rosenberg must have welcomed. Whether one is fully or only partially aware of the secularization of these terms is not decisive in the present context. We simply wish to indicate that here, as a leitmotiv in the overture of an opera, we can already see a pattern emerging which we hope to show more clearly in the course of our investigation.

Lying more openly on the surface and obvious to all was the displacement of God on a postage stamp. Before the advent of Hitler some stamps of a higher denomination bore the slogan, "Ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Gott;" by 1938 "Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer" was common.

The bookburnings which took place on 10 May 1933 cannot be said to have had a religious motivation; yet it has all the earmarks of an Inquisition, where the writer and his books were adjudged "good" or "bad" and where he had neither the chance to repent, defend himself, or withdraw his works.
CHAPTER I

DER FÜHRER

After the hectic years which marked the end of the Weimar Republic, Hitler came to power in January of 1933. The man who only ten years before had been one of the leaders of the abortive Munich Putsch and had been sentenced to prison was, even if somewhat insecurely at first, in the saddle.

Almost immediately the Reichsschrifttumskammer, a subdivision of the Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, under the direction of Joseph Goebbels, began its control of authors as well as book publications. In no action is the purpose and intent of the Party better demonstrated than in the speeches and symbolic bookburnings of 10 May 1933. As early as 16 February of the same year Heinrich Mann was under pressure to resign as President of the Preussische Dichterakademie and, at the latest on 10 May 1933, most of the older members of the Akademie had left, to be replaced by those authors who had the Party's official stamp of approval.¹

¹For a list of these authors see Dietrich Strothmann, Nationalsozialistische Literaturpolitik (Bonn: H. Bouvier und Co., 1960), p.67.
Without this approval, to be obtained only by membership—and membership was limited to Aryans—in the Reichsschrifttumskammer, it was difficult to publish, for the paper supply too was controlled by the Party. The criterion as to who could publish was quite simple: anyone who was willing, "die Bewegung und den Staat zu bejahen."  

Under this dictum a critical attitude toward the state was as impossible as equivocation; either one was for the state or one was against it.

With the Party in control of all publishing, it is evident that especially the poetry which concerns itself with Hitler would only praise and not criticize. As we shall see later, there was no room to criticize, indeed Hitler was soon to be above and beyond all criticism. Poetry, like every other genre of the arts, was used as a tool of politics and persuasion.

Now nothing was as assiduously cultivated as the idea that the Party was a continuation of German History. Especially was this true of the concept of Prussianism. The poets were likewise fond of this notion and attempted to show that once again a figure like Frederick the Great had taken the helm of state.

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2Ibid., p.9.

3Gerhard Ritter, The German Problem: Basic Questions of German Political Life, Past and Present (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1965), p.41., has shown that this idea is
a complete misconception and that Frederick actually stands at the end and not at the beginning of an era.

Regarding themselves and the movement as the direct progeny of Frederick, the Nazis claimed that his reign began an era which culminated in their own. The Party in general and the poets in particular had few scruples about using anything as long as it was effective from the point of view of propaganda. It was of primary concern that the term Preussentum appealed not so much to reason but that it was loaded with vague emotional values and nationalistic feelings which could arouse the masses; it held an ideal before their eyes: Frederick was a statesman and soldier, a ruler and artist alike; added to this his famous dictum that the ruler is the first servant of the state:

Es raunt um die altehrwürdige Gruft
Wie von zukunftsgläubigem Ahnen.
Fredericus erwacht; Fredericus ruft
Seine "langen Kerls" zu den Fahnen!

Denn Kämpfer nahen im braunen Kleid,
Mit opferwilligen Händen
Nach Zeiten der Schande, nach Zeiten voll Leid
Des Königs Werk zu vollenden.

Sie bluteten für das Dritte Reich;
Sie litten mit ehernen Mienen--
Und der sie führet, ist Friedrich gleich
An selbstlos-freudigem Dienen.

Der grosse Preussenkönig rief--
O Wunder, kaum zu deuten:
Es neigen die Hitler-Fahnen sich tief
Vor den siegreichen Fahnen von Leuthen!

---

Heinrich Anacker, Kämpfen und Singen (München: Franz Eher Verlag, 1937), p.103. Anacker, it might be noted, bends
history to his own purposes; it was not Frederick who was fond of the "lange Kerls" but Frederick William I.

Similarly, in the last stanza of a poem called "Preussens Erhebung," the same author makes the continuity more explicit:

Die Fahne weht, die den Weg uns weist;  
Aus dem Boden schon wachsen die Heere.  
Der lange geknebelte Adler kreist—  
Mit Hitler im alten Preussengeist  
Für Deutschland der Freiheit und Ehre!  

Ibid., p.91.

What is spoken of here is the continuation or completion of a cycle started in the past and terminating in the present. It is a conjuring up of the past in order to give the modern copy a heroic front. The equation is not only of Hitler with Frederick, but also of the SA with the "lange Kerls" of, as Anacker says, Frederick.

See also the poem "Friederizianische Zweieinheit," in Über die Maas, über Schelde und Rhein, Heinrich Anacker (München: Franz Eher Nachf., 1942), p.68., where the emphasis is placed on the artistic aspects of Frederick and tells how his "progeny" still possess this unity of sword and lyre. A greater disparity cannot be imagined than the lute-playing at Sansouci as against the "Horst Wessellied."

We shall encounter the repeated use of the word "Kämpfer," for the poets used the same word again and again; it indicates here anyone who belonged to the Party before the Machtergreifung.

the Nazis saw the campaign to power as "Kampfzeit."

The poets did not confine themselves to the use of heroes who were of German origin. At the right time and place the main consideration seems to have been that the hero be surrounded by a history of great deeds, that he win out in spite of insurmountable odds and that he be, by history or saga, of superhuman proportion and genius:

Ein Grosser ruht in diesem Sarkophage,  
Der seinen Wagen an die Sterne band 
Und noch vom tiefsten Sturze auferstand 
Zum letzten Glanze seiner hundert Tage.

Viel sind der Feinde, die er überwand;  
Von seinen Feldherrntaten raunt die Sage—  
Doch um sein bittres Ende düstert Klage:  
Er fiel, weil er nicht Mass noch Grenze fand!

Nun steht ein Grösserer still vor seinem Grabe:  
Der Führer, der mit schöpferischer Gabe  
Gigantisches in Erdemasse zwang.

Bescheidung nach dem Siegeszug der Waffen  
Lässt ihn das einige Europa schaffen,  
Das dem gewaltigen Korsen nicht gelang!  

8Heinrich Anacker, Über die Maas ... Rhein, p.67. This poem was written after the capitulation of Paris, at a time when, by virtue of his Blitzkrieg, Hitler was praised as "grösster Feldherr aller Zeiten." He believed, as he said in a speech to the Reichstag in July, 1940, that he was standing before the last act of the war: the invasion of England. The surrender of the British not forthcoming and plans for the invasion thwarted by lack of air and naval superiority, Hitler, as Napoleon before him, turned his attention to Russia.

While Hitler was previously shown to be the equal of Frederick, he is here greater than Napoleon; by implication, the qualities which caused the downfall of the Corsican, namely the lack of "Mass" and "Grenze" are just the qualities
which Hitler possesses. Napoleon's deeds are called only
great whereas those of Hitler are gigantic. Naturally, there
can be no mention of direct progeny here, but an affinity be­
tween the two men exists insofar as Hitler is said to be
carrying on the work which Napoleon began, namely, "das ein­
ige Europa." The foremost military strategist of recent
history, Napoleon is used simply as a foil to bring out the
superior Feldherrntaten of Hitler.

The use of archaic words and concepts are part and parcel
of the Nazi vocabulary. The people now learned from Wagner's
etc. These words had previously been revived by the 18th
century writers as well as by the Romantics. Now they came
to the surface again. Interpolating this archaic language
into a modern frame of reference, the poets put Hitler at the
head of the army and called him "Herzog;" the following two
selections can stand for many others like them:

So schuf ihm sein Wirken
Würde und Stand.
Der vor dem Heer herzog
ward Herzog genannt.9

9Will Vesper, Kranz des Lebens (München: Albert Langen,

... und nimmer käme der eine zur Herrschaft gesandte
wirksam zur Macht,
wären die Jünglinge nicht, die stürmisch
und herzvoll
ihn zum Herzog erkiesen.10
Gerhard Schumann in his poem "Einer im Jahrhundert" uses still another image when he says, "Ein Bleibendes im Zeitenschwall zu vollbringen,/ Ringt er, der Lehnsmann Gottes, ums Gelingen."  

The knightly frame of reference is common both in the Nazi as well as the anti-Nazi poetry.

While discussing Dürrer's "Ritter, Tod und Teufel" in a book published in 1953, Wilhelm Waetzoldt makes the following observation:


This seems a correct interpretation of a picture by a competent art historian. That he describes the center figure within the frame of medieval knightly virtues is quite natural, for he analyses the picture on its own terms in an objective fashion, with no more motive in mind than explication. What happens to such a picture and its interpretation in the hands of a political poet whose purpose is to persuade is evident in Anacker's poem of the same title:

In Dürers Bild erkennen wir dich tief,
Du, den der Herr zum Führertum berief:
Einsam, dem erzgeschienten Ritter gleich,
Begannst du deinen Ritt ins ferne Reich.
Am Weg, der hart und steil und dornig war,
Lag hundertfältig lauernd die Gefahr.
Und listiger Verführer suchten viel,
Dich wegzulocken vom erkor'nem Ziel.
Du aber bliebest klar und unbeirrt,
Kein Trugbild hat dir je den Sinn verwirrt.
Dein Blick, von einer innern Schau gebannt,
Blieb streng zur deutschen Gralsburg hingewandt.
Unsichtbar zogen Tod und Teufel mit,
Bis Kraft und Reinheit dir den Sieg erstritt!\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{14}\text{Kämpfen und Singen, p.125.}\)

Hitler, it will be noticed, is never mentioned by name; yet there can be no mistake as to who is meant. And there is a shift in emphasis: Dürer's picture brings the knight into the foreground; he is the center of attraction; and the castle in the background is certainly not the Gralsburg. Anacker describes the knight as he sees him, but joins to this a theme borrowed from the epic Parzival, making the castle the resting place of the Holy Grail. Hitler is between
the death and the devil in search of the Holy Grail. This symbol, as it is presented here and elsewhere with its qualifying adjective "deutscher," is an anomaly, for it has signified throughout history a catholic, thus supranational Christian belief; it can, therefore, by its very nature not be restricted to one nation or nationality.

It is not enough that Hitler be simply eulogized; a close relationship must necessarily exist between him and the people. The praise and glory that are his due as one whom "der Herr zum Führertum berief" must somehow be related to the task he is performing. That is to say, he must at one and the same time be set apart from the people, yet be part of them. Above all, his works, deeds and ideas must be shown to be directed toward a goal common to all. One of the more frequent metaphors for expressing this is that of the mason or sculptor:

Wir werdend' Volk, wir sind der rohe Stein—
Du, unser Führer, sollst der Steinmetz sein;
Der Steinmetz, der mit schöpf'rischer Gewalt
Den Stein erlöst von seiner Ungestalt.
Schlag immer zu! Wir halten duldend still,
Da deine strenge Hand uns formen will.
Wir leiden gern, hinopfernd Tag und Nacht,
Wenn nur dein Hammerschlag uns klarer macht.
Wie Michelangelo das Bild des Herrn,
Schaffst du aus uns, was heut noch blass und fern;
Schaffst du aus uns, aus rohem Element,
Des neuen Deutschlands ewig' Monument.15

15Ibid., p.15.

What is preached here is the complete passivity of the
entire nation, the subjection of the people to the "Hammer-schlag" of the sculptor. The metaphor may be striking as such, but the implication of the leader as the sculptor and the people as his raw material is more serious than would appear at first glance. The raw material which an artist uses has as such no "will" of its own; the artist uses it as he sees fit; he is bound only by the natural limitations which the material may have: it is, for example, not in the nature of marble to be molded like clay. If the people are, as the poem says, to be raw material, then this implies also that they have no will of their own and that they are completely dependent on the artist for the end result. The use of the metaphor here makes the people an inert substance with no mind or will of their own. At the same time the metaphor gives the artist unlimited freedom of action. Here is an example of the uncritical, even masochistic, attitude which was preached by the poets; poetry has become the tool of demagogy. Its task is to teach attitudes; correspondingly, the role of the people is to obey.

Such close scrutiny, of course, defeats the original effectiveness of the poems. They were not written for the aloof bystander or unbiased witness. They were meant to be heard and not contemplated. The association of Hitler with Michelangelo is poetic "name-dropping," intended to arouse vague feelings and associations as well as to enhance the stature of Hitler. The appeal to the ear rather than to the mind can also be seen in the use of the word "erlöst." It is
important for the poet that the word brings with it decidedly religious connotations and thus he intentionally uses it to bring the word "Erlöser" into the context without saying it.

In the hands of the Nazi poets, no figure stands the comparison to Hitler. It seems that he is constantly compared to the giants in human history, yet he overshadows each of these. Some lyrics, on the other hand, stress his "human" side; it is a strange paradox that he is praised for his love of the people and the country, as the protector of peace, and at the same time, as the greatest warlord of all time:

So sieht ihn die Welt: Gewappnet in Erz,
Und die Hand am geschliffenen Schwerte—
Wir aber kennen sein gütiges Herz
Unterm Mantel der stählernen Härte.

Die Kinder künden's in strahlendem Glück,
Die irgendwo ihm begegnet;
Und Tiere haben mit stummem Blick
Sein stilles Wohltun gesegnet.

Denn die tiefste Wurzel all' seines Tuns
Ist ein volkumfassendes Lieben—
Drum ist er dem Letzten und Ärmsten von uns
Als Führer Kamerad noch geblieben.

So sieht ihn die Welt: Gewappnet in Erz,
Und die Hand am geschliffenen Schwerte—
Wir aber kennen sein gütiges Herz
Unterm Mantel der stählernen Härte:16

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16 Heinrich Anacker, Die Fanfare (München: Franz Eher Verlag, 1933), p.108. That the poet is more interested in the message than in the form is only too obvious here: not only does he monotonously repeat the first quatrain in its entirety, but the rhyming of "Schwerte-Härte" needs little comment as to quality.
Hitler in the germanic attire of a medieval knight is a favorite pose; it immediately brings to mind the famous picture by Hubert Lanzinger which shows him as the standard bearer clad in armor.\footnote{Unser Jahrhundert im Bild, ed. Golo Mann (Berlin: Bertelsmann Verlag, 1964), p.474.}

It is interesting also to note the use of the adjective "stumm;" it is used here in connection with animals and properly so; that the animals, however, "bless" Hitler's work is hard to imagine.

In their zeal the poets overreach their capabilities and end up stating the obvious. In the following, for example, Baldur von Schirach attempts to juxtapose Hitler's human and superhuman qualities; his technique is to introduce a disjunctive, misleading the hearer into anticipating the normal "sondern auch" and an additional fact; the disjunctive is abortive; he concludes with the tautology, "er ist . . . er selber."

\begin{quote}
Das ist an ihm das Größte: dass er nicht nur unser Führer ist und vieler Held, Sondern er selber: gerade, fest und schlicht, dass in ihm ruhn die Wurzeln unsrer Welt, und seine Seele an die Sterne strich und er doch Mensch blieb, so wie du und ich . . .
\end{quote}\footnote{Das Größte, in Rufe in das Reich, ed. Herbert Böhme (Berlin: Verlag Junge Generation, 1934), p.122.}

For the most part, however, the poets stress his super-

human, titanic qualities:

Wer aber sonnengleich
evom Firmament selber Feuer bringt,
erleuchtend alles, was im Reich
der Kräfte Leben fühlend schwingt:
Der sei Lebendigster genannt.
Titan und lebende Gewalt,
die heilet, was sich lange wand,
die Ungeformtes sammelt zur Gestalt.19

19Heinz Steguweit, "Dem Lebendigsten," in Dem Führer:
Gedichte für Adolf Hitler, ed. Karl Hans Bühner (Stuttgart:
Truckenmüller, 1944) p.52.

Prometheus, according to mythology, fashioned man, "in
a nobler shape than the animals, upright like the gods; and
then he went to heaven, to the sun, where he lit a torch and
brought down fire, a protection to man far better than any­
thing else . . ."20

20Edith Hamilton, Mythology (Boston: Little, Brown & Co.,
1942), p.86.

Steguweit places Hitler into this mythological framework and
without comparing him, attributes to him the deeds of Pro­
metheus; intentionally so: unlike the previous poems in which
Hitler is compared to Napoleon or Michelangelo and still
possesses human qualities, he is here moved into the realm
of the gods; this contributes to the myth of Hitler.

In still another poem Hitler assumes epic proportions
and dwells among the gods:

"Nenne mir, Muse, den Mann" . . . beginnt der homer­
ische Sänger
Seinen Märchenbericht, Götter und Menschen vermischt.
Listenreicher Odysseus, wie hat die unsterbliche Muse
Dir das duldende Herz findig im Kopfe gemacht!

Jetzt ein anderer Mann! --Wer wagt es, gebührend
zu singen,
Wie sein heldischer Mut herrlich das Schicksal
bezwang?
Nein, dies kündet ihn falsch. Noch stolzer fiel die
Entscheidung.
Muse, schrickst du zurück? --Schicksal wurde er selbst!21


The list of such appellatives is long yet repetitive:
some poets placed him in the realm of the gods, others com­
pared him to religious figures of the past:

Vor dreizehn Jahren, in diesem Saal,
Begann das grosse Genesen:
Hier warf der Führer zum erstenmal
Wie einen zündenden Wetterstrahl
Ins Volk seine ehernen

22 Heinrich Anacker, Kämpfen und Singen, p.101. Written
in 1936 but published in an anthology in 1937, the "dreizehn
Jahren" refers to the Putsch of November 1923; the "Saal" is
the Bürgerbräukeller from where the participants proceeded.
The poem was written for the ninth of November, the "Gedenk­
tag der Gefallenen."

Whether by his use of the word "Wetterstrahl" the refer­
ence is to Wotan, or by his use of "Thesen" Anacker means to
refer to Luther is unresolved; clear is, however, that even
a mixture of the two is pregnant with a mixture of mytholo­
gical and religious connotations and suggestions. Less
oblique is the poem of Herybert Menzel:

Der Hitler stand wie Luther auf,

Du Eiserner, grader, du starker Magnet,

Du bringst uns zusammen! Student und Prolet.23

What this suggests is "Reformation," a word tinged with religious overtones; Hitler is placed on the plane of a religious reformer, giving his movement the aura of a religious crusade. He assumes thus the spiritual leadership as well as the temporal. What he says is a matter of "faith."

Two saints are used as comparisons: Saint George would naturally fit in with the metaphor of Hitler in the dress of a medieval knight;24

Hermann Eris Busse compares him to St. Christopher, a man who, according to legend, was supposed to have been a giant:

der aus den dunkelsten Tagen,
treu wie Christoffer, der Riese,

allein uns ins Licht getragen.25

The reader—or perhaps better the listener—will at once make the association with the well-known picture of Christo­pher carrying Christ who in turn holds the world in his
hands. What is striking here is not so much the comparison of Hitler to Christopher, but the logical consequence of this: if Hitler is like Christopher, then the "uns" of the last line, the people, must be Christ. Assuming that the poet wanted mainly to bring out the Hitler-Christopher comparison, we can overlook the obvious blasphemy of such a statement, but hardly the sloppy metaphor.

We have dealt with the poetry which tried to emphasize the human aspects of Hitler; this was, however, far less common than that poetry which contributed to and helped build the cult which surrounded him. Mention is often made of his sacrifices for the people. For them and them alone he had given up family and marriage, as Johannes Linke puts it, "Den eignen Namen verlor er./ Er büsste Heimat, Besitz ein und Stand."26


He had, so to speak, dedicated himself to the people. On the other hand, he was depicted as being completely above them, not only as a ruler endowed with superhuman capacities but also as a religious leader, as shall be presently shown. This aloofness is already evident in the use of the term Führer: his own name almost vanished behind the title; it was absorbed by a concept which heretofore had never been used in the place of a surname. This suggests a magical
separation of him from the people and it is here that the messianic tendencies of the entire movement become evident. Contributing to this, the poets borrowed situations and passages from the Bible:

Er ist so gross, wie wir es nicht ermessen,
Er ist so stark, ein mächtiger Magnet.
Wir alle hatten Deutschland schon vergessen,
Er rang mit Gott um Deutschland im Gebet.

Herr, findest du auch nur noch zehn Gerechte,
Verdirb dein Deutschland nicht, es wird schon rein.
Und sind wir alle auch des Teufels Knechte,
Herr, lass mich kämpfen, es wird wieder dein!

Er kämpfte schon, er zog uns an, gewaltig,
Als ein Prophet, zerschlug die Götzen all.
Ihr Bann liess nach, und stark und junggestaltig
Erhob sich Deutschland nach dem tiefen Fall,

Ein Leib, ein Herz, ein Haupt und ein Gedanke,
Blut seines Führers, seinem Willen treu.
So gibt es für sein Werben keine Schranke;
Die ganze Welt schafft Hitlers Deutschland neu.²⁷

²⁷Herybert Menzel, *Im Marschschritt der SA*, p.48

The first stanza serves as an introduction while the second shows the form which Hitler's "Gebet" took and finally the last two stanzas give the result of his prayers. The last line of the first quatrain states that Hitler struggled with God; the scene parallels the Old Testament account of Jacob's combat with God; indeed, the same word "rang" is used here as it is in the biblical episode.²⁸

²⁸Genesis 32, 24-25.

Remaining in the biblical frame of reference, the first
two lines of the second stanza describe not Jacob, but Abraham's dialogue with God concerning the fate of Sodom:

Es möchten vielleicht fünfzig Gerechte in der Stadt sein; wolltest du die umbringen und dem Ort nicht vergeben um fünfzig Gerechter willen, die darin wären?

Es möchten vielleicht fünf weniger denn fünfzig . .

Man möchte vielleicht dreissig darin finden . .

Und er sprach: Ach zürne nicht, Herr, dass ich nur noch einmal rede. Man möchte vielleicht zehn darin finden. Er aber sprach: Ich will sie nicht verderben um der Zehn willen.29

29 Genesis 18, 24-32.

By his use of the word "rang," the poet brings in a heroic attitude which is then fortified in the second and third stanzas by "kämpfen." No humble Abraham speaks with God here, but instead a warrior who is the equal of him. He has assumed the burden of the rescue; having won his battle, albeit in the form of a "Gebet," with God, the people are "seinem Willen treu," meaning that he no longer acts as a mediator whose task is done for the sake of a higher being, but that he has assumed the role of this power himself. The sober, straightforward account in the Old Testament stands in strong contrast to the passionate account given here.

The mixture of religious and Germanic battle vocabulary: "ringen," "kämpfen," "Prophet," und "Götzen" all point to a secularization of religious terminology. The latter have
strictly Old Testament connotations. And while the metaphor "Prophet" (Abraham-Hitler) is carried out and the "Götzen" refers to those within the country who have beliefs or attitudes at variance with the Nazis, the terms are, nevertheless, applied to a secular background. This tends to corrupt their originally biblical meanings and results in bringing to Hitler and his movement all the attributes of religion and elevating it to the rank of new revelation.

In the history of mankind there have been many leaders who have been called deliverers because they saved their people from one plight or another. One thinks of Joan of Arc, described by Anacker as follows:

Das Standbild einer helmbewehrten Frau.
Als Hirtenkind zu Domremy geboren,
Barg sie ihr scheues, reines Mädchentum
Bis Kriegsnot sie zur Retterin erkoren.  

No figure stands out more vividly in the Old Testament as a deliverer than Moses; he was picked by God to lead the chosen people out of Egypt. In the New Testament two more instances come to mind: Mary was chosen by God to bring forth a redeemer who would save the world, and John was sent to "prepare the way of the Lord."  

The following poem, "Die Botschaft an den Führer," while
literally following none of the three accounts, is so permeated with biblical atmosphere and intimations that they can hardly be overlooked:

Ich die Stimme—
(wohl hörst du mich, doch kannst du mich nicht sehn).
Ich, die Stimme, bin ausgesandt,
dir zu künden:
Heil dir! du bist ausersehn!
Aufwachen soll von deinem Rufen das Volk!
Aufwachen aus Knechtschaft,
aufwachen aus Parteizerrissenheit und Not!
Du sollst verkünden
neuen Glauben an ein neues Reich!

Nimm du des Reiches Macht in deine Hand,
ohne nach Lohn und Nutzen zu fragen,
denn, wie du mir dienst, will ich dir dienen,
und dir wird der Lohn, den du verdienst!

Gehe hin und baue!
Du bist ausersehn!
Mit dir ist Gott,
der ewig war, ist und ewig sein wird!
Millionen mehr und mehr werden im Blute erfahren:
Ich bin mit dir!
Sie werden dir zuströmen,
denn du bist unüberwindlich durch mich!
werden das Reich mit dir errichten,
die Ketten zerreissen,
die Feinde erschlagen . . .

Aufwachen soll das Volk
von deinem Rufen!
und über Nacht—
 wenn es aufgewacht ist,
aus dumpfer Verzweiflung und Not,
führe du es auf mein Gebot
heim in siegreicher Stunde,
heim ins Reich!


Because he couches his poem in this biblical reference,
the poet's intentions are unmistakable: the Führer, just as Mary, received a commission directly from God; both instances have to do with salvation history. Instead of "Gegrüsst seiest du, Maria," the poet consciously and deliberately uses "Heil," well aware that the word means salvation and that it will immediately be associated with the "deutscher Gruss."

Other biblical references are abundant: "Ich bin mit dir," reminds one of Christ's words, "I am with you all days . . ."; "Wenn du mir dienst, will ich dir dienen," suggests the Old Testament idea of a covenant, here between God and Hitler; to make this pact convincing and air-tight, God promises to make Hitler "unüberwindlich durch mich."
The people, on the other hand, will experience "im Blute" that is, irrationally and emotionally, that the leader has God's sanction.

This is new revelation at work. And here is ready evidence that the poets of the Nazi movement did not deny in public the existence of God nor make fun of him; nor did they try to push the notion of God into the background; on the contrary, he was usable, as can be seen here, to promote the cause of the movement. The eclecticism and indiscriminate use of religiously oriented words and symbols can only be aimed at already present religious feelings and redirect them for political purposes. The use, for example, of Hitler's movement as an analogue to the delivery of the Jews.
from Egypt and the consequent notion of a "chosen people" is not only an unintentional irony on the part of the poet, but it misses the mark completely, for this ancient Hebrew idea implies a belief in a God of all nations who chose one nation but who may also cancel this distinction.

If a metaphor is used in prose, its meaning can usually be deduced from the context and very often its repeated use can lead to a more definite idea of what the author was attempting to explain by using it. A poem must stand by itself, however, and here the language can become treacherous, for a metaphor must make itself understood within the context of the poem, without the benefit of outside commentary, or it will fail in its purpose. But it can also be used deliberately to lie, mislead and suggest without stating explicitly. The poem "Christus" by Baldur von Schirach is a good example of this:

Wenn heute er vom Himmel niederstiege,
der grosse Krieger, der die Wechsler schlug,
so brüllt ihr wieder euer "crucifige!"
und schlagt an's Kreuz, das er selber trug.

Er aber lächelt leise euerm Hasse:
"Die Wahrheit steht, wenn auch ihr Träger fällt;
der Glaube lebt, da ich das Leben lasse."
und ragt am Kreuz den Kämpfern aller Welt.33

33 Die Fahne der Verfolgten (Berlin: Verlag und Vertriebs GmbH, 1933) p.49.

Christ is spoken of and held up as an example, but only for the purpose of drawing attention to a situation which,
according to the author, has an analogy in the present time. Even the tense and mood seem to point to this: the "if" clause opening the poem with a subjunctive verb, "niederstiege," demands a verb in the conclusion which is also in the subjunctive. "Brüllt" und "schlägt" are both present time. An attempt to justify this from the point of view of rhythm fails to explain this also; while the rhythm would be changed by the past tense "brülltet," the changing of "schlägt" to "schlägt" would accomplish nothing. In addition, the consistency of the present tense in the second stanza precludes any other possibility. This is then a grammatical impasse, for the "if" clause is not completed. Apparently it is to be read and forgotten; it stands all by itself and serves only as an introduction, since "brüllt" short-circuits its function as a conditional clause. But there is an intention behind this inconsistency: after the abortive "if" clause, the entire poem slips into the present time, giving the reader or listener the idea that Christ is actually present.

A connection is implied between Christ and Hitler, between the truth of Christ's teaching and the "truth" which Hitler preached. Christ is neither parodied nor destroyed; he is depicted somewhat like the Christ of the Heliand, the "grosse Krieger, der die Wechsler schlug."^34

^34Alfred Rosenberg, Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts (München: Hoheneichen Verlag, 1940), makes a point of this also when
he says, "Der gewaltige Prediger und der Zürnende im Tempel, der Mann, der mitriss und dem 'sie alle' folgten, nicht das Opferlamm der jüdischen Prophetie, nicht der Gekreuzigte ist heute das bildende Ideal, das uns aus den Evangelien hervorgeleuchtet." p.604.

The poet does not openly draw the comparison; he does not have to, since the poem is saturated with unmistakable vocabulary. What he attempts to do is substitute or change the existing order of things by hinting at an interchangeability of Christ and Hitler.35

35The more fanatical members of the party did not hesitate to make outright comparisons. Julius Streicher, in an address to the German Academy of Education on 26 July, 1935, said, "It is only on one or two exceptional points that Christ and Hitler stand comparison, for Hitler is far too big a man to be compared to one so petty."

Christ is used as a model or standard and, by suggesting interchangeability, the poet makes the effect accrue to the imitation and not to the original.

Not all of the poets were as open as Schirach. Many did not mention Christ directly, but by their choice of situation and wording leave little doubt that a comparison is being made. The first two lines of a poem by Hans Friedrich Blunck recall the Old Testament expectation of a savior:

Wir aber wissen, wie viel hundert Jahre ein Volk in Sehnsucht lebte, sich verträumt', wir wissen, dass der Besten Blut die Wurzeln der Fremden speiste, da die Heimat säumt'.36

36"Dem Führer," in Dem Führer: Gedichte... Hitler, p.47.
In the same vein, Josef Moder writes:

Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer, riefen sie,  
wer aber wüsste, ob du jemals kämest?  
wer dürfte sagen, dass du je uns nähmest  
als wären all die schweren Bürden . . .37


Blunck's lines would have the reader believe that the people have been longing for the arrival of a savior while Moder achieves the same sense of anticipation by using the subjunctive mood. Heinrich Anacker uses Christmas as an occasion to write a sonnet of the savior's coming; the last tercet is as follows:

So treten wir zur stillen Christnachtfeier . . .  
Empor den Blick, du Volk! Am Horizont  
Aufsteigt dein Stern: Auch dir naht der Befreier!38

38Kämpfen und Singen, p.120. Anacker uses the same theme again in a poem called "Lied der Arbeitslosen," op.cit., p.70.

Herybert Menzel's poem has the youth celebrating the birth of the savior:

Deutschlands neuer Führer ist geboren  
und die Jugend singt ein neues Lied.39

39Im Marschschritt der SA, p.13.

Common to all the poems above is the tendency to see Hitler as Christ; but more than that, they all describe him as coming or being born. Considering that in each case the
poem was published after Hitler's Machtergreifung, the design of the poets can only be deception. Because Hitler was already in power, the idea of birth as it is presented here is ridiculous; yet it is a clever means of persuasion and camouflage, for it repeatedly asserts the Christ-like character of Hitler and thereby helps to shunt aside Christian salvation history and replace it with that of Hitler.

Instances of further biblical allusions taken from the life of Christ are not missing in the poetry; one example can stand for many others like it:

Doch gab es nichts, das dich entmutigt hat,
Dich, ein Chaos werkgewaltigen Erben.
Eisern gebotst du Einhalt dem Verderben,
Und siehe, die gehungert, wurden satt.40


If the emphasis of the poets was put on salvation and on the "Retter," "Heiland" or "Vollender" who would perform this rescue,41

41 Anyone familiar with the messianic idea will perhaps be struck by the degree to which the Nazis transferred Christ's characteristics and works to Hitler. And it is not surprising that the concerted effort to do so produced, at least in Christian minds, the immediate suggestion of him as the Anti-Christ. Cf. Charles W. Hoffmann, op.cit., p.83.

then one asks, from whom the nation was to be saved. The politicians as well as the poets directed the attention of the nation upon itself. One need only think of the importance the Nazis placed on such things as "Volk," "Blut,"
"Rasse" and "Vaterland" to see this. The natural concomitant of this is that the nation begins to see itself surrounded by enemies, indeed by a hostile world. Besides the Jews, the eternal aliens of the Nazis, a ready-made object of hatred presented itself in the form of the lost First World War and the Treaty of Versailles:

Am Himmel steht rot die Gewitterwolke
Und droht in die Zeit und die Trommel schreit!
Was rufen die Hörner? Gerechtigkeit!
Und Freiheit einem verratenen Volke!

Man hat uns mit heiligen Eiden versprochen
Gerechtigkeit, Bruderschaft, Friedens-Bund
und jeglichem Volke den eignen Grund.
Man hat uns die Heiligen Eide gebrochen!

Wie Träumende legten die Waffen wir nieder.
Da bot man statt Frieden uns Knechtschaft und Mord.
Da riss man der Mutter das Kindervolk fort,
und allen vom Leib die lebendigsten Glieder.

Im Norden, im Süden, im Westen, im Osten
gefangen die Brüder, von allen bedroht,
verflucht und gegeisselt, im Herzen den Tod.
Doch stehen sie aufrecht und halten den Posten!

Die heilige Erde, das Erbe der Ahnen,
Jahrtausende lang von den Vätern bebaut,
hat Gott uns zu ewigem Lehn anvertraut.
Drum ruft die Trommeln! Drum mahnen die Fahnen!

Drum fordern die Herzen: stosst nieder die Schranken!
Es steigt aus der Trennung das ewige Reich:
Vom Strande der Memel, vom Nordseedeich,
Ein Reich bis zur Mauer der Karawanken!42

42Will Vesper, Kranz des Lebens, p.140.

The theme of the German nation in "Knechtschaft" was often taken up by the poets and abstracted: they spoke of this time as a fall from God to the depths of despair; Hitler
is finally the one who, by superhuman effort, effects a rescue, as Gerhard Schumann puts it, "mit geweihter Hand." It is not simply a matter of being chosen, however. The burden Hitler must assume is described as staggering, almost beyond human endurance; before he can accomplish his task, even before it is given to him, he must go through a purgative process, one is tempted to say a "dark night of the soul," during which he battles with God on the mountain-top for the sake of the people in the valley below. As he descends, the radiance of the Lord is around him. To accentuate the imitation of the biblical account, the verse from the Bible may here be added:

Da nun Moses vom Berge Sinai ging, hatte er die zwei Tafeln des Zeugnisses in seiner Hand und wusste nicht, dass die Haut seines Angesichts glänzte davon, dass er mit ihm geredet hatte.43

43II Moses 34,29.

Though the following text by Gerhard Schumann is not an exact parallel, the elements can hardly be overlooked; what he adds to this is the New Testament account of Christ's agony in the Garden of Olives:

Notschrei fuhr auf und brach sich grell und bang. Verzweiflung griff mit letzter Kraft ins Leere. Er aufgebäumt, erzitternd vor der Schwere— Bis der Befehl ihn in die Knie zwang.
Doch als er aufstand, fuhr der Feuerschein
des Auserwählten um sein Haupt. Und niedersteigend
trug er die Fackel in die Nacht hinein.

Die Millionen beugten sich ihm schweigend.
Erlöst. Der Himmel flammte morgenbleich.
Die Sonne wuchs. Und mit ihr wuchs das Reich. 44

44 "Der Eine," in Rufe in das Reich, ed. Herbert Böhme
(Berlin: Junge Generation Verlag, 1934), p.120.

Schumann calls this poem "Der Eine." Neither in the
title nor in the poem itself does he ever blaspheme: the
person meant is never named. Yet it can be said that in the
year the poem was written, 1934, the myth of Hitler had so
permeated Germany that there could be little doubt who was
meant by "der Eine." But more than that: as in the Old
Testament the circumlocution "Jahweh" was used instead of
the unutterable name "God," so here Hitler is "der Eine,"
the ineffable.

The sonnet form is used, perhaps to intensify the sub-
lime message the poem is to convey. By the use of antiquated
word forms such as "Talen" instead of "Tälern" and "aufstund"
in place of "aufstand," the author would like to capture the
flavor of the biblical example. His use of the emphatic
words, "Blut," "Notschrei," "Grauen," "aufgebäumt," "Ver-
zweiflung" and "zittern" is supposed to accentuate the enor-
mity of the suffering which has been placed on Hitler by a
higher power.

The last line of the second stanza mixes Christianity
with the Germanic belief in fate: the burden is assumed in a pose reminiscent of Christ's humility in the Garden of Olives but the word "Zwang" brings to the entire line a note of unavoidable fate and provides that element of pathos essential to secularized religion.

It is evident that such poetry has as its final goal the deification of Hitler, for the process of his selection by God, the subsequent suffering for his people and the implication, by the mere use of the biblical landscape and background, that he sacrifice gladly out of love for "his" people: all surround Hitler with an atmosphere which lifts him out of and beyond the reach of the common man. By virtue of his great suffering, he has access directly to God. Hans Pflug-Franken brings this out in his poem, "Der Führer"; there can be no doubt that Hitler sees the face of God, a privilege, by the way, not granted to Moses nor even to Christ in the Garden of Olives:

\[\text{Einsam und frei in der Zeit,} \\
\text{so muss der Führer stehn,} \\
\text{Flammend erschlossen dem Gotte,} \\
\text{der ihm sein Antlitz enthüllt.}\text{45}\]

\[\text{45 Gedichte eines Soldaten (München: Franz Eher Verlag, 1943), p.9.}\]

The purgative process through which Hitler must go before he can deliver his people has another variation in a poem by Johannes Linke: this poet describes it as one of
Wenn je dem Volk die Flut seiner Not
bis zum Munde schwillt,
greift Gott aus dem Reichtum der Männer,
die ihm immer bereitstehen,
die Tauglichsten mit seiner eignen Hand
und stösst sie, gnadenlos, wie es scheint,
in den lichtlosen Abgrund,
schlägt ihnen tödliche Wunden und überhäuft
ihr Herz mit der bittersten Qual
all ihrer Brüder,
dass er sie prüfe, ob sie das Sterben bestehn.

Wer von den also Gestürzten
den Tod ertrug und heil aus der Tiefe emporstieg,
den hat das Grauen verwandelt.
Der ist kein Einzelner mehr, der ward
wiedergeboren in seinem Volk,
der bringt aus der Finsternis
das hellste Licht heim,
der ward geläutert, der ist gefeit,
seiner Sendung gewiss, der weiss, dass ihm nichts
geschieht,
als was Gott ihm zuschickt.

46 "Der Führer," in Die Ernte der Gegenwart, p.366. It
might be noted here that this poem is an imitation of Stefan
George's, "Der Dichter in Zeiten der Wirren."

Linke also seems to use the occasion of Christ's men­
tal agony in the Garden as a model. What he adds to this is
a "Purgatorio" through which Hitler must go, bearing the
"bitterste Qual" of his people. Having withstood this "death"
he is reborn "in seinem Volk"; like Christ, he is immune to
everything on this earth, standing, as it were, with one foot
in this life and one in the next. He is no longer, as the
poet says, an "Einzelner"; he is an embodiment or incorporation
of his people. This will be treated more fully later.
An excerpt from a poem by Theo Goerlitz shows the extremes to which the deification of Hitler could go:

Wenn ein Volk, das wächst,  
unter den Fenstern eines Gewaltigen steht,  
und der Gewaltige  
seine Stimme verströmen lässt  
über dies Volk . . .  
Wenn seine Stimme dauert und ohne Falsch ist  
und sich anschickt  
die letzten Gebirge zu erschüttern,  
bis dieses Volk nicht mehr aus noch ein weiss  
vor Erhebung des Herzens . . .  
Meint ihr, dass es die Stimme eines Menschen ist,  
die zu euch spricht,  
wen nicht Gottes Stimme sich in diese Stimme  
verzaubert hätte--

47"Von dem Gewaltigen," in Rufe in das Reich, p.125.

The "Stimme" is no longer identified as that of an individual. It is God who speaks directly through him to the people. The implications are obvious: the listener, hearing the voice of God, has no choice but to obey that voice. The speaker has become the mouthpiece of God and as such cannot make a mistake. Only the final step remains, namely that of adoration and veneration; Hanns Johst provides an example of this:

Das Dritte Reich versteint, gestählt,  
steht festgefägt im Morgenglanz,  
umbaut als köstlichste Monstranz  
dein glückliches Lächeln, mein Führer.


The myth of Hitler and the cult of personality around his person have here turned into idolatry. He partakes of
immortality, is indeed enshrined in a holy vessel and is the center of a religious benediction. The numerous appellatives which he is called in countless poems, i.e., "der Erwählte," "der Eine," "der von Gott gesandte," "Schicksalsleiter," "Seelenhirt" etc. all in one way or another contributed to this final enthronement on the altar.
CHAPTER II

DAS VOLK

Hitler was held up before the eyes of the German people as a savior, one who would rescue Germany in its hour of need. As he acquired more and more power, his words and pronouncements came to be regarded as law. He appeared to be a great simplifier, for in a society where rationale and bureaucracy were the norm of life, his words and the consequent prompt execution of his orders appeared on the surface to be miraculous. A totalitarian state is normally a palliative for the search for order, for it contains an over-abundance of regimentation. And if Hitler's internal reforms were not enough to establish him as one "chosen" by God, "du von Gott gesandter," to lead Germany, certainly his Blitzkriege were; he carried these out successfully in spite of the warnings and objections of his military advisers. If then he was regarded as the chosen leader, it follows that his people too must be chosen.

The historian Arthur Rosenberg has shown that it is a misconception to think the Germans in the late 1920's were suffering from an inferiority complex due to the loss of the First World War and that as a result Hitler came easily to
power.¹

¹Entstehung und Geschichte der Weimarer Republik (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1962), p.194.

It did, however, seem evident from the years of the Weimar Republic that democracy was a form of government alien to the German mind and temperament. Moreover, that Germany was willing to find a scapegoat after losing the First World War is understandable; a nation which through four years of war and torment, both at home and in the field, had sacrificed its life-blood in hopes of victory would hardly be induced to think of its supreme effort as a collective crime or fit of insanity.

Nazi propaganda from the very beginning centered on the idea of a humiliated Germany and capitalized on the subsequent "resentment" which resulted from the occupation by foreign forces. The Weimar Republic had to take the brunt of the blame for the existing state of affairs. Besides this, the objects of Nazi propaganda were threefold: it cursed the Treaty of Versailles, the Jews were blamed as the instigators of all evil and, as the positive aspect, the Nazis cultivated German nationalism. That Germany had lost the war was hardly mentioned. Indeed, if it was, then only insofar as the men who lost their lives in it had died valiantly for their country. One need not, the Nazis said, be ashamed of being German. Just the opposite. The German people were told that they could and should be proud of being German, proud of being
different, for as a chosen people they had a singular destiny to fulfill. The Nazis condemned the outsider, nurtured and fed a fierce pride and supported this pride not only by pointing to the chosen leader but also by playing up the differences of the Germans from all other peoples:

Den Stolz
darf euer Leben nicht vermissen,
den Stolz auf
das, was von euch fordern wird
das Reich.
Wahrlich, die Güter dieser Welt,
das Gold,
 ihr habt es nicht zum Pfande.
Doch ihr habt eins, worum Millionen
euch beneiden.
Ihr seid geboren,
ihr,
in einer Welt von andern,
Deutsche zu sein.²


"Den Stolz, in einer Welt von andern, Deutsche zu sein," was to be an oft-repeated theme. The idea accentuates national pride and an exclusivity limited to those of the German race. One need only think of the magically loaded words, "Volk," "Rasse" and "Blut" in order to see how great the chasm became between one who belonged and one who did not. But if this national superiority was, as the Nazis preached, part and parcel of being one of the chosen, then being German meant more than just being a citizen; implicit was the idea that to be a German meant to be burdened with
the fate of the entire nation. And to carry this fate in
the midst of a hostile world was regarded by the poets as
heroic. They inflated the honor connected with being Ger­
man and the accompanying sense of duty to heroic proportions:

Deutsch sein, heisst einsam wandern,
so ganz auf sich gestellt,
und ohne Furcht vor andern,
auch gegen eine Welt!

Deutsch sein, heisst Treue halten,
bis an des Daseins Rand,
ganz unverfälscht dem alten
geliebten Vaterland!^3

To assert oneself even against an entire world is the
essence of Nazi heroism; the detachment and loneliness are
only too transparent. In a poem called, "Die Anderen und
Wir," Gerhard Schumann speaks in the same vein: "Wir sind
Volk. Die Anderen Staaten."^4

^3Wolfgang Herscher, "Deutsch sein," in Gedichte des
Volkes, p.348.

^4Bewährung: Gedichte (München: Albert Langen, Georg
Müller, 1940), p.17.

The emphasis on the generic term "Volk" makes little sense
in terms of the present generation; it must be shown that
this generation is in continuity with the past. The Old
Testament books of Chronology attest to this as do the some­
what parallel "Ahnenzeugnisse" of the Nazis. This selec­
tivity of the Nazis rejected everyone and everything which
was not in one sense of the word or another Germanic.
High on the list of favorite topics in the lyrics were the early Germanic tribes who had, as the following selection shows, already felt themselves to be a "Volk" and who rejected the religion of Winfrid (Bonifatius) because it was not intrinsically German:

"Sprich, Wulf, was dieser Fremde in unseren Gauen will!" Um Winfrid, den Fremden, standen die Friesen still und sahen mit dunklen Blicken auf seine gereckte Gestalt, da Wulf, der Priester, die Rechte zur Faust geballt: "Du kamest auf unsere Höfe und batest um Trank und Rast, du kamest in unsere Gaue, da wurdest du unser Gast."


The poem, as so much of Nazi propaganda, argues essentially from a position of half-truth. It would have the reader believe that Christianity, as represented by Winfrid, was totally rejected; if it is part of German life today, then only because it was forced on the people. Needless to say, it is a covert attack on Christianity. The poem emphasizes action and the Reckenhaltung of the ancient Germans, who would bow their knee to no one: this attitude was constantly preached as being essentially German. The poet attempts to show that the
Christian cross is no more effective, no more powerful, than the oak of Donar. And what is more: the oak of Donar is rooted in the soil; it is, as it were, part of the people while the cross of Winfrid is "fremd in diesem Land." The last lines of the poem make it clear that Winfrid has been killed, that is, that justice has been meted out by the sword; might becomes right, for the non-acceptance of Winfrid's religion, so the author would have us believe, rests justifiably on a demonstration of right by force of arms.

Central to the poem is the idea that that which is essentially German must be protected at all costs. Very often by mere repetition, or as in the following poem by adjectival use, the idea of Germanic superiority was stressed:

Du bist das Urbild germanischer Kraft,  
schiesst du des Speeres eschenen Schaft  
in sonnenschimmernde Weiten,  
schaue ich Siegfrieds strahlenden Ruhm,  
seh ich germanisches Reckentum  
um edelste Krone streiten,  
hör ich ein Klagen schwingend und schwer:  
Germanischen Mann traf germanischer Speer——  
denkt der kommenden Zeiten.6

6Helmut Dietlof Reiche, Vom neuen Glauben (Berlin: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1942), p.69.

The reference to the hero of the Nibelungenlied, or for that matter, to any of the heroes of the sagas, is not unusual.7
The return to the past for heroes and ideals is certainly not the discovery nor exclusive property of the Nazis. They took over and continued a movement which had long been a current in the stream of German literature. Felix Dahn, called by Soergel one of the "rückwärts gewandte Poeten," glorified the German past with works such as, "Die Könige der Germanen," "König Roderich" and "Odhins Trost" to name just a few of his many dramas. Jost Hermand, "Gründerzeit und Bürgerlicher Realismus," Monatshefte, LIX, No.2 (Summer 1967), p.108-117., points out that at the time of Bismarck, Moltke, for example, was called "Wodansaug'" and Bismarck himself the "getreue Eckehard"; much of the literature, Hermand says, is patriotic, "voller stolzer und wehmütiger Rücksichten in die Vergangenheit."

The Nazi poets used these figures to nurture an ancestor worship, holding them to be the embodiments of the quintessence of Germanic virtue. The best known poem is perhaps Böhme's "Bamberg, dein Reiter reitet durch die Zeit," or the following by Anacker:

Wir leben oft, als wäre kein Kalender,
Wir steigen, nicht mehr wissend um die Zeit,
Schlafwandelnd, gegen jeden Sturm gefeit,
Auf Treppen ohne Brüstung und Geländer.

Und einer ist uns Vorbild: Parzival.
Er ritt durchs Land als reinster aller Toren,
Er hat an Kundrys Reich sich nicht verloren,
Und rettet für uns den ewigen Gral.

Und dieses Wissen trägt uns gläubig weiter:
Auch heute hinterm donnernden Motor,
Auch ohne Rosse sind wir nach wie vor,
Der Deutschen Inbrunst ewige Sehnsuchtsreiter.

Im Dom zu Bamberg ragt ein Reiterbild,
So männlich schön, das Haupt umrahmt von Locken--
Das gibt uns Kraft, im Schmerze nicht zu stocken,
Weil wir zu Dienst an Deutschland tief gewillt!
Anacker combines the quest for the Holy Grail of Parzival with the statue in the Cathedral of Bamberg. That is, of course, using various separate parts to form the whole, for he takes from Parzival the sense of the eternal, unrelenting search for a goal and then interprets these into the statue in Bamberg. He sees the statue as the incorporation of German knighthood and as an ideal worthy of imitation; in the hour of need, it gives strength and inspiration. As a Christian looks to the Cross for spiritual nourishment and to the saints as ideals to be emulated, so does the poet here look to that which to the Nazis embodied the epitome of manhood and masculinity: the knightly virtues of the Middle Ages. In this the sentimental propensities of the Nazis are revealed, for they attempt to form modern man according to the ideals of a by-gone age. How the poet relates this to the present can be seen in another poem by Anacker.

Wie einst König Artus' Tafelrunde,
So wollen wir kämpfen aus eigener Kraft,
Doch mit dem ganzen Volk im Bunde,
In strenger und gläubiger Ritterschaft.
Wenn rein wir schauen das Wunderbare,
Und ringend suchen wie Parzival—
Dann leuchtet uns allen im neuen Jahre
Der langverdunkelte deutsche Gral!

Der Aufbau (München: Franz Eher Nachf., 1936), p.34.
In both of the above poems, as in the previous chapter, the Holy Grail is mentioned; and, here as there, with the adjective "deutsch." In medieval literature it has several different connotations; it is rather a vague and undefined goal toward which the entire nation was supposedly striving. Its constant use has nothing to do with reason or a calculated means of attaining it, but it is rather used for its sentimental and emotional value.

Epic characters were used in poetry as ideals to be imitated; accompanying them were the ancestors. They served as a constant reminder and warning to the present generation: the ancestors had worked and died for Germany; now the present generation had to be worthy of them and continue what they had begun:

Wir werden nicht fragen,
ob unsere Ahnen einmal
gefehlt.
Nicht fragen,
ob sie in den Zeiten,
als noch keine Christen waren,
Sünden begangen.
Wir werden uns vor ihre Gräber stellen,
mit ihrem Schwerte
ihre Sarkophage decken,
und werden nie vergessen,
dass ihre Augen
unseren Himmel schon geliebt,
ich Blut
für unsere Sprache schon geflossen,
und dass ihr Arm, ihr grosser Mut
Jahrhunderte auf diesen Boden festgehalten.
Wir werden nie vergessen die,
die vor uns waren.
Könnten wir dies,
wi wären nicht
aus ihrem Blut.11
The last line of this poem contains the central thought of the Nazi Weltanschauung: the importance of blood relationship. Few poems of this kind fail to draw attention to a kind of immortality brought about by the purity of blood lines and the shame connected with the contamination of German blood. Only too apparent is that immortality was reduced to a purely biological preservation of the race:

Halte dein Blut rein.
Es ist nicht nur dein.
Es kommt weit her.
Es fließt weit hin.
Es ist von tausend Ahnen schwer.
Und alle Zukunft strömt darin.
Halte rein das Kleid
Deiner Unsterblichkeit.

Just as important as the purity of racial lines and carrying on the work of the ancestors was the constantly reiterated idea that all life was "Kampf." The "treachery" of the Treaty of Versailles provided ample ammunition to show that Germany had been betrayed and that she was engaged in a constant struggle for survival. As ever, there is a great deal of distortion. The Treaty was not presented as the result of a lost war. Instead, the Nazis spoke of it as a pact between the Allied Powers and Germany; this pact
had been broken and the Allies now held Germany in servitude.\(^\text{13}\)

\text{\textsuperscript{13}}See, for example, the poem "Preussens Erhebung," in Heinrich Anacker, \textit{Kämpfen und Singen} (München: Franz Eher Nachf., 1937), p.91.

Deliverance—the word was purposely used in all of its religious connotations—could only come about by means of struggle. This was true from the beginning of the Nazi era to the end. As Hitler himself set the pace with his book, \textit{Mein Kampf}, so now all life consisted of "Kampf":

\begin{quote}
"Hütet die Fahne!
Ewig bleibt Kampf!
Hört mich, ihr Brüder,
Hört, wie ich mahne:
Hütet das Licht."	extsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{14}Carl Maria Holzapfel, "Hütet die Fahne," in \textit{Gedichte des Volkes}, p.36.

In accordance with the idea of struggle and the attitude conditioned by the pride of racial superiority, it did not behove the German to think of peace; as Fritz Mende shows, peace-seekers were considered weak and the Germanic attitude did not tolerate weakness:

\begin{quote}
Denn das edlere Blut
will immer kämpfen—
Nur die Schwächlichen
schwärmen von Frieden,
als sei er das Mass
und nicht selbst gemessen
vom Schicksal.\(^\text{15}\)
\end{quote}

Life thus essentially becomes a struggle for survival and further growth, always threatened by the darkness, always reaching for the light. A tree in the forest hinders the growth of another by its mere existence; so also do nations which want to grow unavoidably clash with their neighbors who are following the same law. This has in general been true for all time and place; certainly it is not a discovery of the Nazis. Other nations used it as an excuse and felt apologetic. The Nazis maintained, however, that it was life's foremost reality, exalted in it and glorified it. They claimed it to be the norm and law by which their nation lived and survived. Heinrich Anacker brings this out in a poem which he calls, "Am Anfang war die Tat":

Noch gilt der Spruch: Am Anfang war die Tat!
Auf schwachen Füssen steht kein starker Staat.

Wie Laub im Wind verweht das leere Wort--
Die Tat allein verbürgt des Friedens Hort.

Wer nicht aus eigner Kraft sein Recht sich nimmt,
Wer wie ein Lamm in Rechtsgefühlen schwimmt,

Der wird als Lamm vom nächsten Wolf gefressen,
Und ist--noch eh' er weh schreit--schon vergessen.

Nur gleiche Kraft besiegt die Drachensaat--
Das Wort ist nichts. Am Anfang war die Tat!16

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16Der Aufbau, p.55. In contrast to this, Hermann Otto Hoyer painted a picture with the title, "Am Anfang war das Wort." It shows Hitler speaking to his followers. In George Mosse, Nazi Culture (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1966), Plate XIII.
Anacker uses the famous words of Faust which are originally found in the Gospel of John. While Anacker and Faust use the same words, the spirit and meaning each gives to them are quite different; by the same token, Anacker ends the poem with the line, "Das Wort ist nichts," a position completely contrary to John's. Anacker relegates human relations among nations as well as diplomacy to deeds of power, that is, he reduces diplomacy to impotence and relies upon sheer force of arms. The one capacity which differentiates man from animal and makes him a being of a higher order, namely his power to reason, is brushed aside and replaced by a social Darwinism of a highly dubious nature; Anacker applies to the social sphere those concepts of the survival of the fittest which Darwin meant to be limited to the biological order. The same ideas are expressed in the following poem:

Nicht in Parlamenten und Regierungspalästen wird Deutschland.  
Nicht bei schönen Reden und lärmmenden Festen wird Deutschland.  
........................................................................................................
Wo Herzen hassen und Fäuste beben:  
Dort keimt, dort reift das neue Leben für Deutschland.17


What follows from this is a complete dependence upon one's own strength or, in the case of a nation, upon the military might it can muster in order to maintain itself in a world of wolves. Furthermore, the basic belief in the justification and effectiveness of taking one's rights by
"eigener Kraft" leads in a straight line to a totalitarian state which recognizes no higher power outside itself; and this in turn admits not even of a common sense morality, for the state then becomes its own arbiter of moral action. Anything which then exists within that state which could hinder its actions is necessarily suppressed, or as the Nazis called it, "gleichgeschaltet."

Rather than contain the antinomies within the country and turn them to advantage, the totalitarian state of the Nazis viewed criticism as treason and everything which was not "Tat" as suspect. Under these conditions contemplation becomes anathema as does the belief in a Supreme Being, though for a time lip-service may be paid to such a Being. Kindness becomes a transgression against a "higher" order and one who prays becomes an enemy of society:

Wer stark ist, ist ewig.
Wer schwach ist, vergeht!
Das ist der Spruch,
Der geschrieben steht
Im Buch
Unseres Lebens.
Und der lebt vergebens,
Der das Heute verlässt
Um des Himmels willen,
Der seine Tat nicht tut,
Weil seine Zeit
Den Gebeten gehört. 18


This underlying, basically hostile attitude toward opposition of any kind both inside and outside of Germany sought to arouse in the people the will to close the ranks.
They were called on to unite against all opposition and this unity could only be achieved if everyone worked together. A coordination of efforts was preached, but it was to emanate from a coordination of minds.

To be a German thus meant to man the ramparts, to dedicate oneself passionately—the word cannot be emphasized enough—and uncompromisingly to the fatherland. Acquiescence was not enough; action was the only way to show support and this meant participation:

Menschliche Hände—nicht Hände, die betend
In inn verschlungen im Schoss sich versenken—
Menschliche Hände, die hämmernd und knetend
Schwitzend und schwielend ihr Bestes verschenken:
Jugend und Freiheit—dem Geiste zu frohnen,
Der mit des Meisters hartem "es werde"
Taten vollbringt, ohne menschlich zu lohnen,
Bilder der Gottheit vereinigt zur Herde!19


Hesitancy and deliberation were suspect; doubt and the search for cause and effect, punishable. The Führer did not need help in formulating policy, indeed he and the Party did not even grant the citizen the right to form their own opinions about the cause or necessity of world-wide conflicts. They needed doers, people to carry out their orders. The poem "Straflied an den Träumer" shows this adequately:

Du hast den Schlaf der heiligen Nacht entweiht,
du hast das Leben an den Traum verloren.
Dein Dasein hat der stille Wunsch entzweit,
du seist, die Welt zu bessern, auserkoren.
Wieviel Probleme hat dein Sinn zerdacht!
Dein Münd hat Fragen ungezählt gesät.
Doch Siegesfeuer hast du nie entfacht,
stets kam dein Vorschlag einen Schlag zu spät.

Du Grübler hast geforscht nach Sinn und Ende,
Nach Ursprung, Weg und Ziel der Kreatur.
Doch fern vom Werke blieben deine Hände,
dein Fuss ging stets die ausgetretene Spur.

Nie hat der Traum dem Dasein Sinn gegeben,
Der Zweifel war am Werke stets Verrat.
Die Welt ist gut. Es rauscht im Keim das Leben.
Die Zukunft wird gesegnet durch die Tat.20

20 Heinrich Klaus, in Gedichte des Volkes, p.224.

It is interesting that a single word which the poet uses in the first line of the second stanza unmasks the entire attitude of the poem: "denken" with its destructive prefix carries with it anti-intellectual overtones and indicates the Nazis' attitude toward the intellect and the intellectual. Against this pejorative connotation the poet poses the creativity of all brutish-vital, organic life: "rauscht," "Keim," "Tat" and "Leben."

Scorn was directed, however, not only at those who would not wholeheartedly accept the movement, but also at those who were not, in the eyes of the Party, passionate enough in their dedication. The Nazis demanded rabid participation and made it a matter of social acceptability:

Fort mit dem Schacher und her mit dem Recht!
König ist König! Und Knecht ist Knecht!
Arbeit ist Herzblut und wird nicht verschenkt,
An die Laterne wer anders denkt!
Revolution!
Trommler, wirble mit jedem Schritt: "Revolution!" Die Masse muss mit! Trommle die Strassen so lang wie breit, Schlage den Takt, bis die Menge schreit: Revolution!21

21Hans Schwarz, Götter und Deutsche, p.99

The word "Revolution" was supposed to make the blood flow faster; the Nazis wanted, like many other dictator­ships, to be in the constant state of revolution; that by its very nature breeds impatience and intolerance. When slogans for action are repeated often and long enough, deeds must finally follow words.

In a different vein, Herybert Menzel parodies a poem of Cäsar Flaischlen, lampooning those who go along with the movement for the sake of appearances but who are not sufficiently enthusiastic. The poem is a rarity in one respect: the Nazis were anything but humorists; everything was serious, but here is one of the few amusing poems in their writings:

Hab Sonne im Herzen und rede dir ein, 
Es ginge dir gut und stürz dich mit Schrein 
Auf die braune SA, dann komme was mag, 
Geh' auch Deutschland zugrunde, dir lächelt der Tag.

Hab ein Lied auf den Lippen, doch hätte dich fein, 
Es könnte ein Sturmlied des Hitlerheers sein, 
Man schläge mit Latten und Knüppeln dich rund, 
Nein, sing nicht von Deutschland, so bleibst du gesund!

Hab ein Herz auch für andre, Kutisker und Weiss, 
So machst du Karriere mit Ehre und Preis, 
Lass andere hungern und bluten und schrein, 
Und sind's deine Brüder, sieh weg, sei von Stein.
Hab drei Pfeilchen im Köcher, doch sei kein Rebell!  
Ruf "Freiheit" wie Schiller, doch werde kein Tell!  
Aus dem Hinterhalt schieße, und nur auf SA,  
So bist du ein Deutscher, als Held stehst du da.

Ja, hab Sonne im Herzen und Schmalz im Gehirn,  
Das Parteibuch im Rock und den nötigen Zwirn,  
Dann bist du ein Deutscher in Deutschland allein,  
Wirst fett, kommst zu Jahren und stirbst auch gemein.  

22Im Marschschritt der SA (Berlin: Wolf Heyer Verlag, 1933), p.12. This poem was written against all the lethargic philistines, braggarts and Socialists whose enthusiasm had waned during the period of prosperity from 1924 to 1928. Concerning the two men, Kutisker and Weiss, mentioned in the poem, the following information is appended:  
After the brutal assassination of Walther Rathenau, the Berlin Criminal Police under Dr. Weiss, incidentally a Jew, quickly pursued the two assassins, Kern and Fischer. On 17 July 1922 Kern was shot while resisting arrest at Saaleck Castle near Kösen; thereupon Fischer shot himself. Nazi Germany later erected a monument to the two men on the spot.  
Ivan Kutisker was involved in a scandal with the Prussian State Bank. The London Times of 30 December 1924 gives the following report: "The arrest of Herr Bartels, the Chief of the Passport Office for foreigners, on Nov. 18 on the charge of bribery and corruption, has been followed by a number of further arrests, among them that of Herr Ivan Kutisker, director of a number of well-known German firms, on a charge of forgery and fraud against the Prussian State Bank and, as a result of his arrest, three leading directors of this bank were arrested today."  
"... Dr. Reuthe, a financial adviser to the Prussian State, is accused of conspiring with Kutisker in obtaining credits from the Prussian State Bank without deliverance of adequate security."  

Apparent in this poetry is the drive toward conformity; the goal was solidarity behind the leader and this could only be achieved by obedience on the part of the people.  
Nothing trains for obedience as much as marching and of this Albrecht Schöne has commented, "... niemals hat eine politische Bewegung ihre Anhänger so unablängig zum Marsch-
ier genötigt . . ."23


Hagemann has further shown that while other leaders permitted or even encouraged marching, "... erst Hitler machte daraus ein wichtiges Mittel der Beherrschung."24


Poem after poem, either by its rhythm or content, encouraged the people to march along:

Wer hinter unsre Fahne tritt,  
der muss sich erst beweisen.  
Muss halten können gleichen Schritt,  
und gleichen Schlag am Eisen.25

25Hans Baumann, Wir zünden das Feuer (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1940), p.44.

Many poems, indeed, had persuasion as their sole motive:

Nicht zum Genusse gemacht
ist dir der Tag und die Nacht,  
dich ruft die Pflicht.  
Hämmere das Werk deiner Hand,  
stosse den Spaten ins Land,  
trete ins Licht.

Richte im Glimmer des Scheins  
immer den Blick nur auf eins:  
Denk! an den Schwur!  
Einzig der Schritt in die Tat  
dreht um die Achse das Rad,  
Gräbt deine Spur.
Hole zum Schlage nun aus,
Füg' das gemeinsame Haus.
Stehst nicht allein!
Hand greift in Hand, Kamerad,
Marschtritt erschüttert den Pfad,
schwenke du ein!26


Figuring predominantly in the opening lines of the poem is the anti-eudaemonistic idea that the Pursuit of Happiness is not the concern of the state. This is very often evident in the great emphasis put upon "Pflicht"; Kurt Eggers, for example wrote, "Gott ist kein karger Trost der Toren:/ Er heisst Pflicht!"27


Much was written in order to persuade the individual to march along; one frequently finds the authors referring to the entire movement as a glorious march into the future, as the culmination of the dreams of the nation; this usage brought with it, as C. Berning has shown elsewhere,28


philosophical-utopien as well as theological overtones:

Das ist der Marsch, von dem wir träumten,
Der grosse Marsch ins Dritte Reich . . .
Die Wunden, die sich blutend bäumten,
Die Toten, die den Kampfweg säumten,
Sie segnen uns, verklärt und bleich.
Denn lichtwärts tragen wir die Fahne,
Entgegen dem ersehnten Ziel.
So wissen sie in Charons Kahne:
Sie opferten nicht blindem Wahne,
Sie starben nicht für eitles Spiel!

Das End' sei würdig den Beginnen!
in unerhörtem Siegeslauf,
Den Helden gleich an Geist und Sinnen—
Hoch auf der deutschen Gralsburg Zinnen,
Da pflanzen wir das Banner auf!29

---

The entire purpose of marching was presented under the pretext of showing solidarity against a real or imagined threat from without or within. If no adversary was mentioned, then the threat is the darkness or loneliness. Kurt Eggers, in a poem called "Aufbruch," also uses the theme of a march into the future, but he calls the goal a "Neuland": at the beginning of the century the word meant colonial expansion to the east:

Uns trennen viel Erden und Himmel
Vom Gestern.
Wo wir marschieren ist Einsamkeit,
Und wo wir suchen ist Dunkelheit
Vorm Neuland.

Unsre Füsse sind wund und müde
Und sehr schwer.
Unsre Augen brennen in der Nacht.
Wie Fackeln flammen sie uns zur Schlacht
Und leuchten.

Keiner weiss, wann seine Stunde kommt
Am Morgen.
Das Schwert kennt das wehe Lied vom Tod.
Bald ist die Klinge vom Blute rot
Im Kampfe.

---

29 Heinrich Anacker, Kämpfen und Singen, p.89.
Wir müssen wandern für Deutschlands Raum
Und Freiheit.
In der Weite brennt ein Feuerbrand,
Er ruft uns zum Kampf für Raum und Land
Für Deutschland.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{30}Deutsche Gedichte (München: C. Kaiser Verlag, 1934), p.5.

While the pretext of the poems may have been a show of solidarity, the natural by-product was that those marching were easily controlled, for marching consists essentially of keeping step and listening for orders; and the orders issued are obeyed with automatic response and without thought. The suggestive power of marching is great since the natural inclination is to keep step to the rhythm of the music and the beat of the drum:

Eine Trommel geht in Deutschland um
und der sie schlägt, der führt,
und die ihm folgen, folgen stumm,
sie sind von ihm gekürt.

Sie schwören ihm den Fahnenschwur,
Gefolgschaft und Gericht,
er wirbelt ihres Schicksals Spur
mit ehernem Gesicht.

Er schreitet hart der Sonne zu
mit angespannter Kraft.
Seine Trommel, Deutschland, das bist du!
Volk werde Leidenschaft!\textsuperscript{31}

Böhme calls this "Der Führer." So closely was Hitler's name associated with the title that it and the name became synonymous. In the poem proper not even "der Führer" is mentioned; he is referred to only by the personal pronoun. All functions of this pronoun can be seen as active: "schlägt," "führt," "wirbelt," "schreitet"; all others can almost be considered passive: "folgen," "folgen stumm," "schwören." In contrast to the singular "er," "ihm" etc., the plural pronoun which refers to the followers, "sie," has the effect of generalizing and not individualizing, so that in the last line the "sie" no longer exists; all have been assumed, as it were, into the magically loaded word, "Volk."

The "Trommel" is literal in the first stanza, metaphorical in the last; active in the first, passive in the last. Indeed, if it can even be called a metaphor, then only in a vague sense, for its use within the first stanza is nebulous: the people are the drum and, at the same time, are the followers. All this becomes evident, however, only when one thinks it through. The close identification of the "Trommel" with Germany in the second last line is aimed at effect rather than understanding; with the addition of the possessive "seine," a close relationship is established between the singular "er" (the drummer) and the "sie" (the drum). The last line finally is supposed to arouse and define the purpose of the drum. The archaic word, "gekört" attempts to bring a germanic flavor to the poem.
The Nazis were skillful in their appeal to and for popular emotion; this ability was decisive in creating support and they used every means at their disposal to maintain it. They were, for example, astute enough to know that a verbal attack on an "enemy" must be accompanied by an equally strong assertion of one's own right. We have seen that through their propaganda they directed their attack against the outside and the outsider, cajoling and admonishing the people to join their movement and dedicate themselves passionately to it, for, they said, only in this way could Germany survive. This was verbal camouflage and a means to an end. And in the same way, they obscured the totalitarian nature of their movement by putting "Rasse," "Volk" and "Vaterland" above all other considerations. These three, but especially the latter, became the realities to which all else was subservient. One cannot speak properly of nationalism, but only of chauvinism; not of dedication to goals, but only of adulation. And of this adulation the Nazis made a cult. Wilfrid Bade's "Hymne an das Vaterland" shows this clearly:

Aber es ist
Nur ein Schimmer
Zu Deinen Füssen.
Das Edle
Kniert vor Dich hin
Und die Helle des Volkes
Ist ein Leuchten von Dir;
Seine Tat wird Dir getan,
Und der Ruhm ist Dein,
Dein ist die Ehre:
Denn Du bist
Anfang uns,
Mitte und Ende.
Unser Leben ist Dein
Und unser Sterben,
Denn Du bist ewig,
Heiliges, Du,
O Vaterland!32

Poems extolling and praising the country of one's origin, wherever that may be, have abounded at all times and places; what makes this poem so different is its essentially religious character. The "Vaterland" is treated as a supernatural entity, as an object of worship, as a religious relic. To refer to the people who comprise this "Vaterland" as "das Edle" is self-praise; to say that they kneel down in adoration before this "Vaterland" is blasphemy. It may well be true that one is born in a country, lives there and is buried there, but the context into which this is put here, "Denn Du bist Anfang uns, Mitte und Ende,"33 makes the land the reality of realities, that goal to which all life is dedicated, that object of veneration for which all acts are performed; this includes death for some


33This line, one cannot help feeling, is a variation of the passage from the Book of Revelation 1,8, which reads, "Ich bin das A und das O, der Anfang und das Ende, spricht Gott der Herr, der da ist und der da war und der da kommt, der Allmächtige." Revelations, however, speaks from the point of view of God, whereas the poem cited changes the aspect and at the same time replaces God with "Vaterland."
Both of the foregoing poems have in common that they speak of more than just loyalty to the country. They refer rather to a sacrosanct entity which takes precedence over all else. The term "Vaterland" has acquired a vague connotation, for it here includes the people as well as the territory and at the same time it is treated as though it were something in and of itself, separate and objective. The vagueness loads the word with meanings which are aimed primarily at the emotions.

The use of the adjective "heilig" before either "Reich" or "Vaterland" indicates a subtle shift in location. The Western world has considered that land to be properly called "holy" from which Christianity sprang, the land where Christ lived and worked; its geographical boundaries are limited to the area surrounding Palestine. Yet by calling Germany...
holy, these poems shift the boundaries to continental Europe, specifically to Germany. It follows that that which lies outside of Germany is not holy. Germany's causes and goals are likewise holy and the wars it wages are crusades:

Wir stehn wie Mauern um dich her  
In Treue und Geduld.  
Kein Opfer ist so gross und schwer.  
Wir sind in deiner Schuld.

Wir kämpfen stumm den heiligen Krieg,  
Dem uns dein Wort geweiht.  
Wir kennen nur das eine: Sieg!  
Und Deutschland Ewigkeit.

Wir wissen, dass dein Werk gelingt,  
Weil Gott dein Herz erhellt.  
Aus deinem Sieg des Friedens dringt  
Die Freiheit aller Welt.  


Anything and everything could be justified if it were done for the fatherland. Conversely, the concepts "German" and "Germany" were to stir the emotions so deeply that at the mere mention of the words all else shrank into insignificance. Hermann Burte gives a dramatic example of this in a poem called "Totenprobe":

Das schiene mir ein Arges:  
Lebendig begraben zu sein!  
Drum soll an dem First meines Sarges  
Ein heller Knabe schrein:  
Deutschland! --Wenn ich dann schweige  
und nicht aus den Brettern steige--  
dann scharrt mich ruhig ein!  

36
It is evident that the Nazi state did not seek to instill proportion and balance in its citizens, but rather a disproportion of passionate dedication to that which was German. As the concepts "Vaterland" and "Deutschland" loomed as ever greater realities, so in proportion did the individual suffer the loss of significance and identity. Dedication demanded subordination and this in turn lead to a submersion of the individual personality into the collective masses. The loss of the human element has in part already been shown by the importance the Nazis placed on marching; in the long marching columns the individual is lost, indistinguishable one from the other. The poetry shows this collective being first and foremost by its constant use of "we" instead of "I," indicating that the individual is of far less importance than the collective body. Heinrich Anacker's "Vom Ich zum Wir" spells out the relative importance of each:

Einst schien das Ich der Angelpunkt der Welt,
Und alles drehte sich um um sein Leiden.
Doch mählich kam erkennendes Bescheiden
Und hat den Blick aufs Ganze umgestellt.
Nun fügt das "Ich" dem grossen "Wir" sich ein
Und wird zum kleinen Rad in der Maschine.
Nicht ob es lebe--ob es willig diene,
Bestimmt den Wert von seinem eignen Sein. 37

37 *Die Trommel* (München: Franz Eher Verlag, 1938), p.120.
The devaluation of the intrinsic worth of the human being, indeed of human life altogether, and the concomitant emphasis on the service which that being can render now determines the value of existence. Every deed had to justify itself before the future; every individual had to account for his deeds in the light of eternity. The word "Maschine" in the above poem is particularly apt and unmasking; the Nazi Weltanschauung is laid bare, for it follows logically from the last line that that which does not serve the machine is without value and thus not worthy of life; it is unimportant "ob es lebe."

Anacker comes back to this theme many times; in the following poem he attempts to show how the collective existence completes the sense of individual existence. By using "klein" as an adjective to "ich," he relegates the individual to impotence and shows that security is only possible as part of the collective:

Wer überm "Wir" das kleine "Ich" vergisst,
Der bringt kein Opfer, leistet kein Entsagen—
Der lernt nur, endlich kurz und klar zu sagen,
Dass tief im "Wir" des Daseins Fälle ist.

Wie schön ist das: Wir sind nicht ganz verloren,
Kameraden sind uns nah auf Schritt und Tritt,
Und fühlen jedes dunkle Bangen mit,
Und sind wie wir dem gleichen Ziel verschworen.

Denn ihre Not ist unsere eigene Not
Und ihre Freude ist auch unsere Freude;
Die Fundamente unserer Staatsgebäude,
Sie sind vom Herzblut der Gefall'nen rot.

So grüssen wir der Zukunft lichtes Tagen.
Auf unserm stolz getragenen Panier
Steht unsichtbar, doch gross das Wörtlein "Wir,"
Und gibt uns Kraft, aufs neu den Kampf zu wagen! 38

38 Wir wachsen in das Reich hinein, p. 18.

The poem asserts and preaches a negation of the individual, maintaining that only in this communal existence can one find "des Daseins Fülle." Both the pain and joy of one member of this corporate body are felt by all others: the statement is unfathomable unless one concedes that a common denominator exists which is a vehicle by means of which an impulse is registered in every part of that body. And for this to be possible is again to admit that the individual reaction, whether rational or emotional, does not exist. Such scrutiny, however, defeats the intent of the poem.

The de-emphasis of the individual element has, in the last analysis, a very real goal: just like marching, it seeks to place the individual into a controlled and controllable environment. His duty was to act, not to think; to believe, but not to speak. This means that human existence has a completely new point of orientation; the individual finds his fullest expression not in himself, but as a member of a closed society; he is bound to it and its goals and is obedient to its leaders. The collective has, in fact, become the center of his existence:

Ich bin nicht ich; ich bin mir selbst verloren.
Zu Scherben sank die kleine Wichtigkeit.
Zu neuem Dasein bin ich umgeboren—
Das wurzelt tief in der Gemeinsamkeit. 39
Reincarnated, as it were, in this collective, the individual cannot break out of it, for to do so would plunge him into an endless void. Raised in this manner and educated to accept this as his ultimate fulfillment, his fall from the collective necessarily means the loss of his center of existence. This is a double-edged sword: if he found himself outside of the pale of the collective, his point of orientation which consists essentially in marching, campfire ceremonies, songs and comradeship was gone; as part of the collective he was considered organically a part of it; thus to put into question any of the group's actions which had been sanctified by tradition or law was tantamount to treason. Indeed, a negative opinion or vote was taken as criticism and would be interpreted as criticizing God's anointed. To make this collective more attractive, any acts performed for it, he was told, contained the seeds of immortality:

Dich fordert das Volk
Eitler Sehnsucht bar
trägst du die Glut
deiner Unsterblichkeit
selbst
in der Tat
für das Wir.
Denn das Volk
ist unsterblich.

---

Although the connections are very tenuous, there seems to be some vague similarity here to Goethe's "Grenzen der Menschheit"; this is particularly true in the idea of "Forme den Ring": in the three preceding stanzas Böhme has consistently used the metaphor of the flame. Now suddenly he speaks of a ring, and in the imperative at that; Goethe's lines read, "Ein kleiner Ring/ begrenzt unser Leben"; at least Böhme expects his listener to be familiar with the line. Be that as it may, Böhme seeks to extinguish the individual and above all, he is selective: it is not mankind which gains immortality nor one person, but the "Volk." As the flame of the individual is extinguished, it fructifies the immortality of the collective, which is to say that individual imperishability is not possible. The same is true of his mention of God: the collective birth is a "Stufe zu Gott" which, by omission, would imply that the individual cannot attain God.

mention of God: the collective birth is a "Stufe zu Gott"
which, by omission, would imply that the individual cannot
attain God by himself.

Anacker also uses the metaphor of the ring, but he
adds to it words from the Bible:

Wir sind nicht allein—wir sind unsrer Viele,
Die heimlich bauen am innern Reich.
Das Mal auf der Stirn vom gemeinsamen Ziele,
Den wissenden Augen enthüllt es sich gleich!

So wird es uns leichter, den Zweifel zu tragen,
Der manchmal in sternlosen Nächten uns quält.
So wird es uns leichter, den Aufbruch zu wagen,
Da einer den Glauben des andern stählt.

Wir sind nicht allein, nicht im Dunkel Verlorene—
Nicht Saat, der auf steinigem Boden verging—
Wir sind zum gemeinsamen Werke Verschworene—
In Gluten geschweisst zum lebendigen Ring!  

41Kämpfen und Singen, p.163. "Das Mal auf der Stirn,"
mentioned in line three of the poem has two interpretations
in the Bible: one with the "Malzeichen" was either a follower
of God as in Revelations 14,1., or it also marked the anti-
Christ, as in Revelations 9,4.

By using the exact quotation from the Bible, the author
assumes that the hearer will make the connection and know the
parable; it is indeed the only parable which is explained by
Christ to the Apostles; thus there can be no mistaking its
meaning and, by inference, its meaning in the poem. The
essential part of the Gospel reads:

... damit sie sehen und doch nicht sehen, hören
und doch nicht verstehen; sie glauben eine Zeitlang,
allein zur Zeit der Versuchung fallen sie ab.  


Anacker uses the beginning of the Gospel and, varying the
biblical seeing-believing, turns this to "wissenden Augen."
The Gospel then speaks of "Geheimnisse des Reiches Gottes"; "Geheimnisse" becomes "heimlich" here while "Reich" remains, fitting well into Anacker's pattern. The second stanza opens with "Zweifel" and ends with "Glaube," which is then carried through to the last stanza, where it becomes obvious that the "Glaube" is not an individual but a community affair. The inference is that by being part of the "lebendige Ring," the collective can only, to continue the biblical metaphor, fall on good ground and be nourished, able to stand any temptation. What this temptation is, is not said, but it must be remembered that everything which was not German was suspect; thus to hold views which were not in agreement with official doctrine was heresy.

An insistent and well-manipulated propaganda was first and last interested in gaining complete control of the population. Instead of containing the differences of opinion or directing them to useful ends, the Nazis eliminated them; in the process they did away with the individual as well. As fond as they were of quoting (perhaps one should say misquoting) Nietzsche, his idea that all of man's potentialities be given full play were now reversed: man gives all he has, even his identity as a person, to fulfill a great supra-individual function.43

So much did the personal identity suffer defeat that W. Jäkel called a poem "Die Namenlosen":

Wir schreiten ohne Namen,  
wir wollen Namen nicht,  
denn alle, die wir kamen,  
stehn in der gleichen Pflicht.

Und einen kennen  
heisst alle kennen,  
und will man uns nennen,  
so soll man uns nennen  
mit einem Namen die ganze Schar:  
Dem Namen des Landes, das uns gebar.

So schreiten wir mit Namen,  
doch unsern Namen nicht,  
denn alle, die wir kamen,  
stehn in der gleichen Pflicht.

Ob auch die Fremden spotten,  
wir schreiten fest und schwer  
in Reihen und in Rotten,  
des einen Namens Heer: Deutschland.  

The collective expresses itself as "wir"; poems written in the first person singular are rare. Yet above and beyond this collective voice, the poetry many times relegates acts to the collective body which by their very nature can only be personal:

Mutter, wer weiss, ob wir wiederkehren?  
Mancher schon blieb auf dem Feld der Pflicht.  
Aber wer fiel, hat bestanden in Ehren—  
Aufwärts die Blicke, und grämme dich nicht!

Mutter, du hast uns für Deutschland geboren.  
Leuchtender wird es uns täglich bewusst,  
Dass uns das Schicksal zu Höhem erkoren.

Mutter, wir reichen dir schweigend die Hände:  
Schau ins Gesicht uns mit gläubigen Mut!

Seldom was there more preoccupation with death than during the Nazi era. The tone of the poem can only be called heroic; there is little show of emotion. The human act of procreation has become purely functional; that it is an act of love between two people is left unsaid; one has children not to fulfill a natural wish, but in order to prove oneself a valuable asset to society. Childbearing was put in the service of the state for the purpose of providing that state with men to bear arms. And with emotional attachment almost shunted aside, woman becomes little more than a child-bearing machine, one whose duty it is to serve man in a man's world:

Ich bin rückständig, sehr rückständig.
Ich will, dass die Frauen Frauen sind.
Ich bin so rückständig wie die Natur,
die den Frauen einen fruchtbaren Schoss, nährende Brüste, Instinkt
für Familien gegeben hat.46

Supposedly devoid of any feeling, woman has become a tool of man and the state; her existence was justified by her willingness or ability to bear children. The Nazis placed a premium on fertility by awarding medals and the like to mothers of large families. And to assuage woman as

45 Heinrich Anacker, Kämpfen und Singen, p.28.

well as encourage her, they made of the natural process of childbearing a heroic act so that she too had a part to play in the German "Schicksal":

Mit deinem Kinde schreitest du,
Du Mutter, auf die Ferne zu,
Die ist so grau und kalt.
Du schreitest, schreitest zag und schwer:
Dein Kind, dein Kind, das pocht so sehr.
Bald ist die Stunde, bald.

Dein stilles herbes Heldentum
Ist ohne Prunk und Menschenruhm,
Es ruht in dir allein.
Dein Kind, dein Kind ist deine Kraft,
Die aus dir, Weib, ein Schicksal schafft--
Bald wird die Stunde sein.47

47Kurt Eggers, Deutsche Gedichte, p.36.

Somehow every segment of society partook of heroism. The reason for it here stems from a basic attitude of the Nazis: it is a means of putting woman in "uniform" and thus making her controllable.

How thoroughly life was saturated with ideas of the heroic can be seen by the following poem, which can well be regarded as the correlative of the previous one: the woman who bears a child is heroic; here, while the child is still in the crib, the future heroic life and death which are the child's lot are reflected on by the father; needless to say, the child is a male:

Wenn ich zu dir in deine Wiege sehe,
Lachst du mich an.
Ich und du, wir sind aus einem Blut,
Mein Junge.
Du fühlst es und ich weiss es.
Du magst mir später fluchen
Oder mir für deinen Namen danken:
Du kannst aus deinem Blute nicht heraus,
Mein Junge.
Und du hast kämpferisches Blut.
Du wirst die Schlacht um ihrer Schönheit willen suchen,
Und um der Ehre willen wirst du niemals wanken.

Drum sei du Du, mein Junge, wie auch ich Ich gewesen bin,
Dass, wer dich einmal auf dem Schlachtfeld findet,
Jener weiss, dass du dem Wir auch wert gewesen bist. 48


Special attention was given to children, for they were
to be reared exclusively into the Nazi way of thinking.
They were supposed to acquire the values and virtues of a
heroic race; they were a new generation who had not known
war as their fathers had; they were, therefore, to be raised
with the belief that they were first and foremost destined
to fight. Baldur von Schirach gives an example of these
artificial veterans:

Nie dienten wir, und doch sind wir Soldaten,
Wir kämpfen nie in einem wahren Kriege,
In einem Krieg der Kugeln und Granaten.
Und doch bekannt sind Kämpfe uns wie Siege—
Nein, nicht im Krieg schlug man uns unsre Narben,
Und doch war's Krieg! Denn viele, viele starben . . .

Frei sind wir alle, doch wir seh'n im Dienen
Mehr Freiheit als im eignen Befehle.
Am Schreibtisch sitzen wir und an Maschinen,
Sind hunderttausend und nur eine Seele.
Wir sind die Ketzer und die tiefen Frommen,
Das Heut', das Gestern und das grosse Kommen. 49

49 "Das neue Geschlecht," in Auswahl deutscher Gedichte
von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, ed. Richard Wittsack
(Halle/ Saale, 1936), p.715.
This generation was to be passionately dedicated to the Party and its ideals; youth is often radical, but especially so if it is encouraged by an all-present state which seeks and cultivates this radicalism. Raised from childhood with the belief that the Party and Hitler were everything, they could sing the following profession of faith:

Wir sind die fröhlichen Hitlerjugend,
Wir brauchen keine Christustugend,
Denn unser Führer Adolf Hitler
Ist stets unser Mittler.

Kein Pfaffe, kein böser, kann uns hindern,
Uns zu fühlen als Hitlerkinder;
Nicht Christus folgen wir, sondern Horst Wessel,
Fort mit dem Weihrauch und Weihwasserkessel.

Wir folgen singend unseren Fahnen,
Als würdige Söhne unserer Ahnen.
Ich bin kein Christ, kein Katholik,
Geh mit SA durch dünn und dick.

Die Kirche kann mir gestohlen werden,
Das Hakenkreuz ist Erlösung auf Erden,
Ihm will ich folgen auf Schritt und Tritt,
Baldur von Schirach, nimm mich mit!  


It is evident from the poems so far that it was man's duty and mission to die heroically on the battlefield. Now it is a stark reality that modern war—and no war proved it more dramatically than the First World War—does not make heroes of men;  

51 The Nazis too were aware of this, witnessed by the fact that books like Erich Maria Remarque's Im Westen nichts Neues
were among the first to be burned and cast aside as "Schundliteratur." See Josef Wulf, Literatur... Reich, p.56f.

rather just the opposite. Man as an individual in modern war is almost lost in and becomes insignificant under the sheer press of the economic forces at play. The Nazis disregarded this reality, however, and held before the German people the beguiling vision of medieval chivalry, of the tournament, where the victor carries away the prize. A hero's death to one who had found an adversary worthy of him was considered by the Nazis as the epitome of life and honor. As Kurt Eggers brings out in the poem "Freiheitslied," the soldier's life is not his own; it belongs to the "Volk":

Der Deutsche ist geschaffen
In Wehr und Waffen,
Hinaus ins Feld zu reiten,
Al's Held zu streiten.

Wenn Winde eisig wehen
Muss er zum Sterben gehen.
Ein Kreuz wünscht nach der Schlacht
Ihm eine gute Nacht.

Er hat kein Eigenleben,
Muss es dem Volke geben.
Ihn schickt sein Vaterhaus
Ins Feindesland hinaus.

Sein junges frohes Sterben
Verpflichtet seine Erben
Gleich ihm ihr junges Leben
Als Lösegeld zu geben.52

Rolf Börnsen brings out more pointedly that man's raison d'être is to die, to offer all for Germany, uncom-
promisingly, unthinkingly:

Andere fürchten den kalten Tod
und lieben ihr kleines Leben.
Uns ist das Leben nur geschenkt,
damit wir es Deutschland geben.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{53}Gedichte des Volkes, p.43.

Over and above dying for the country, the poets often
made the willingness to die a more personal matter by
dedicating death to Hitler. To die for an ideal is common-
place; to maintain that one is born in order to die for one's
country is unusual; to arrive at the next step and emphasize
the inclination to die for the leader of a country can only
mean that this leader has assumed divine proportions:

Da kam der eine und nahm unser Herz:
"Mit euch will ich Deutschland erretten!"

\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots
Wir wollen mit ihm durchs Feuer gehn
als Deutschlands würdige Erben.--
So wie wir mit ihm zu leben verstehn,
verstehn wir auch, mit ihm zu sterben!--\textsuperscript{54}


To be a man was to be a soldier. To be a soldier meant
to march, and to march meant to obey. The individual could
only be led if he were given little time to think; every-
thing contributed to this end. In such a situation the
individual becomes obsolete; he is relieved of the respons-
ility of judging for himself. The propaganda reveals itself as a continuous composition directed at the emotions; tautology was piled upon tautology, rhetoric intensified to the imperative, the language of command. Nazism was a theater production on a national scale in which the entire nation had to participate, in which every member had a part, all of it staged by the Party and all parts acted out as the director saw fit.

Constantly bombarded by this propaganda, incessantly encouraged or forced to march, overcome and intoxicated by the enormous and technically perfect rallies, celebrations and singings, the individual was lost; he was squeezed into a pattern of active participation and unthinking conformity. The beat of the drum and the cadence of marching boots replaced reasoning.

The result in the individual was and could only be total resignation and surrender:

Was gilt dein Glück und meines?
Und was gilt unser Leid?
Wir kennen nur noch eines:
Marschtritt im Ehrenkleid!

Versunken und vergessen
Ist all', was uns verdros,
Wenn sich die Fäuste pressen
Ums blanke Koppelschloss.

Ob morgen wir noch leben?
Ob heut der Tod uns bricht?
Wir fragen kaum—wir heben
Den Kopf ins kühle Licht.

Das ist die herbe Weihe,
Die unsern Weg verschönt:
Magie der Viererreihen,
Wenn vorn die Trommel dröhnt!55

55Heinrich Anacker, Die Trommel, p.74.

A terminal state has been reached: life has become meaningful only within the context of endless marching columns; but exactly here life is meaningless. Whether marching in sun or snow, the marchers concentrate only on keeping step to the beat of the drummer. Where he is leading them, no one asks; that he is leading them is important:

Was morgen wird, das können wir nicht wissen,
Uns ist der Blick fürs Grosse aufgetan.
Wieviele auch ins Dunkel fallen müssen,
Wir alle sahen doch das Ziel der Bahn.

Was morgen wird, das wollen wir nicht fragen,
Was unser Führer von uns fordert, gilt.
Er ist der Weg, der Sturm, das grosse Wagen,
In seinen Augen glänzt uns Deutschlands Bild.56


A blind, uncritical obedience is intensified by the first lines of the second stanza which partially repeat the opening lines, yet by the change of verbs call attention to the unwillingness even to be concerned with the question, "war morgen wird." "Was der Führer von uns fordert, gilt," is the only statement possible when the individual exists only as part of a collective mass which listens for orders. Schumann, in one of his poems, raises this obedience to the level of prayer when he says, "Schweigen, das ist unser
To go a step further, Anacker describes the collective as part of the landscape; in doing so he unavoidably and precisely delineates the Nazi attitude toward the individual:

Ein braunes Feld, umsäumt von Grünelände...
Ist es ein Ackergrund? Ein Kämpferheer?
Wiehunderttausend Halme heben Hände
Sich sonnenwärts, dass sie das Licht verklä'r.'

Ergriffen ahnen wir Geschickverwandschaft;
Ein Wunder wird uns herrlich offenbar:
Entflamme Menschen werden Glied der Landschaft,
Und sind mit ihr verbunden immerdar.

Als buntes Blühn, als goldnes Früchtetragen,
Als namlose, braune Scholle nur,
So reifen sie entgegen fernen Tagen,
Im Tiefsten eins mit deutscher Gott-Natur!58

As part of a cycle of poems with the subtitle "Nürnberg-Gedichte," this one was written on the occasion of the Reichsparteitag. Thousands of people came together and the individual became but a minute part of a gigantic whole, nameless and insignificant. In his description Anacker carries the landscape metaphor through the poem. The brown field becomes a field of ripening grain turned to the sun, one indistinguishable from the other. As in many other poems, the metaphor of the sun, the eternal source of light, figures prominently. Anacker's description could well be taken as
a depiction of an ancient sun-ritual, where primitive man greeted the arrival of the morning sun. Here the nameless people are placed one step below that, for they are described as being in unity with nature, as vegetative beings; primitive man recognized and acknowledged his dependence on the sun and worshipped it accordingly; here, however, it is a vegetative reaction, subhuman and unthinking.

As the critical ability of the individual became undermined, as human freedom and the pursuit of happiness came to be regarded as negligible quantities, the belief in Germany became a kind of religious confession. In addition, other factors came into play which helped to make the individual a conscienceless being who carried out orders without the slightest compunction or sense of moral responsibility.

One of these was the messianic aura which surrounded Hitler; this has been previously discussed. Hitler's unique title of Führer hints at something more than just a representative of the people. One is not, as Ernst Loewy has stated, elected Führer:

Es ist nicht das Volk, das in freier und souveräner Entscheidung seine Macht an ihn delegiert. Wenn er auch in der politischen Praxis um des Volkes Stimmen buhlen muss, so bleibt dies einerseits Taktik, andererseits Tünche. Seine Macht wird ihm angeblich von der Geschichte selbst verliehen, als deren Werkzeug er sich empfindet.59

The poetry too does not speak of elections, it speaks of historical mission; it speaks not of rational deliberation, but of feeling:

So sei es:
Sei du Führer,
weil wir dich als Führer fühlen!
Gib uns Befehl,
wir folgen.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{60}Fritz Sotke, "So sei es," in Rufe in das Reich, p.128.

The second factor, closely related to the first, was called the will of the people; this was the mandate under which Hitler ruled, for he was considered the incorporation of this will:

Denn fragt uns einer, wo der Führer steht,
so zeigt ein jeder auf das eigne Herz:
Hier steht er eingewurzelt in das Blut,
hier muss er stehn und weiter wandern gehn
durch unser Blut Geschlecht nun zu Geschlecht--
In seinem Namen eint
ein grosses Volk sich wieder ganz als Volk!
Daran gedenkt! Das Grösste habt ihr nun empfangen!
Tragt euern Dank ihm allerseits zurück
und werdet das, was er euch vorgelebt;
das Volk, in dem, wie in dem grossen Wald,
Gott selber wieder seine Heimat findet!\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{61}Hans C. Kaergel, "Dem Führer," in Dem Führer: Gedichte für Adolf Hitler, p.53.

With Führer and Volkswille a unity, Johannes Linke maintains that Hitler too is no longer an individual:

Der ist kein Einzelner mehr, der ward
wiedergeboren in seinem Volk,

\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots
Den eignen Namen verlor er. Er büsste
Heimat, Besitz ein und Stand.
Aber stattdessen
Trägt er den Namen des ganzen Volkes im Herzen,
jedes Herz seines Volkes ward ihm Heimat,
sein Besitz ist der Glaube ans Volk,
und es ward ihm vom Schicksal
der Heiligste Rang verliehen.62


The total capitulation of the individual and the con­comitant reliance upon Hitler as the expression of the will of the people means that he can only do as the people want. He is the expression of their wishes and desires. Many times the relationship between Hitler and the people is expressed in the poetry as an oath of fealty or as a covenant:

Verlangst du alles, was wir besitzen,
Wir geben es.
Denn wir glauben an dich.
Wir schwören dir Gefolgschaft.
Diesen Eid kann keiner lösen—
selbst du nicht—nur der Tod!
Denn unsres Seins Erfüllung ist die Pflicht.63

63Fritz Sotke, "So sei es," in Rufe in das Reich, p.128.

The oath is unconditional; it commits everything, life included, to Hitler. That is far more than God demanded of the Jews in the Old Testament, for his covenant with them was only conditional: he would be their God if and only if they would be his people. Sotke's poem expresses more than that: complete surrender. And how dependent the people are can be readily seen: having taken the oath, they cannot dissolve it; they commit themselves uncompromisingly to him. There is no reciprocation on the part of Hitler. The
sequence ends where it began: the people swear fealty to him and, since he is the incorporation of them, he can only do as they desire. This is a propagandistic tactic which obscures and hides the totalitarian nature of Nazism. Yet it was constantly used. There was, it seems, a need to always reassert the close unity which existed between Hitler and the people; unremitting repetition was an essential part of the propaganda. And many times the identification between Hitler and the people was complete:

Führer

das Geheimnis deines Waltens
ruht in unserer eignen Tat.
Du bist wir
und wir sind du.
Alle Worte, die du findest,
sind von unserm Mund genommen,
denn du sagst es,
was wir glauben.
und du bist es,
der dem Leben
seine Form so
fügsam prägt,
dass mit glückhafter Gewissheit
sie wie Gottes weiter Mantel,
heimgefunden,
uns umhegt.64

64Friedrich Klähn, "Führer," in Gedichte des Volkes, p.65.

This is the language of the mystics with which they once described the intimate relationship between God and man. For purposes of contrast as well as similarity, a poem by Mechthild von Magdeburg may here be included:

Ich bin in dir, du bist in mir,
Wir können einander nicht näher sein,
Denn wir sind beide in eins geflossen
Und sind in eine Form gegossen
Und verbleiben so ewig unverdrossen.65


Attempting to experience the nearness and presence of God, the mystics sought a union with him in the deepest recesses of the soul; they tried to dissolve the separation between God and the soul in this life. But this could only be a personal experience. True, it meant the negation of the individual will, but this only in hopes of finding God within the self; the poem above illustrates this by its use of the preposition "in."

The foregoing poem as well as the following attempt to express an unio mystica, but with important differences:

Ihr seid viel tausend hinter mir,
Und ihr seid ich und ich bin ihr.

Ich habe keinen Gedanken gelebt,
der nicht in euern Herzen gebebt.

Und forme ich Worte, so weiss ich keins,
das nicht mit eurem Wollen eins.

Denn ich bin ihr und ihr seid ich,
und wir alle glauben, Deutschland, an dich!66


Schirach copies the tone and idea of the mystics but the poem is written from the viewpoint of the supreme rather than subordinate being. The central idea of the mystics is
thus reversed: God does not exist in the inner reaches of the individual; on the contrary, the people exist, as it were, within him. Furthermore, the relationship is not one to one, but many to one, unless one conceives of the "Volk" as a single entity; and in this case the poem stands as testimony to the relative unimportance of the individual. One does not exist in the other, but is simultaneously an incorporation of the will and thoughts of the others, all culminating in the "Glaube" of the last line.67

67See also the poem, "Uns steht der Glaube höher als das Wissen," in Der Glaube lebt, p.23.

Another poem in this same vein can serve to show how closely the poets copied the mystics. If one did not know the title of Joachim Zücker's poem, "Gabe an den Führer," one could easily take it to have been written at an earlier time. Indeed, one is tempted to say he simply changed the title of an extant poem:

Schenk dich aus
und gib dich hin,
geh ganz hinaus
aus dir in ihn.

Und bist du leer
bis auf den Grund,
dann hör nur mehr
auf seinen Mund.

Alles gibt sich
dir zurück--
unermesslich
ist das Glück.68
The will of the people, as it proceeds from the above poems, assumes the dimensions of what can be called a higher order, a standard by which all actions are judged.

The secular political hierarchy of the Middle Ages, for example, was seen as the reflection of a higher order which was divine, eternal and revealed and which man could imitate but not affect. In this scheme the earthly ruler served a representative function, he had power only "by the grace of God." And to this Divine Being the king himself was ultimately responsible. Not so today: the modern state is self-referential in that it stands as its own justification and does not represent a higher order; it instead derives its power from the people. God has neither voice nor sanction; he does not meddle in the affairs of men. Thus there no longer exists a court of last resort or appeals outside of the state, attested to by the fact that the state cannot be sued unless it agrees to such action.

What is, however, the balancing power in a democratic order is the dialogue which exists between those in power and the opposition. And what is more: though neither incumbent nor opposition can be absolute, it is through dialogue that the state reaches decisions, for it remains the task of the opposition to point to the weakness of the

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68 Gedichte des Volkes, p.80.
ruler's own argument. In the Nazi state, on the other hand, dialogue was banned and only the "will" of Hitler was recognized; that is to say then, that the acknowledgments of the masses, for lack of opposition, approved and measured of the flattering demagogue. And the masses were easily convinced, especially under the intoxicating influence of gigantic rallies.

If Hitler, by the same token, is the embodiment of the will of the people, then he becomes the highest court of the land, for he in essence determines what the law will be.69

69Hermann Goering, in a speech to jurists, was quoted by the Völkische Beobachter of 14 July 1934 as having said, "Recht und Wille des Führers sind eins. Es kann nur eine Rechtsauffassung gelten, und zwar die, die der Führer selbst festgelegt hat."

Not only that: recognizing no higher authority than this will, he becomes the arbiter of moral law. As the people's messiah he had full power to judge and command the "goodness" or "badness" of an act. Since that which was German was said to be superior to all else, it follows that any act was good which was to the advantage of Germany and vice-versa. It further follows that in such an atmosphere differences of opinion or especially criticism of Hitler's decisions could not exist. Results and orders likewise do not follow from discussion; it is, in the last analysis, a decision-making which proceeds from "divine providence," and this has nothing to do with reason, but solely with belief.
While the individual's duty was to obey, he was at the same time relieved of the moral responsibility for his acts. Nowhere did this become more evident than at the Nuremberg trials. What existed was a standard or set of morals valid for Germany alone, based on self-abandonment and militarism. How the poetry preached this can be seen in Rudolf Rost's "Der SA Dolch":

Man gab dir die Waffe!
Die Waffe des Mannes, der im Kampf fest steht.
Jetzt kämpfe und schaffe!
Mit der Faust auf dem Griff sprich dein Morgengebet.
Bist in Ehre geweiht
tu kämpfen für Deutschland, für Freiheit und Brot
sei nun allzeit bereit!
Zu dienen dem Volk sei dein höchsten Gebot.
Nun kämpfe um dein Recht!
Zieh blank deine Waffe, wenn Ehrpflicht dich mahnt,
form der Zukunft Geschlecht,
wie einst deine Ahnen den Weg dir gebahnt.
Das Recht zu der Waffe
Hast du erworben im heiligen Streit.
Jetzt kämpfe und schaffe!
Lass die Faust nicht vom Griff, es gehört dir die Zeit!70

Using religious words like, "Morgengebet," "geweiht," "Gebot," "im heiligen Streit," the author tries to build into the poem an air of respectability and reverence which cannot, however, hide the philosophy of "might makes right." With no reservations, "Zu dienen dem Volk," is the only moral criterion.

If the above poem, with its constant use of the imperative, is the command, then the following is the reply on the part
of the people:

Die Vielzuvielen sind versprengt, verlaufen,
Vom Feuer blind, das über uns gebraust.
Die heut marschieren in den erznen Haufen,
Wir fragen nicht. Wir sind des Führers Faust. 71

Again Schumann makes reference to a biblical event. In the previous stanza not quoted here he speaks of a "schwarze Tag" and here in the second line the words "Feuer" and "gebraust" parallel the tongues of fire which, in the Bible, gave the Apostles the conviction and courage to preach the new faith. Here also the central idea of selectivity is expressed: in the words of the poem, the "wir" are the hard core, the elite as opposed to the "Vielzuvielen." The select are the wheat, the large masses the chaff who have not withstood the winnowing. 72


72 It is here that the terms "Jünger" and "Gefolgschaft" become transparent. Indeed, the term "Führer" is meaningless without the above two.

For Anacker the belief in the cause includes the willingness to die:

Eint mit den Frauen und Müttern ein einzig Gebot,
Glühend zu dienen
In heiligem Selbstvergessen,
Tief in der Brust die Flamme der letzten Bereitschaft:
Führer, befiehl--
Und wir folgen dir bis in den Tod! 73

The superiority which the Nazis felt and preached they supported with religious and biblical underpinnings. Nowhere does this become more transparent than in their use of the word "hate." It is not uncommon for a nation or an individual to hate an enemy. But this is a negative disposition. The Nazis, however, cultivated hatred as a part of their Weltanschauung. Gerhard Schumann's "Sonette des Hasses" shows this:

Von Liebe wird die starre Welt verwandelt.
Denn sie erschafft das Leben durch den Schmerz.
Doch, Brüder, hütet eurem Hass und handelt!
Denn auch den Hass gab uns der Herr ins Herz.

Mag Liebe duldend Grosses auch gebären--
Der Hass allein hält es von Hunden rein.
Denn Händler nahn, zu wechseln und zu mehren,
Und machen es gemeinsam und gemein.

Und wenn ihr glaubt, ihr sollt mit offnen Armen Jedweden Bruder nennen, der es heischt,
Von Mitleid überquellen und Erbarmen--

Habt ihr euch, Brüder, um den Sinn getäuscht.
Glaubt nicht an ihr erlogenes Geplärr!
Denn auch den Hass verlieh uns Gott der Herr!74

74Wir dürfen dienen, p.66. Cornelia Berning, op.cit., mentions only that "'Hass' in der Zusammensetzung 'heldischer Hass' positiv. Der heldische Hass der nordischen Rasse steht im stärksten Gegensatz zu dem 'feigen Hass des Judentums.' Er 'enthält unerbittliche, aber ehrliche, gerade und mutige Härte, von Wille und Einsicht beherrscht, entspringt vorwiegender Pflicht- und Verantwortungsbewusstsein zum Schutz bedrohter Werte.' It is apparent, however, from the poem quoted above and others like it, that "Hass" is positively meant when it is used by itself and not only in the compound she mentions. See also the poem "Neues Deutschland," in Deutsche Gedichte, p.8., and "Vision des kommenden Reichs," in Gerhard Schumann, Gesetz wird zu Gesang (Wien: K.H. Bischoff, 1943), p.22.
No doubt a close relationship exists between love and hate; what is new here is the exclusivity involved. The author describes love in terms of birth and the accompanying pain and then introduces hate as an inborn by-product which alone can certify and maintain the existence of this love. That is to say, love produces life and hatred protects it. And since love is of divine origin, hatred must be of the same origin.  

Hatred is then part of the Germanic-heroic attitude which the Nazis cultivated; it demands passionate dedication to a goal and regards sympathy and generosity as crimes. In the previous poem Schumann borrowed an episode from the Bible: "Denn Händler nahn, zu wechseln und zu mehren." The selection recalls Christ's banishing the money-changers from the Temple. It is the only time that anger comes to the surface in Christ's life. The same theme is in the following selection, but Christ is replaced by "wir" and instead of anger, the word "hate" is used with the adjective "holy":

Einst werden wir das Schwert zur Ruhe legen.  
Wir schlugen hart wie Gott im heiligen Hass.  
Doch Liebe war des Richters letztes Mass.  
Dem Leben kämpften wir uns still entgegen.  

Gerhard Schumann, Gesetz wird zu Gesang, p.22.
The repetition of slogans and words such as "Deutschland," "Blut," "Volk" etc. is to act like adrenalin, constantly infusing the masses with new energy for action. These slogans are themselves thought of as goals for which any and every act is justified. Killing, for example, becomes acceptable because it is a means of securing a goal and a way to establish one's honor:

Vom Würgen und Morden für unser Volk
Sind wir steinhart geworden für unser Volk.
Das Schicksal mag uns schlagen,
Wir halten stand.
Wir können Schwerstes tragen für unser Land.
Glühheiss sind die Gewehre in unserer Hand.
Wir kämpfen für die Ehre, für unser Land.
Und müssten wir auch sterben vor unserm Ziel,
Wir lassen unsrn Erben das deutsche Ziel.77

77 Deutsche Gedichte, p.11

Political murder as a permissible, even necessary act, condoned by the "will" of the people, is shown in a poem written in 1934 after the Röhm-Putsch:

Und als der Mann die dunklen Worte sprach:
Erschossen--war ein schwarzer Raum um ihn.

Und als die Schüsse peitschten durch die Nacht,
Brach jede Kugel in des Führers Herz.

Solange Deutschland lebt, wird in den Nächten
Die Salve Menschen aus den Betten schrecken.
Und blutig wird das Herz des Mannes leuchten,
Der seine Freunde tilgte um das Reich.78


Discussing this poem, Albrecht Schöne quotes from a
speech made by Hermann Pongs which makes all other commentary superfluous, for it fully accepts such acts, not only on a juridical but on a personal level as well:

Eine erschütternde Wirklichkeit ist hier Gedicht geworden, und sie kann es mit so unmittelbarer Kraft, weil das überpersönlich strenge Ideal, die grosse Haltung, die die Zeit fordert, unmittelbar darin einleuchtet. Diennend dem Leben, das heute schicksalsgewaltig, unerbittlich-wirklich und über den einzelnen hinweggreifend völkisch ist, wird auch die Dichtung ihre neue Form finden.\(^){79}

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79 Albrecht Schöne, op.cit., p.38.

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For purposes of contrast, another poem should perhaps be added here because it attempts to disguise overt acts of violence by abstracting them into the realm of ideas:

Nun aber steht ein Haufe von Entschlossnen, Aus deren Blick der blanke Wille schießt. Sie träumen nachts vom Blut, vom hingegossnen, Und von dem Führer, welcher einsam ist.

Dem Führer, der das dunkle Schicksal trägt, Und von dem Acker, der nach Männern schreit, Und von dem Strom, der an die Grenze schlägt, Und von dem Bruder, der die Schuld verzeiht.

Vor ihrem Blick steht das Geheime nicht. Ihr hartes Wort fällt schwer und wie aus Stahl. Aus ihren Schritten hallt das Blutgericht.

In ihrer Seele tragen sie den Gral. Knechte des Führers, Hüter und Rächer zugleich, In ihnen brennt, mit ihnen wächst das Reich.\(^){80}

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80 Gerhard Schumann, Fahne und Stern, p.62.

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Despite its avoidance of direct description, there can be no doubt what is meant. The "will" that shoots and the
words which fall as steel do not successfully camouflage a scene of violence.

We have arrived finally at the point where the individual is but an obedient robot. Saturated by a propaganda composed of half-truths, he has been convinced that the leader sent to rescue Germany has indeed been sent by God. In obeisance to that leader, he fulfills his duty best by obeying. He need not and dare not question the validity or morality of the orders which he receives. The individual does not act on his own, but reacts to orders from above. Not concerned with the morality of his acts, he can condone and carry out any orders which he may receive.

It is at this stage that the epithet "der von Gott gesandte" assumes frightening proportions; it is a guise and a ruse: one who believed in Hitler could maintain and feel secure that he was obeying God, who had sent Hitler. He could attend "services" to him as well as carry out his every order, knowing that God's approval stood behind them. Here is Christology, pure and simple.

It is perhaps appropriate that we conclude this chapter by drawing another comparison. We saw in the last chapter how Hitler was finally enthroned in a monstrance; and we have seen in this chapter how often religious, especially biblical references were used. In the Old Testament the cry of a lost people is nowhere more poignantly expressed than in the Psalms, the incantations of a helpless people
crying to the Lord:

Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir.
Herr, hörne meine Stimme, lass deine Ohren merken
auf die Stimme meines Flehens.81

81Psalms 130, 1-2.

How closely this emotion is followed, how dependent the
people are on Hitler can be seen in the cry of ecstasy and
submission in Herybert Menzel's poem:

Packe zu, dir will ich mich ergeben,
Rette mich, in Qualen hör mich schrein!
Ach, ich Träüber werde wieder leben!
Ich Verlorener will dein Jünger sein.82

82Im Marschschnitt der SA, p.11
CHAPTER III

DIE FAHNE

In his book Mein Kampf, Hitler describes the origin of his swastika flag:

Ich selbst hatte unterdessen nach unzählichen Versuchen eine entgültige Form niedergelegt: eine Fahne aus rotem Grundtuch mit einer weissen Scheibe und in deren Mitte ein schwarzes Hakenkreuz.¹


That the flag was thought of as a symbol by both Hitler and his followers is also indicated in his book:

Und ein Symbol ist dies wirklich! Als nationale Sozialisten sehen wir in unserer Flagge unser Program. Im Rot sehen wir den sozialen Gedanken der Bewegung, im Weiss den nationalsozialistischen, im Hakenkreuz die Mission des Kampfes für den Sieg des arischen Menschen.²

²Ibid., p.491

The colors and swastika of the flag are described in terms of national goals and aspirations; these no doubt remained for some time. Important for our consideration is, however, that in poetry the flag became closely associated with the person of Hitler. The process of identifying Hitler with the flag became more intense as a mythical aura grew around him. Hitler himself contributed to and nurtured this association: one need only to consider that the oath of
allegiance was taken to him and the flag simultaneously.\(^3\)


Since Hitler was hailed as the "Befreier," his flag was often referred to in the poetry as the "Freiheitsfahne":

Freiheitsfahne, wir grüßen dich!
Sieghaft wehst du im ganzen Lande,
Flatterst vom Rhein bis zum Weichselstrande.
Deiner Gegner Stern verblich---
Freiheitsfahne, wir grüßen dich!

Freiheitsfahne, wir denken daran,
Wie sie dich jahrlang geschmäht und verboten.
Hundertmal decktest du unsere Toten;
Sterbende sahen verklärt dich an---
Freiheitsfahne, wir denken daran.

Freiheitsfahne, du bist das Symbol,
Das uns der Führer selber gegeben---
Künden sollst du von lauterstem Streben
Für des Volkes Ehre und Wohl---
Freiheitsfahne, du bist das Symbol!

Freiheitsfahne, wir schwören es dir:
Keiner soll dich beflecken und schänden!
Rein sollst du wandern von Hand zu Händen,
Kindern und Enkeln noch stolzestes Zier---
Freiheitsfahne, wir schwören es dir!\(^4\)


This poem was published in 1937; the first stanza is a simple greeting to the flag. The second recalls the history already connected with the flag while the third mentions it as a symbol of the "lauterstem Streben" of Hitler for the honor and well-being of his people. He has given them a flag
which represents his sacrifices for them. An association is made between Hitler and the flag, but as yet it does not stand "for" him, that is to say, the two are complementary. This symbol of "des Volkes Ehre und Wohl" is in the last stanza to be kept pure and clean. The flag came from one hand; it is received by many, not only of this generation but of the ones to follow as well. This suggests the eternal character of the symbol.5

5It might be remarked here that short spans of time were not part of Nazi thinking. That, for example, a man be remembered by the next generation was hardly enough; deeds had to last forever. This is already apparent in the resurrection and sentimental glorification of the ancient Germanen. Likewise the flag: it was made for no less than eternity, thus the overuse of the word "ewig."

Here too is the symbolic touching of the flags and the passing of them from hand to hand; the ceremony was to become an integral part of the Reichsparteitag. The ritualistic transfer in the poem goes from Hitler to the people. A similar ritual is described in the following poem, but this time Hitler carries the flag to God. The poem implies the recognition of a Higher Being to whom Hitler turns for approval; from the point of view of the propaganda at least, this serves the twofold function of giving the flag a relic-like character and of providing Hitler with a symbol of divine sanction:

Er steht vor uns, zu hohem Schritt bereit,
Und steht, geballte Kraft in Blick und Ruf,
Und seine Sehnsucht ist die Ewigkeit
für seine Fahne, die ein Reich erschuf.

Und da die Nacht kam, trug er sie zu Gott,
dass sie die Weihe nahm aus seinen Händen,
da warfen sie in Ketten ihn, und Spott
sollte die Reinheit seiner Fahne schänden.

Erst sinkt die Sonne, und die Nacht bricht an,
und wer vom Schmerz erzittert, stirbt im Tod,
doch wer dem Schwur der Fahne bleibt vertan,
sieht noch in tiefster Nacht ein Morgenrot.

So stand der eine opfernd und bereit,
und blieb, geballte Kraft in Blick und Ruf,
Und schreitet glühend nun durch unsere Zeit
mit seiner Fahne, die ein Reich erschuf.  

---

6Herbert Böhme, Der Glaube lebt; Rufe der Zeit

The first stanza speaks of Hitler's desire that his
flag be eternal; this is seemingly assured by the consecration
to God. The second stanza brings in decidedly religious overtones which are carried over into the third. The content is
straightforward: Hitler carries the flag to God. It becomes
the visible symbol of God's trust and sanction.

The description would seem to mix fact with fantasy: the
night is Hitler's banishment to prison after the Putsch. To
say that he was thrown in chains overstates the case, but it
does serve the purpose of making a martyrdom of his imprison-
ment. More than that, however, the entire stanza is a clear
and intentional parallel to Christ's agony in Gethsemane and
the events of the following day. The key words, "die Nacht," "zu Gott," "warfen in Ketten ihn" and "Spott" pinpoint the
intention and place Hitler in a situation analogous to that of Christ. Hitler is mentioned by a personal pronoun or, as in the last stanza, by "der eine" but is never referred to by name; yet clearly he is meant. As the cross became the symbol of Christ's victory over death, so here the flag is placed in a similar situation and becomes the symbol of Hitler's triumph. It can no longer be affected by the "Spott" and remains forever undefilable.

The night is mentioned in two stanzas. The first time has been discussed and refers to Hitler alone; stanza three also speaks of the night, this time with respect to the people. The different manner in which the night is described bears a closer look: the second stanza simply says the night came whereas the third mentions the sinking sun. Now the sun has always figured prominently in sun cults and mythology as the source of life and light. Here, like the pillar of fire in the Old Testament, the flag is the source of strength. Whoever cannot bear the pain of darkness, "stirbt im Tod," whatever the redundancy is to mean. For those who remain true to the flag, its mystic power serves as a guiding glow and a source of strength in the darkness. Thus on the condition that one dedicates himself to the flag, it becomes a source of salvation.

The fourth stanza describes Hitler in heroic terms and brings him and the flag more closely together. Except for
the preposition, the last line of this stanza is exactly
the same as the final line of the first stanza. The change
from "for" to "with" indicates a progression. Hitler and
the flag have become one and inseparable.

With monotonous regularity the Nazi poets speak of the
purity of the flag and of the power it radiates. Oskar
Bischoff's "Die Reinheit der Fahne" is one such poem:

Haltet mir die Fahne rein,
in ihr brennt des Führers Wille,
sie gab nicht aus lauer Stille
heissen Glauben, neue Kraft!

Haltet mir die Fahne rein!
Sie muss lodern, sie muss wehen,
wo wir schreiten, wo wir stehen:
sie schenkt heilige Leidenschaft!

Haltet mir die Fahne rein!
Sie darf nicht--umblutet--fallen,
wennoch einer "Sieg" kann lallen---:
wird sie bei den Sternen sein.7

7Gedichte des Volkes, ed. Herbert Böhme (München:

There is an implicit identification between Hitler and
his flag. Certainly it stands for national goals as before;
but more than that, in his poem it is apparent that these
aspirations are embodied in Hitler's person. The flag rep­
resents his will. Though not described as a light in the
darkness as previously, the flag here is clearly a source of
strength and an object to be passionately believed in; it
indeed arouses the "heilige Leidenschaft" for Hitler's "Wille"
which in turn is "Glaube." The opening line, repeated as it is in each stanza, underscores by the use of the imperative in the last two stanzas the relic-like sanctity of the flag; it dare not be defiled and must be fought for to the last man.

The swastika flags were replicas of one, original flag, the Blutfahne, which was considered the Holy of Holies. This flag had been carried during Hitler's abortive Putsch and later covered the caskets of the men who were the movement's first martyrs. November 9th each year marked the Gedenktag der Gefallenen.  

\[8\]

The names of those who died were inserted within a black border after the title page in Hitler's Mein Kampf.

In time the ceremony added tradition to the movement and each time it was repeated new successes could be cited and the flag thereby acquired additional symbolism:

Du trankest unsrer ersten Toten Blut,
Du Fahne vom November Dreiundzwanzig;
Du trankest der gebrochenen Herzen Glut
und wardst Fanal vom Saarland bis nach Danzig.

Vor deinem heil'gen Tuche neigten tief
Die Adler sich von sämtlichen Standarten,
Eh' sie zum Siegesflug der Führer rief,
Und Bataillone braun sich um sie scharten.

Und wieder ist's, dass jener Tag sich jährt,
Da opfergross die sechszehn Helden starben---
Du aber, Fahne, flatterst ruhmverklärt,
Und Millionen grüssen deine Farben.

Wild braust ein Sturm; der deutsche Riese reckt
Zornbebend sich vom Saarland bis nach Danzig:
Das ganze deutsche Volk hast du erwacht,
Blutfahne du, vom Jahre Dreiundzwanzig!  

\[9\]
The vivid imagery would have the reader believe that the flag's red color is a result of its "drinking" the blood of the fallen heroes. The second stanza confirm this: since those who died are martyrs, the flag, red from their blood, becomes a symbol of their sacrifice and an object of veneration; thus it is holy. That the flag now flies from the Saarland to Danzig attests to the righteousness of the cause and the efficacy of the martyr's sacrifice.

Preserved in the Braune Haus in Munich, the original Blutfahne was brought forth on only two yearly occasions: on the Gedenktag der Gefallenen and on the Reichsparteitag. Its function at the latter ceremony in Nuremburg shows its symbolic significance: Hitler himself took over the "blessing" of the new flags by touching them with the Blutfahne. A kind of secular transubstantiation, this ritual supposedly transferred to the new flags all the mystic powers which had accrued to the original through its affiliation with the martyrs of the movement. Then the newly consecrated flags were taken to all parts of Germany where they were treated with highest respect and served continually to remind the people of their duty to obey. The flags, increased in symbolic value by ritual, were a visible reminder of the blood which had been shed for the movement. Their very color and

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9 Heinrich Anacker, Kämpfen und Singen, p.100.
their close association with Hitler made both him and the martyrs omnipresent.

The act of touching one flag to the other was not confined to the Reichsparteitag, though it was the only time that the Blutfahne touched the new flags. The ritual itself took place time and again and imitated the original ceremony. Yet in addition, the masses of the people too had to be able to partake of this "holiness." Hans-Jürgen Nierentz includes those who have been touched by the flags as being consecrated:

Fahne, 
wer dich begreift, 
ist dir geweiht,
Fahne, 
wen du gestreift, 
der trägt die Zeit.
Fahne, 
wer sich verschwört 
zur Tat des Mannes,
Fahne, 
wer dir gehört, 
gehört dir ganz!
Fahne, 
wen du berührt, 
der ist geweiht!
Fahne, 
du führst 
zur Ewigkeit.10


Again, everything is directed not at temporal goals but at eternity. Here the cult of the flag is seen in the same aspect, for the cult is aimed beyond the relic to eternity. The relic consecrates and makes eligible those who are touched by it; and one is reminded of the New Testament words,
"If I but touch his cloak, I shall be saved."\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{itemize}
\item Math. 9, 18-26.
\end{itemize}

A variation of the same idea is found in a poem by Baldur von Schirach:

\begin{quote}
Du bist die Schönste aller, die uns wehten,
Du bist die Kraft, die jenen Kämpfer wirbt,
du heiligst selbst den Sünder, der dir stirbt,
du hohe Hand, mit der die Helden beten.

Inbrunst und Wille bist du von uns allen.
Wer für dich fiel, zum Bild wird er in dir.
Du bist die Brücke zwischen dort und hier.
Heil denen, die in deinem Schatten fallen.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}

By using the word "heiligst," Schirach brings to bear the idea of making holy and suggests at the same time the allied German word "der Heilige" in contrast to "der Sünder." The condition for the sinner's becoming a saint is his belief in the flag; even the sinner can be saved if he dies. If, as the poem maintains, the flag has the power of sanctifying, if it is the "hohe Hand, mit der die Helden beten," forming a bridge "zwischen dort und hier," then the flag is an object capable of producing devotion, i.e. a sacramental, and hence a means of attaining eternal life. The word "Heil" in the last line can then well be understood in its religious meaning: salvation is assured to those who fall in the flag's shadow.
In a poem discussed earlier God was said to have blessed Hitler's flag; the standard was regarded as a sign of God's sanction and approval. How much more effective it is to maintain that God is "in" the flag can be seen in a poem by Herybert Menzel:

Nun gilt nicht hůh, nun gilt nicht hott:
Sturmi! blasen die Trompeten.
In unsern Fahnen lodert Gott,
Wir kämpfen wie wir beten.
Nichts hält uns ab, nicht Zwang, nicht Spott,
Der Marsch ist angetreten!

Gott will kein Dach, Gott will kein Haus,
Wenn wir die Stuben lassen,
Er zieht mit uns zum Kampfe aus,
Und segnet unser Hassen.
Wir halten ihn im Sturmgebraus,
Wenn wir die Fahne fassen.

In unsern Fahnen loder Gott,
Drum wir sie heilig nennen.
Drum gegen Lug und Trug und Spott
Zum Sturme wir anrennen.
Und wer da fällt, der stirbt für Gott,
Zu dem wir uns bekennen.

Der hat zu ihm sich nie bekannt,
Der bleibt, wenn wir marschieren.
In dem ist Gott noch nie entbrannt,
Der will, dass wir verlieren.
Doch er durchglüht das ganze Land,
Wird uns zum Siege führen!

So pressen unsre Hände wir
Nur fester um die Waffen.
So wie wir kämpfen, beten wir;
So wie wir fallen, glauben wir!
Gott segne Wehr und Waffen,
Die du zum Kampf erschaffen!13


Published in 1936, the poem seeks to whip up enthusiasm for the cause of National Socialism and to convince those
who have not yet committed themselves to the movement. The manner in which Menzel proceeds is compelling even if logically specious. God is specifically mentioned in each stanza; the reader or hearer is to be convinced of the veracity of the statement, "In unsern Fahnen lodert Gott" by sheer repetition. On the acceptance of this line the entire poem is built. God is said to flare like a flame in the flag; the red color would support this metaphor. Then in the fourth stanza a biblical allusion is added, for what is said of the Holy Ghost on Pentacost is now said of God in the flag: "er durchglüht das ganze Land."

Moreover, as a deity of fire residing "in" the flag, God becomes controllable. Man has, as it were, taken God into his own hands. What is said is that God is committed to "our" cause; what is implied is that God is indifferent, that in fact man can do what he wants.

The pretentiousness of so limiting God to one nation and one flag is overshadowed by the effect which is sought: the author hopes to convince his readers that the flag is holy. For a second time the third stanza repeats the line, "In unsern Fahnen lodert Gott" in its entirety and, having brought God and the flag so closely together, the author can explicitly state the obvious: the flag is holy. The "Spott--Gott" rhyme of the first stanza is moreover here intensified to "Gott--Spott--Gott." And having once established the holiness of the flag, the author can make the following con-
attention: God is in our flag. We believe in God; whoever does not march with us shows that he does not believe in God and is thus against us. But God is on our side and he "wird uns zum Siege führen."

In addition to the direct biblical allusion the poem contains religiously meaningful and loaded terms. They are used here to entice and to persuade; they have become convenient and highly effective vehicles for furthering the Nazi cause and, finally, they intend to elicit obedience through reverence. In the first stanza, for example, the word "beten" is used in the context, "Wir kämpfen wie wir beten" while in the closing stanza the line reads, "So wie wir kämpfen, beten wir." While the change may have been made for the sake of end rhyme, it is possible to say also that the meaning of "beten" has been corrupted between the first and last stanzas. The first stanza has one possible interpretation: "We fight in the same manner in which we pray" while the last line admits of either "While we are fighting we are praying" or "As soon as we fight we pray." Now praying is a personal communication between man and God; that relationship exists in the first line. In the last line this relationship, a necessary condition of prayer, is missing and prayer becomes the equivalent of fighting. But just as one cannot properly pray by marching or working, so also is it impossible to pray by fighting. It is purely then religiously associative value of the words which is being exploited here.
A more belligerent poem containing many of the same religious terms is the following by Kurt Massmann:

Wir werden es niemals glauben, 
dass Gott in den Schwachen wohnt! 
Man will uns den Mut nur rauben, 
indem man die Büsser belohnt!

Sie sagen, wir können nicht beten, 
weil unser Knie sich nicht beugt; 
wen wir vor die Fahne hintreten, 
uns Gott seinen Willen bezeugt!

Und mag man uns auch verdammen, 
weil eifernder Hass nicht versteht: 
Wir stehn um die Fahne zusammen, 
und unser Appell ist Gebet!14


It was already apparent in the previous poem that the oft-used word "Gott" is subject to many and various interpretations, indeed, one is almost forced to reinterpret it in each poem. Baldur von Schirach, for example, says in one poem, "So in uns Gott und Erde/Und Tod und Lebenssaft,"15


which would indicate that God is in the people; in other lyrics he may be equated with "Blut" or "Rasse." In the above poem Massmann means God to be regarded as the heathen warrior-god of the ancient Germanen. Evidence of this is abundant. The opening lines assert the belief that might makes right, that God dwells in the ranks of the stronger.
The second stanza makes this more explicit: the self-assertive Germanic warrior, so the Nazis learned from past history, considered bending the knee a sign of weakness; this act was contrary to the Reckenhaltung for it implied servitude and humility.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16}Gerhard Schumann, for example, opens his poem, "Einer im Jahrtausend," with the lines:

\begin{quote}
Als alle zagten, hob er an zu zeugen.  
Als alle sanken, stand er leuchttend auf.  
Als alle fronten, riss er sie hinauf  
Nie mehr in Knechtschaft ihre Knie zu beugen.
\end{quote}


It was consequently an inappropriate gesture for the Nazi "warrior" and, by the same token, the "Gott" mentioned in the poem has nothing more to do with Christianity. Nevertheless Massmann tries to show a compatibility between the Reckenhaltung and Christianity by means of the word "beten" and its paronym "Gebet." The "wir" of the last stanza stand around the flag, their "Appell" becomes their "Gebet" and the military muster becomes a religious ceremony. Moreover, the God to whom they pray dwells in the flag, just as in the last poem, yet he is surrounded by the atmosphere of Germanic warriordom; he becomes thus an immanent being comparable to the heather god Donar whose presence was worshipped in an oak tree.

That the flag was considered a relic has been shown; how it was used as the centerpiece of a pseudo-religious ceremony
can be seen in the poem "Der Fahnenträger":

Da wird nicht mehr gesungen,
spricht keiner einen Laut;
wir haben einem Jungen
die Fahne anvertraut.

Und als er seine Hände
in unsre Hände legt,
ist's, als ob einer stände,
der unsre Ehre trägt.17

17 Rolf Börnsen, in Gedichte des Volkes, p.133.

To underscore the solemnity of the event, the author begins by setting an atmosphere of reverence and silence. All attention is focused on the young boy who has just received the flag. The poem would have one believe that not everyone is allowed this honor. In this symbolic ritual or initiation rite the touching of hands signals the assumption of duty, viz., the flag is the symbol of the "honor" for which the young boy now becomes responsible.

Carl M. Holzapfel calls the flag a relic but adds a further element:

Hütet die Fahne,
unseres Heiligtumes
loderr.de Flamme,
die sich aus Finsternis
in des Ruhmes
dämmern Morgen
blutrot erhebt!

Ein lebendes Kreuz
im Strahlenkranz
trägt sie
den Augenglanz
zerschossener Brüder,
schlägt sie
den Atem ruhmreicher Heere
neu uns entgegen!18
There can be no question that the word "Kreuz" immediately suggests the cross of Christ; yet what is meant here is the Hakenkreuz. The poem wants the reader's power of association to infer the latter while taking advantage of the religious significance and value of the Christian Cross.

The swastika has another function in a poem by Otto Glaunings:

Hakenkreuz, du Kreuz der Wende,  
leuchtest uns auf unserer Bahn.  
schwörend heben wir die Hände:  
immer sei du uns voran!

Du bist uns das heilige Zeichen  
wie das Sonnenlicht so rein.  
Alles Heil ist zu erreichen,  
darfst uns du der Weiser sein.19

Here too the Hakenkreuz is in competition with Christ's cross. The birth of Christ marks the turn from the Old to the New Testament; the Hakenkreuz fulfills the same function. While the year is not definitely mentioned, the swastika is called the "Kreuz der Wende." Metaphorically at least, it marks, as does the Christian cross, a new era, a new year one. And to follow this up, the cross, as the symbol of Christian salvation and triumph over death, is replaced by the Hakenkreuz which in turn can now effect "alles Heil."

18"Hütet die Fahne," in Gedichte des Volkes, p. 36.

We have shown that in a great number of poems there is a close connection between Hitler and his flag; far greater in number are those which do not mention such an association, poems in which the flag itself acquires the status of a symbol or relic. This in no way suggests a dissociation of Hitler from the flag. The connection is rather taken for granted, just as the title Führer came to be so intimately associated with the man that it was not found necessary to mention his proper name.

The poems concerning the flag seem to suggest an interchangability of "Kreuz" and "Hakenkreuz." Readily at hand was another object which had a much greater similarity to the cross—the "Fahnenmast":

Schleissiger Stamm ohne Knorr und Ast,
Baum ohne Wurzel und Wipfellast,
Rindlos blanker, ragender Mast
Unserer Fahne.

Nie ist dein innigster Herzschlag erschlafft:
Blutstrom des Volkes durchbraust deinen Schaft
Heilvoll und drängend als Lebenssaft
Hochauf zur Fahne.

Stolz im verborgenen Firstgeäst
Schwebt dir die Blüte bei Feier und Fest,
Die unsre Herzen erzittern lässt:
Unsere Fahne.20


The initial stanza is descriptive; it combines the two qualities of the mast: it is a bare, rootless mast, yet the author calls it a tree, which suggests its intrinsically
organic nature. This idea carries over into the second stanza where the mast-tree, rootless and thus cut off from its natural source of life, nonetheless contains a "innigster Herzschlag." The living tree once drew its life from the earth. Its trunk contained the arteries which brought the sap up to the crown: now the mast continues to serve this same function. It pulsates with the "Blutstrom des Volkes" and transfers this "Lebenssaft" to the flag at the top.

That a parallel to the cross was intended was already apparent to Hellmuth Langenbucher in 1942 when he wrote that in the poem,

... offenbart sich das Geheimnis des Baumes, sein Leben als Gleichnis, wie es der Dichter aufleuchtet lässt in einem Sang 'Auf die Welten-esche Yggdrasil,' auf das christliche Kreuz, und schliesslich auf den Fahnenmast.21

21Ibid., p.217.

Even more is Langenbucher's quote applicable to the following poem by Bodo Schütt. It would seem at first reading that Schütt compares and juxtaposes the Christian cross with the flag mast. What he does, however, is use not only Christian tradition but also Germanic mythology as moral support for Nazi symbolism:

Heilig der Baum, der den Gott schwankend ertrug in des Sturms wilder Entrückung den Opfern gesellt, welche das hungrige Schicksal nimmt für die Tat, die beständig Schuld mischt mit Heil.
Heilig der Speer, der den Gott
sehrte in eigener Hand,
denn Waffen allein
zeichnen der Männer
Opfer gerecht, es vollzieht
gültig der Schlacht
zornig geworfenes Erz
des Schicksals Auftrag.

Heilig die Wunde, des Gottes
letzte Entscheidung, wo Blut
träufte aus der roten
Blüte des Leibes wie Tau
zeugenden Todes
und furchtbar sich
schlingt aus des Opfers
springendem Borne des Schicksals
ewige Bindung.

Heilig die Fahne, des Heils
Baum in dem brausenden Wald
reisiger Männer, des Speers
bebender Schaft, der dem Gott
weiht die Erkornen
und hoch in des Tuchs
flatternder Röte dem Feind
kündet des Opfers Gewalt,
den Ansturm des edlen,
sieghaften Bluts. 22

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22 Geist und Gestalt (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1944), p.58.

In Norse mythology the center of the world was formed
by a mighty tree, the ash called Yggdrasil. In the poem
Hávamál the god Odin is described as hanging from this tree
pierced by a spear. The first stanza of Schütt's poem de-
scribes this voluntary sacrifice of Odin to himself. 23

23 H.R. Ellis Davidson, Gods and Myths of Northern
the passage from the Hávamál as follows:

I was stuck with a spear
and given to Odin,
myself given to myself . . . .

Several other factors from mythology enter in here. Victims, whether prisoners of war or not, were hung from trees before the Viking age; they were sacrifices to the god of death, Odin. If Odin himself goes through the same rite as it is described in mythology, then it is a voluntary sacrifice, not to share the suffering of the world, but as an initiation rite to gain the secret knowledge of the runes.24

24For a more complete treatment see H.R. Ellis Davidson, op.cit., p.143ff.

Thus in the first stanza of the poem the god, Odin, himself a victim, is "den Opfern gesellt, welche das hungrige Schicksal nimmt . . . ."; the gods too are subject to fate.

The second stanza introduces the spear. Now the initiation rite through which Odin goes consists of several parts:

Erst soll der Initiandus von der Welt, in der er bisher gelebt hat, losgelöst werden; dann muss er in die neue Gemeinschaft übergeführt werden. Hierfür ist die Form oft ein Scheintod, ein Eingang in die Welt der Toten und eine darauf folgende Wiedergeburt.25


In Odin's death three elements can be distinguished: he suffers death, hangs on a tree and is pierced by a spear. And this spear which the god held in his own hand--indicating
self-sacrifice—is called holy. Weapons, as used by warriors, mark men for sacrifice in a manner acceptable to the deity. Odin, god of battle, resided in the warrior's paradise Valhalla. Only those who underwent violent death either by battle or sacrifice had entry into Odin's realm.26

26 H.R. Ellis Davidson, op.cit., pp.149 & 152.

The spear, described in the poem by the kenning, "der Schlacht zornig geworfenes Erz," completes the death and offering of Odin and allows him to go into the world of the dead.

The third stanza again repeats the word "heilig" in the opening line. This time it is the wound, inflicted by the spear, which brings forth the victim's last sign of life. Again, the god referred to is Odin, who immolates himself.

One would expect the final stanza to concentrate on the victim, judging at least by the progression in the prior three stanzas. Instead the flag is described and it then becomes apparent that the poem in the preceding three stanzas has each time mentioned God in the opening lines, building up until in the third stanza the red blood is mentioned. This is in turn then associated with the color of the flag. Stanza four is to be the culmination of the preceding three stanzas; that is already evident from the structure of the poem: the first stanza has seven lines and each stanza adds one line until in the fourth there are ten. The intensi-
fication can also be seen in the repetition of each prevalent symbol of the foregoing stanzas in the fourth: "Heil," "Baum," "Speer," "Schaft" and "Blut."

The results at which all of this aims are important. The repetition of "Gott" in the opening lines makes it seem as though he is the central figure whose death is somehow exemplary. The events surrounding Odin's death are depicted. Yet there is room for misunderstanding here. To the reader unfamiliar with Norse mythology the God mentioned could be Christ. Both deVries (p.499) and Ellis Davidson (p.144) point out that the similarity of Odin's death to that of Christ was once thought to show Christian influences.27

27Davidson at the end of her book makes the remark that the heathen accepting Christianity would find a great deal which was familiar to him. "The cycle of the Christian year was something to which he was already accustomed. Even the idea of God himself hanging upon a tree as a sacrifice was foreshadowed in the image of Odin upon Yggdrasil." (p.220).

Then deVries points out that the idea of a God as the sacrificial victim belongs as an essential element to older mystery cults. The fact remains that the similarity exists and the poet here takes advantage of both possibilities. The reader unversed in mythology would read "Christ" into the word "Gott" while those familiar with the story would know that the reference is to Odin. In either case, the "Gott" becomes the "hidden persuader" who is built into the poem in order to make the last stanza acceptable and
to point up and transfer to the flag those symbols associated with his death. What began in the poem as a description of Odin hanging upon a tree turns out in the last stanza to be the red swastika flag flying from a mast.

Whether the poet hopes to show a relationship between ancient mythology and the swastika flag—and one is reminded that the swastika has mythological roots—or whether he wishes to make the flag part of Nazi mythology, the effectiveness of the poem must have suffered because only a small, esoteric circle of Nazis were familiar enough with mythology to have understood it. Perhaps behind the writing of the poem lies a wish of the poet: that the people should be as familiar with the story of Odin as they were with the story of Golgatha. Be that as it may, the attempt to revive this mythology in an age when it was no longer understood and when the reason for its existence had long passed could only be sterile.
CHAPTER IV

DER BAUER

The previous chapters have shown that the people were constantly exhorted by the propaganda to ever-greater efforts; marches, singing and rallies contributed to an atmosphere and attitude of revolution and change. In the poetry dealing with the peasant and his life, however, exactly the opposite tendency is present. The peasant and his life are praised for peace, constancy and immutability. The coexistence of the puzzling and even contradictory attitude of the poets needs explaining, namely, how was it possible that the poets on the one hand extolled and held up as models the dynamic, warrior-like German while at the same time praising the unwavering steadfastness of the peasant and the slow organic change of the rural society. The reasons are economic and social as well as political and historical.

The agrarian elements and interests were treated no differently than any other strata of German society insofar as they too were subject—albeit under the guise of unity—to the Gleichschaltung of 4 April 1933. By January of the following year all agrarian organizations had been united under the leadership of R.W. Darre, Hitler's Secretary of Agriculture. He was largely responsible for the Reichserb-
hofgesetz of 29 September 1933. This law became the basis of agrarian policy and, to a great extent, was determined by the attitude of official Germany toward the peasant. It was the juridical expression of an underlying and very real social emotion.

The law in essence prevented the existing "Erbhöfe" from becoming ever smaller through inheritance.¹


But economic consolidation was only part of the reason for this law. K.D. Bracher, commenting on the legality of the law, makes the observation that it,

... klammerte sich an den antisemitisch begründeten Rassebegriff in extremer Weise und bezog einen Zusammenhang von "Blut und Boden," wie er sich in den Köpfen nationalsozialistischer Ideologen darstellte, in Recht und Gesetzgebung ein, für den es eine sachliche Begründung weder in allgemeiner politischer noch in wirtschaftlicher Hinsicht gab.²


Bracher then hastens to add that the agrarian calamity of the time provided ample reason for this intervention by the Nazis: farm recovery was as crucial an issue to the Third Reich as
was business recovery, indeed farm productivity remained an issue even after business had fully recovered. But not only that; by law the peasant was now more than just a farmer; he was bound to the soil he tilled as the farmer was not.3

3Scorn was often in fact directed toward the farmer who treated his land as a commodity to be bought and sold. "Zur Farmwirtschaft herabwürdigen" is a favorite phrase of Darre's. See Darre, op.cit., p.42ff. That the poets also made a clear distinction can be seen in the poem, "Bauerntestament":

Grund und Boden ist Ware nicht,  
die man wägt und schachert und münzt,  
die man vergibt um ein Linsengericht  
od für Geldgewinnst.

Grund und Boden ist Kampf und Schmerz,  
wie er selbst verwundet nur trägt,  
Grund und Boden ist wie ein Herz,  
das unter dem Kittel schlägt.

Karl von Berlepsch, in Rufe in das Reich, ed. Herbert Böhme (Berlin: Junge Generation Verlag, 1934), p.228.

The peasant was not the favorite of Nazi propaganda for economic reasons alone; economic considerations converged here with racial ideas and with the predominant sentiment and conviction that only in nature was man in his natural habitat. The peasant was healthy, thus superior, and conversely, the city was an unhealthy moral swamp. D. Schoenbaum remarks in his book that,

It [the agrarian state] could be rationalized strategically as a means of resisting Polish encroachment, sociologically as a basis of certain egalitarian virtues and a kind of social stability, economically as an alternative to imports and the loss of currency reserves. But for the true believer such rationalizations were unnecessary. For him,
Blut und Boden, the East German homestead, the superior virtues of rural life, were ends in themselves and approximations—if not realizations—of a state of nature. They appealed like little else to a certain kind of Nazi imagination, and like little else were maintained from the beginning of the Third Reich to the end.  


What Schoenbaum fails to say is that this attitude toward the peasant was neither the discovery nor the exclusive property of the Nazis; it was rooted in pre-Nazi and non-Nazi attitudes alike. We find the Nazis' attitude and outlook to be little different than that, for example, found in Meyers-Konversations-Lexikon of 1874:

...so ist der Stand des Bauern besonders auch darum so wichtig für den Staat, weil er einesteils als der zahlreichste und anderntheils als der, welcher durch einfache und gesunde, dem Wechsel verderblicher Moden und Modelaster nicht unterliegende Lebensweise der Natur noch am nächsten steht und ganz geeignet, bei richtiger Verfassung ein moralisch und physisch tüchtiges Element zur Wiederherstellung geschwächter nationaler Kraft und zur Verjüngung des alternden Staates zu bilden. Dazu kommt, dass der Bauer schwerfällig und hart von Begriff in politischen wie in anderen Dingen, dass er als ein Mann des Ererbten und Überlieferten, wie in wirtschaftlicher Beziehung, so auch in der Politik misstrauisch gegen Neuerung ist. So kommt es, dass der Bauernstand, wenn auch nicht eine konservative Partei, so doch eine konservative Macht bildet, dass er das rasche Durchschlagen revolutionärer Bewegungen hemmt, dass er ein Gegengewicht gegen vorschnelle Neuerung und allzu raschen Fortschritt bildet, und so im politischen Leben, wenn auch kein Stillstand, so doch eine gleichmässige und geregelte Entwicklung erzeugt.
The sentiments toward the peasant had a tradition and were still "in the air." Thus instead of being an antinomy, the Nazis' treatment of the peasant fits quite logically into the overall Nazi Weltanschauung.

Nazi poetry is marked by a sentimental glorification of the peasant and a strain of social resentment; one or the other is usually present, sometimes both. The search is for a set of values which are simple, usable and certain; the result is a distorted and mythicized depiction of the peasant. The opposite is also true: accompanying the praise for the simple peasant life is an anti-civilization tendency. No doubt this was most conspicuous in the novel dealing with the peasant, but traces of it can be found in the poetry as well:

Pflügt eure grossen Städte nieder!  
Dort stirbt das Leben an dem Stein.  
Baut euer Haus auf Ackern wieder,  
wo Saat und Ernte können sein.  
Auf Furchen müsst ihr euch begegnen:  
An jedem Anfang steht der Pflug.  
Wollt ihr die Erde nicht mehr segnen--  
ist euch ihr Segen schon genug?  
Ihr gebt euch mit der Frucht zufrieden,  
vergesst die Körner überm Brot--  
die Saat ist grösser als die Ernte,  
wie Leben stärker ist denn Tod.  
 Herrgott, bei dem die Saat auch Ernte,  
bei dem die Ernte gilt als Saat:  
gib deinem Volk, das nicht mehr lernte  
am Pflug zu stehn--den Bauernstaat.
Wir wollen dich in Mauern finden:
Du bist der Pflüger dieser Welt!
Die Völker deine Ernte binden,
die unter deine Sense fällt.
Herrgott, Du starker Ackerbruder,
Hörst Du sie rings nach Ernte schreien?
Wir stehn bereit an deinen Furchen--
Wir sind berufen: Saat zu sein.6


Baumann begins the poem with an outcry against the sterility of the city and soon turns to what he considers the positive ideal, the "Bauernstaat." He praises and holds up as a goal the archaic farmlife which had been a norm a century before. And this he proclaims to be the natural state of things.

The image of the plow goes through the poem, first as an instrument of destruction to plow under the cities, then as a starting point of all life, finally in reference to God as plowman. God fulfills the dual role of plowman and reaper; and he is called "Ackerbruder," which pulls him down into the life of the peasant. The initial indictment of city is strengthened, for the implication is that God is not to be found in the city but only in the country.

Baumann speaks at the beginning of the poem of the seed which is said to be greater than the harvest, just as life is greater than death. The imagery is hardly new; the seed is to be understood as potency, as the beginning which contains the possibility of dynamic growth, in contrast to the
harvest which is the conclusion or death.

The first twelve lines are addressed to the city people in the form of an exhortation. The lines beginning with "Herrgott" are a prayer in which a comparison is made between the plowman God and the peasant. The final two lines form the climax, for while the rest of the people bind the harvest cut by God, they, the peasants, are prepared to be the seed. Having previously established that the seed is greater than the harvest, the poet now proclaims that his people are "berufen" to be seed. Baumann in effect says that the "Schreier," by implication the city people, demand only the results of the harvest or the material gains; and this he previously equated with death. The peasant is prepared to be seed, that is, he offers to be "plowed under" in order to assure the continuity and betterment of the coming generations. By addressing himself directly to God, the poet seems bent on making the point that a close relationship exists between the peasant and God. This point will be developed later.

If city life was scorned and seen negatively, then in proportion the peasant and his way of life were stylized and idealized. That the peasant's life was hard was emphasized less than that it was healthy; that his existence depends upon shrewd planning, that indeed his life too is conditioned and regulated by economic considerations was conveniently overlooked. The peasant leads, so the poets, an idyllic
Dem Klang der Glocken lauscht an diesen Tagen das ganze Dorf, die Straßen liegen leer, und die Gehöfte, festlich aufgetragen, umschwingt Kastanienduft, besonnt und schwer.

Die langen Stunden stillveratmend gehn, den Glast des Friedens freudig zu verspinnen, am Pflug bleibt eine Schar von Gänsern stehn, als fragten sie, was sollen wir beginnen.

Die Tore ruhen breit und abgeschlossen, die Höfe schauen wohlgepflegt heraus, und Sonne spiegelt sich in ihren Gossen; das junge Volk trieb längst zum Dorf hinaus.

Das Vieh ist heimgekehrt von seiner Halde. Komm, suche mich, der Abend wächst vom Walde, und löscht das frohe Licht gelassen aus. Die Tiere schlafen schon, die Bauern sinnen und sitzen schmutzig bei den Bäuerinnen auf einer Bank bis in die Nacht vorm Haus.7

7Herbert Böhme, Des Blutes Gesang (München: Albert Langen, Georg Müller, 1934), p.34.

In addition to describing the stillness and serenity of peasant life, the poet praises it because it is in accord with the grand, yearly cycle of nature, changing to be sure, yet always moving forward. The peasant is in perfect harmony with nature and above all, his life is dedicated to work. The following poem by Will Vesper shows such a cycle more clearly. The peasant goes steadily about his work while others attempt to change the world. The repetitive effect of the last line in each stanza can hardly be overlooked:

Sie bauen den babylonischen Turm.
Sie reiten auf dem Meer im Sturm.
Sie fliegen übers Dach der Welt.
--Der Bauer drückt den Pflug ins Feld.
Sie säen Zukunft, Wort und Wind.
Ihr Herz ein goldnes Traumnetz spinnt.
Sie blasen auf dem Zauberhorn.
--Der Bauer wirft ins Feld das Korn.

Sie heben aus dem Abgrund Licht.
Sie wissen, was die Urzeit spricht.
Sie sind mit Gott im Rat allein.
--Der Bauer fährt den Weizen ein.

Ihr Räder-, Traum- und Zauberspiel,
wo treibt es her? Zu welchem Ziel?
Sie schauen nach dem Himmel stumm.
--Der Bauer reicht das Brot herum.

Ein Blut aus dunkler Wolke tropft.
Dumpf unterm Boden droht's und klopft.
"Herr, bleib bei uns mit deiner Gnade!"
--Der Bauer prüft die neue Saat.


The first three lines of each stanza form a contrast to the last lines. In the first three stanzas the activities of "civilization" are described; the forth stanza puts these pursuits to the question: "Wo treibt es her? Zu welchem Ziel?" In each stanza the recurring image of the peasant, who has his "roots in the soil," counters this way of life. The technological civilization and age, with its "Räder-, Traum- und Zauberspiel" has led nowhere and will lead, as the fifth stanza then hints, to a new "Götterdämmerung." The peasant in the meantime has gone about his yearly chores and now stands ready to begin the cycle once again.

The objection may be made that this poem does not show any specifically Nazi traits, that it could have been written
by any of the exponents of neo-romanticism. It has been included here because it is typical of the kind of poetry the Nazis fostered.

The attitude and outlook illustrated in the poem above contends that the unvarying state of existence is better and more natural than the active, that the peasant's unchanging way of life is far better than the progress man has made in science, industry or commerce. A strong positive accent is placed upon the more primitive life of the peasant. The city people are the slaves of their technology while the peasant is, as Darre was fond of saying, "König in seinem Bereich." ^

^R.W. Darre, op.cit., p.44.

When the poets praised and preached a return to the soil, they failed to see or they conveniently overlooked that man in nature must wage a continuous fight in order to subsist. Here if anywhere he is at the mercy of the elements. In the poet's hands it fell to the farmer's lot to revive the mythical concepts of a holy earth. The sterility of the city was opposed by the eternal fertility of mother earth. Exclusivity is involved here also: one cannot become a peasant; one must be born on the land:

Die Scholle duftet, feuchte Gare,
von Pflug und Egge aufgetan.
Sie ruft gelöst im Ring der Jahre,
sie hat geboren und empfah'n.
It is not a matter of learning to plow fields, not a question of economics or even of knowledge which can be acquired. By using the modal verbs "kann" and "darf," Gerda von Below emphasizes the necessity of being, as she says in the next line, "eingeweiht." Not only that: she describes these select people as "ewig," indicating that calling and not knowledge is important. Below places the two words together in the combination "ewig Eingeweihten," and in so doing attempts to bridge the gap between the present generation and the ancestors. And they in turn bring an element of fate, continuity and organic growth to the poem. Upon closer consideration, however, it will be seen that this organic growth is not growth at all but timeless repetition. Through his ancestors the progeny was to breathe the eternal:

Ehe Könige und Fürsten kamen
Waren wir schon da
Warfen in das Land die Samen
Das uns ackern sah.

Sind aus altem Gottes Stamme
Zeugend sein Geschlecht
Halten an des Herdes Flamme
Uralt ew'ges Recht.

Müssen einst ihm wiedergeben
Land das er betaut
Das in stetem Weitergeben
Uns ward anvertraut.

Des Geschlechtes lange Kette
Ur und Ende Er
Glieder wir auf seiner Stätte
In der Wiederkehr.\textsuperscript{11}


An eternal chain of being is presented here: God bestowed the land directly on the peasant who in turn will pass it on to his progeny; they will someday have to give it back to God.

With this as a background, the transfer from one generation to the next assumes the aspects of a ritual. The youth now is reminded of the seriousness, even sacredness, of the land he is about to receive; the similarity to the New Testament story of the use of the talents can hardly be overlooked:

Nimm den Pflug aus meinen Händen
Halt ihn fest und stark
Musst die Erde sorgsam wenden
Ist ja deine Mark

Halt das Haus in gutem Stande
Pferde Ochs und Kuh
Bist belehnt mit diesem Lande
Ahne schaut dir zu

Musst es einmal wiedergeben
So ist das Gebot
Wenig Zeit ist unser Leben
Ewig ist der Hof.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p.40. See also the poem by Volkmar Haselbach, "Sieh, dein Volk bestand," in \textit{Kampf und Glaube}, ed. Hein Stünke (Potsdam: Ludwig Voggenreiter Verlag, 1938), p.32.
The symbol of farming, the plowshare, is passed on with a reminder that, as a knight in the Middle Ages received a fief, so also the peasant has been "belehnt" by God, under whose commandment he lives. And in the background, as it were, the ancestor watches over the land which was his and for which the youth now is responsible.

Running through much of the poetry is the close relationship of the peasant to God:

Der Herrgott gibts Leben,
Wir geben das Brot,
Drum stehen wir Bauern
am nächsten bei Gott.13

13Hans Baumann, Wir...Feuer, p.20.

The peasant and his life are set apart as something sacred; in addition to his special relationship to God, however, he has a mystical-mythical connection to nature. With God on his side, his work is holy; with the forces of nature supporting him wind and weather are his companions:

In aller Frühe, schon im Dämmergrau
sah ich den Landmann schreiten hinterm Pflug
das Feld entlang und bis zum Abendtau.
Der lange Tag ist ihm nie lang genug.

Und heilig ist die Arbeit seiner Hand,
weil treu mit ihm die alten Götter sind,
die Ältesten von ewigem Bestand:
Die Mutter Erde, Sonne, Regen, Wind.

Wer ihrem Dienste fromm und streng sich weiht,
den segnen sie mit redlichem Gewinst.
Sie dulden keine freche Üppigkeit
und kein Geschwätz und hohles Hirngespinst.
Bei ihnen gilt nur Tat und fromm und still
ein Lauschen auf ihr Wandeln durch das Jahr.
Wer ihrem Dienste sich ergeben will
das Herz sei rein und dessen Stirne klar.

So wird ihm auch zuletzt der beste Lohn:
Die guten Geister treten in sein Haus.
An seinem Tische sitzen sie beim Schmaus
und sagen zu ihm Bruder, Freund und Sohn.


Two ideas stand out boldly: one is the stylized portrait of the peasant. He does not fight the elements but dedicates himself to them. He is placed in a surrounding where the forces of nature are on his side, where he is able to perceive their "Wandeln durch das Jahr." The other idea is concentrated in the third and fourth stanzas. The peasant can listen to the secret whispering of the deities Earth, Sun, Wind and Rain; they in turn bless his work. To serve them requires a pure heart and the reward is their friendship.

Another poem which at first glance seems to personify the land is H. Eckmann's "Lied vom Acker":

Dieser Acker war müde und steinig
und hatt' keine Lust mehr, war arm und leer,
denn sein Bauer war sich nie mit ihm einig,
das machte dem Acker das Leben schwer.

Aber nun ist ein neuer Bauer gekommen,
der hat Lust und Kraft zur Tat
und ihm als guter Kamerad
zuerst die Last der schweren Steine abgenommen.

Und hat ihm Kraft gegeben, dass er sich stärke,
und ein gutes Wort
und hat ihm Lust gegeben zu fröhlichem Werke,—
das merkte der Acker sofort.

Und nun will er wieder leben
und dankbar helfen, wo er nur kann.—
Er möchte seinem Bauern am liebsten die Hände geben,
das sieht man ihm an.15

15 In Gedichte des Volkes, p.246.

If the poem is read literally and accepted at face value, it soon becomes apparent that it is patent nonsense. If, however, one takes the "Acker" to be a metaphor for Germany and its people and "sein Bauer" to be the Weimar Republic, then the poem becomes a short sketch of recent German history. The first stanza is a criticism of the Weimar government: Germany is empty and tired because there is no contact or unity between the people and the government.

The new peasant, Hitler and his administration, comes to power and relieves the country of the "Last der schweren Steine," that is, of the burdensome conditions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. As a result, the country is now ready and eager to work once again; it is thankful and in harmony with the new peasant; and it is his hand they would like to shake.

Though clad in a rustic metaphor, the poem is purely political. It depicts Hitler as the peasant, Germany as his land and the new era in terms of the peasant-land relationship. The political and the rustic intersect here; the rustic is positively accentuated and used as a vehicle
for political ideas. And this indicates an approval on the metaphor level of the peasant and his way of life.

Contributing to the myth of the peasant is his freedom from economic purpose. The experience and techniques of modern agriculture are completely disregarded. It is not a question of whether the peasant understands his work, but that he recognizes the sanctity of an earth which has assumed a religious character. The land is often described as a relic or a sacred place and the peasant is in its service; as G. Schmückle's poem shows, the peasant has become a priest of the soil:

Aller Dinge Born
war ein Samenkorn!
Greif mit frommer Hand ins Volle,
Priester sei auf deiner Scholle,
barhaupt, Bauer, wirf dein Korn!

Sieh, jed' Körnlein will sein Grab,
will hinab.
Will hinab, eh' es zu spät,
dass er wieder aufersteht---
Barhaupt, Bauer, wirf ein Korn---

Was der Mutter je entspross,
fordert heim in ihren Schoss,
und am Ende in Gottes Namen,
ruth der Bauer selber---Amen---

Bis am Tag der letzten Mahd
still der grosse Schnitter naht.
Barhaupt, Bauer, wirf dein Korn!16


The peasant performs the ritual of sowing the seed; and from this seed all life is generated. The word "seed" has
an extended meaning in the second stanza, for it is said that it seeks its grave in order to arise again. Oblique as it may be, the reference is to Christology, to the Resurrection. The idea of a priest is, moreover, amplified by the poet's use of the words, "barhaupt, Bauer." It is a custom to walk uncovered in a holy place or church. If then the peasant walks uncovered, it indicates that he is performing a ritual in a sacred place where a direct relationship to God exists.

Another poem, entitled "Der Priester," was written by Baldur von Schirach:

Im Licht der Sonne sah ich einen schreiten, geboren aus dem Boden, den er trat. Jüngst sah ich ihn die Scholle hier bereiten, nun warf er Saat.

Den Glanz der Gottheit auf den hellen Haaren, gab er das Heilige aus seiner Hand. Und feierlich, wie schon vor tausend Jahren, sank seine Saat in das gepflügte Land.17


As in almost every poem of this kind, the repetitious, cyclic and eternal nature of the peasant stands in sharpest focus. The poet presents a stylized picture of the peasant who is unaffected by the living and working conditions of modern agriculture. He is shown working in the same way as his ancestors before him.

The peasant has become part of the landscape, for he is said to be born of the fertile womb of mother earth. And as
a priest distributes Holy Communion, so the peasant performs the same function for the land; thus the seed can be called "das Heilige." Once again, the stylized priestly function of a ritual is the central image of the poem.

The peasant thus occupies a unique position in the poetry as well as in the scheme of Nazi propaganda. That he was praised for constancy and organic growth while all others were urged to be revolutionary fits logically into the framework of Nazi thought. He was, as we have seen, considered a prototype: his close relationship to the soil was declared healthy and above all, natural.\footnote{It might be remarked here that in addition to all that has been said of the peasant, official Germany considered him the key factor in maintaining the physical as well as spiritual health of the nation. Darré said in defense of his Reichserbhofgesetz, for example, "Ohne dieses Bauernrecht wird es uns niemals gelingen, unser deutsches Volk körperlich und seelisch gesund zu erhalten, wird es uns niemals gelingen, unser Volkswachstum zu beleben." Darré, op.cit., p.45.}

Yet it must be evident from the foregoing that what was declared eminently natural was in fact an anachronism, a stylized ideal, which was at best the remnant of a by-gone age. It became a silent rejection of the modern era and its technology-oriented society. Because the peasant could communicate with the forces of nature, they became his partners and the land became eternally fertile. Through his ancestors he received his land directly from God; he had a tradition and a duty to pass this land on to his progeny. No city-dweller
could claim such a tradition. This made the peasant eternal and everlasting. It was a basic form of human existence. No matter that the word "eternal" asserts constancy behind a seemingly ever-moving world; no matter that it is absurd to lift one group out of humanity or society and proclaim it to be "eternal" above all the rest; it fell to the peasant to provide an example of stability. But this stability was based on a romanticized reality.
CHAPTER V

DIE ZEREMONIE

Reference has constantly been made in the foregoing chapters to the cult which surrounded both Hitler and those who gave their lives for the cause of National Socialism. And in every chapter it has been shown that the poets, parroting the Party line, made use of familiar Christian figures and symbols in order to turn well-known subconscious and emotional values to advantage for the cause the poets espoused. That in their hands these symbols and figures lost their familiar meanings or were so corrupted as to require new definitions using National Socialist points of reference has been shown numerous times.

We have further seen that the Nazis demanded submission, complete dedication and rabid enthusiasm on the part of the people, that is to say, they demanded a total commitment to their cause. Within a few years after their takeover, the Nazis had eliminated all competition, both in the political parties and in the public information media. But organized religion, of whatever confession, was not so easily eliminated. The Christian Churches had already existed for centuries; they had an established tradition and the forms of their rituals were closely identified with the style of life. True, the Nazi presented a Weltanschauung which often
ran at complete variance to that of the Christian Churches. That these Churches did not accept or readily acquiesce in Nazi teachings did not, however, mean that the Nazis were able to suppress them. The preoccupation with Christian symbols in the poetry shows that the Churches were a force which the Nazis knew had to be reckoned with. That the Nazis hoped someday to eliminate Christianity altogether and replace it with their own religion is now a matter of historical record.¹

¹See, for example, the small volume of aphorisms by Kurt Eggers, Die Geburt des Jahrtausends (Leipzig: Schwarzhäupter Verlag, 1942), p.33: Man kann nicht—wie man es heute hier und dort gern tut—an der Existenz des Kreuzes verübergehen. Es lässt sich nicht totschweigen, sein Schatten verdrängt nun einmal das Licht. Man muss sich vielmehr mit dem Kreuz auf Leben und Tod auseinandersetzen, um es durch die Ordnung des Gesetzes abzulösen.

In his Tischgespräche Hitler makes the remark, "Da alle Erschütterungen von Übel sind, erachte ich es für das Schönste, wenn wir die Einrichtung der Kirche allmählich durch eine geistige Aufklärung überwinden und ihren Tod schmerzlos machen könnten."

Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier, ed. by Percy Ernst Schramm (Stuttgart: Seewald Verlag, 1965), p.47.

Small wonder then, that the Nazis had to adopt a two-fold strategy: they tried to present their Weltanschauung as "proto-Christian," stemming from the Germanen, and they took over many of the symbols and rituals of the Christian Churches. The Nazis ultimately wanted the population to say what Hanns Johst said in addressing Hitler: "Meine Religion heisst Deutschland, meine Konfession Ihre SS!"²
The takeover of symbols and rituals was just a starting point. All existing Churches would in the future be remolded or taken over by the German National Church. Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi theoretician, leaves no doubt that the threat to the Churches was more than superficial:


Such a statement is already a tacit admission that Nazism was and intended to be more than just a political party. Evidence of this is abundant everywhere: one finds, for example, a set of commandments in the Organisationsbuch der NSDAP; that there should be ten is hardly a coincidence:

Der Führer hat immer recht! -- Verletze nie die Disziplin! Vergeude nie deine Zeit in Schwätzereien, in selbstgefühliger Kritik, sondern fasse an und schaffe!

Sei stolz, aber nicht dünkelshaft!

Das Programm sei dir Dogma; es fordert von dir äusserste Hingabe an die Bewegung!

Du bist Repräsentant der Partei, danach richte dein Betragen und Auftreten!

Treu und Selbstlosigkeit sei dir höchstes Gebot!

Übe treue Kameradschaft, dann bist du ein wahrer Sozialist!

Behandle deine Volksgenossen so, wie du behandelt zu werden wünschest!

Im Kampfe sei zäh und verschwiegen! Mut ist nicht Rüpelhaftigkeit!

Recht ist, was der Bewegung und damit Deutschland, d.h. deinem Volke nützt!
Handelst du nach diesen Geboten, dann bist du ein wahrer Kämpfer deines Führers! 

3As quoted in Josef Wulf, Die Bildenden Künste im Dritten Reich (Gütersloh: Sigbert Mohn Verlag, 1963), p.91.

In poetry too, the constant use of such words as "Gebet," "beten," "Glaube" etc. corroded their traditional meanings; they hint at a basically religious orientation in general. These poems, which in and of themselves constitute an integral part of the ersatz-religion, copies for the most part from the rituals, songs and prayers of the Churches, are of greatest importance; to show them and to illustrate their intentions will be the task of this chapter.

Compared to the gigantic, week-long celebrations of the Reichsparteitag, all other rallies past and present shrink into insignificance. The Reichsparteitag was held in September in Nuremberg, a city appropriate in historical significance, if not in size. In a poem entitled "Nürnberg 1927" Baldur von Schirach describes the ancient city and juxtaposes it with the brown-shirted followers of Hitler, the SA. But that is not enough: the illustrious son of the town, Albrecht Dürrer, must be present and lend his approval to the man who will not only lead, but "be" Germany; Hitler is juxtaposed with Dürrer: the name Dürrer is almost synonymous with Nuremberg; Hitler's name, the poet implies, will soon be
Wir stehen staunend in der alten Stadt,
die grässt uns heute wie ein Kind bekränzt. 
noch niemals hat 
So festlich sie und feierlich geglänzt.

Dies Heer der Braunen bietet ihr ein Bild 
Der Zeit, die einst aus tiefem Schlaf sie küsset. 
Aus Wolken lächelt Albrecht Dürer mild 
dem Manne zu, der morgen Deutschland ist.


While it was originally selected for its age and historical role as the annual meeting place, the new, over-dimension buildings and parade grounds soon made Nuremberg the citadel of National Socialism; and in this function the town's historical importance as the most outstanding Free Imperial City was soon overshadowed. Indeed, the antiquity and romance of the town itself were dwarfed by the enormity of the Luitpoldhain and the spectacular celebrations held there.


By 1938 Anacker could strike a completely different note; Nuremberg signified not the town but the Reichsparteitaggelände:

Nürnberg, du bist uns Kraftquelle Jahr für Jahr! 
Wenn wir im Kampfe ganz uns ausgegeben, 
bis nichts in uns als dumpfes Müßsein war, 
Machst du uns wieder straff und wach und klar, 
Und neu bereit zu kämpferischem Leben!
Wer's nie erfahren, fragt umsonst: warum?
Denn Wunder gibt's, die Worte nie erklären.
Sie bleiben Mythos and Mysterium,
Ein Volk--und erdverbundenes Heiligtum,
Das Strahlen eines höhern Lichts verklären.

Nürnberg, du lockst wie mächtiger Glocken Ton--
Drum wollen wir, die Jungen und die Alten,
Die ersten, die im Kampf ergrauten schon,
Gemeinsam mit der Zukunft der Nation
Nach Nürnberg immer wieder Wallfahrt halten!6

6Wir wachsen in das Reich hinein (München: Franz Eher Nachf., 1938), p.72.

The Reichsparteitag as Anacker describes it, was much more than just a political rally; and Nuremberg was now a holy shrine to which a yearly rejuvenating pilgrimage was made. When the people come to take part in the celebration, the rally serves as a "Kraftquell," renewing their energies to continue the "Kampf." They come exhausted from the struggle, there to be recharged, as it were, with enthusiasm.

As thousands of people joined in the parades and singing, the individual was to feel a sense of exahilation, of participation; the latter was of utmost importance. In the poem the poet himself stammers, for he cannot describe or answer the question, "warum?" to those who have never had the experience. It is a "Wunder," inexplicable, irrational and finally "Mythos and Mysterium." This shows only too well how lean the intellectual fare was and how much the Nazis relied on subjective feelings which they could arouse and direct. In the overwhelming, overorganized and technically perfect atmosphere of the Reichsparteitag, the
individual was to be swept along with the current, unable to resist. Everything contributed to this goal of emotional frenzy.

What Anacker describes and how he describes it is the key to the intent and purpose of the Reichsparteitag. It was the greatest of the Nazis' visual aids, complete with choreography and ritual; the amazing similarity of it to a church ceremony can hardly be overlooked. The Nazis created at Nuremberg a ceremony which was to parallel the Christian church ceremony. Anacker begins the third stanza by stating that Nuremberg is like a "mächtiger Glocken Ton." Bells are an integral part of a church, used principally to call the faithful to services; by analogy, Anacker suggests in this image what Nuremberg really means: "Wallfahrt," a yearly pilgrimage.

In another poem Anacker is more specific:

Scheinwerfer wölbten leuchtend Strahl bei Strahl
Um hunderttausende, die angetreten,
Bis zu den Sternen einen Kuppelsaal.
Da schauten Irrgegangene den Gral,
Und harte Herzen lernten wieder beten.

Und alle haben feierlich bekannt:
Wir wollen an den ewigen Herrgott glauben,
der den geliebten Führer uns gesandt,
Und so errettet unser Volk und Land—
Und nichts und niemand raubt uns diesen Glauben!

Und als verklungen war der letzte Ton,
Ging ein erschüttert Schluchzen durch die Reihen.
Was da geschehen war vor des Höchsten Thron,
Es war der Gottesdienst der Nation,
Die reinste und heiligste der Weihen.
The poet comes to the point in the last stanza. The hundred thousand who have come together are celebrating the "Gottesdienst der Nation." Anacker is not the only one who describes the setting and ceremony in religious terms. Ina Seidel, also describing a Reichsparteitag, calls the scene a "Lichtdom." Searchlight beacons form the "Pfeiler" of an open-air cathedral:

Der Lichtdom baut sich bläulich zu den Sternen,  
Und seine Pfeiler stehn rings um das Reich.  
In ihren Grenzen gibt es keine Fernen,  
Die Kuppel überwölbt uns alle gleich.  
Ihr sagt, es seien Vögel, die dort oben  
Taumelnd durchkreisen das erháb'ne Rund?  
Mich aber dänkt, es täten sich von droben  
Geheimnisvolle Zeugen schwebend kund—

Hier stehn wir alle einig um den Einen,  
Und dieser Eine ist des Volkes Herz.  
Das Herz, das wie die Quelle unter Steinen  
Standhielt dem tödlich starren Winterschmerz,  
Das aus der Erde schwerem Ackerschweigen  
Sich unermüdlich pochend aufgekämpft,  
Und das kein Spuk und kein Dämonenreigen  
Im Glüh'n und Glauben für den Sieg gedämpft.  

The poem brings in several elements present in any of the festivities held at Nuremberg. Overshadowing all else is the key role of Hitler himself. The poem mentions him as "den Einen"; he is the highpriest who beholds revelation
and celebrates at the Reichsparteitag the offerings of his people. In keeping with his role as celebrant, his speeches become "sermons":

Er predigt, bis verlorene Herzen pochen,
Von Schuld und Schmach und Not erlöst durch ihn.
Er droht nicht mit Gewehren und Granaten,
Bis ihm die Erde feig zu Füssen fällt.
Nein, die ihm dienen, ernten frei die Saaten.
Mit seinem Wort will er die Welt begnaden.
So schlägt sein starkes Herz im Herz der Welt.9

9Gerhard Schumann, Schau und Tat (München: Albert Langen, Georg Müller, 1938), p.73. It is hard to conceive how the poet in the third line can maintain that Hitler does not threaten. Certainly even in 1938 when the poem was written the Reichsparteitagreden of Hitler were if any belligerent and threatening.

Everything ultimately comes back and focuses on Hitler; he is described in terms which can only be religious: "predigt," "begnaden." Here not Germany alone is to be saved, but the whole world. One time Hitler is the high-priest, another the preacher;10

10See also Heinrich Anacker, Der Aufbau (München: Franz Eher Nachf., 1936), p.71., where Hitler is described as walking through his army in the following manner:

Und feierlich schreitet
Er schweigend durch seine braune Armee,
Als segne ein Priester
Die keimenden Saaten,
Als schreite ein Erntner
Durch fruchtende Flur . . .

the appellatives are endless and the reason is close at hand: Hitler is not merely one in whom trust is placed, he is the center of the faith:

Führe uns!
In deinen Händen
liegt das Schicksal von Millionen,
die in deinem Herzen wohnen,
denen du ein Glauben bist.—
Gott hat dir die Kraft gegeben,
einzig deinem Volk zu leben,
das für dich der Pulsschlag ist!11


In the poem cited above, Ina Seidel mentions the second element which is present in many poems: "Mich aber dänkt, es täten sich von droben/ Geheimnisvolle Zeugen schwebend kund."
These witnesses are the omnipresent force, an army of the dead which participated in every event. Of the highest rank were the martyrs of the Putsch, and in addition Horst Wessel and Leo Schlageter. The latter gave, as Hanns Johst says in the following, "Pflicht und Dienst und Ziel" to the movement:

Wir sind der Schritt
Der kommenden Zeit,
Wir Jungen.
Wer uns errang,
Hat Ewigkeit
Errungen:
Schlageter!

Er ging, er fiel!
Sein Tod hat unserm Leben
Pflicht, Dienst und Ziel
Gegeben:
Schlageter!

Wir stehn in seinem Zeichen
Zu Pflicht und Dienst und Ziel
Und schwören, stets zu gleichen
Ihm, der für Deutschland fiel:
Schlageter!12
The man who was later to be hailed as the greatest general of all times made his first stand in front of the Feldherrnhalle in Munich. Those who died there had, according to Nazi thinking, consecrated it by their death.13

Schlageter, however, was killed by the French for sabotage in the Rhineland. See Arthur Rosenberg, Entstehung und Geschichte der Weimarer Republik (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955), II, 134.

The altar in a church is a sacrificial table; it contains the relic of a saint; the shedding of blood at the Feldherrnhalle likewise qualified it as a Nazi altar:

Nicht in alten Bahnen ist Gott.
Du kannst ihn ahnen, wo die Fahnen
des Glaubens wehn: am Schafott.

Dort, wo die Teufel rufen:
"Schwör' ab, Hund, oder falle!"
Was sie auch Dome schufen,
uns sind Altar die Stufen
der Feldherrnhalle.14

Baldur von Schirach, Die Fahne der Verfolgten, p.32. Meter, rhythm and tone of the poem remind one of Rilke's Stundenbuch.

These sixteen men who gave the movement its martyrs, were constantly cited as examples of unselfish dedication and
devotion; and in any movement, the dead are strong persuaders. The present generation should glorify and remember them and, if called upon to do so, should follow their example:

Weil diese starben, steht für euch die Fahne. 
Erschauert ihr und beugt euch stumm hinab. 
Reisst sie ans Herz, dass sie euch brennend mahne: 
sie weht, weil einer sich zum Opfer gab.

Sie weht, weil immer wieder einer wild 
dem Sinkenden sie aus den Fäusten riss. 
O wie dies heranquellend herbe Bild 
uns stumm macht in das Schicksal und gewiss.

Ihr wahrt dies Bild den Kindern, die da kommen 
und reicht die heilige ewige Flamme fort. 
und lehret sie mit mutigen und frommen 
und festen Herzen dieses dunkle Wort:

Das Leben lebt, weil einer sich verschwendet, 
der mehr als sich die wehende Fahne liebt.— 
Das stürmisch Leben, welches niemals endet, 
solange einer sich zum Opfer gibt.15

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The central point can be gleaned from the initial line of the first and last stanzas: because the martyr gives up his life for us, we are enabled to live. The idea is patently borrowed from Christianity; but it is secularized. Christ's expiatory sacrifice is paralleled here by the martyr's death. Far greater, at least in number, than those who died in Munich were the soldiers who died in the First World War. We have said previously that the concepts "Vaterland" and "Deutschland" were the ultimate realities for which everything was done. As a result, those who died in the Putsch were said to be related to the war dead because they had fulfilled what
the latter had done. And both had died for Germany. A poem by Herbert Böhme, "Der 9. November," has the subtitle, "Die Toten des Sieges den Toten des Krieges." The martyrs of the movement address themselves to the war heroes; and Hitler stands between them as the fulfillment of both:

Wir gaben eurer Stimme Gewalt,
Verdun, Douaumont, Totenmann,
und Flammten die Berge an.

Die Fackel der Freiheit trugen wir
und schlugen sie in das Land
militär Bruderhand.

Du bist ihr Wille, wir sind dein Schwert,
Verdun, Douaumont, Totenmann,
so stürmen wir, des Sieges wert,
mit der Fahne zum Himmel hinan.

Vor der Feldherrnhalle standen wir
und fielen in deinem Namen,
denn alle Toten leben in dir,
und Deutschland muss siegen, Amen!16


Because it took place only once a year, the Reichsparteitag could not be the only source of ritual, enthusiasm and stimulation for the masses. Indeed, the Nazis were only too well aware that repetition is the source of habit and especially control. The Reichsparteitag was the "High Mass," the "heiligste der Weihen"; it was a celebration of staggering size where the participating masses were overwhelmed by
spectacle and lashed by verbal pyrotechnics. Yet the enthusiasm generated here could only last a short time. The religious atmosphere and ritual begun at the Reichsparteitag had to be continuously fortified, not only by the "Morgenfeier," which was usually held on Sunday mornings in competition with church services and which in time built up its own liturgy, but also by poetry written in the form of prayer and song.17

17At the "Morgenfeier" church songs were replaced by appropriate "Kampflieder," readings from Mein Kampf replaced the Gospel and a speech by a local official replaced the sermon.

The same phenomenon mentioned previously in connection with Hitler and the flag appears here again: far from being scorned, the symbols, rituals and ideas were borrowed from the Churches and used for the Nazi cause. Who, for example, could overlook the similarities to the Lord's prayer in the poem "Versuchung" which bears the qualifying subtitle, "Aus dem deutschen Vaterunser":

Vater, versuche uns
nicht mit Versöhnung!

Verhöhnung
war aller tückisch gemeinte
Friede bisher
und zum Fluche.
Siehe, du, schwer
drückt uns noch immer der Feinde
Gericht.

Versuche uns nicht! Amen.18
Martin Boykin, in Rufe in das Reich, p.233. See also the prayer-like poem of Gerda von Below, "An den Führer," ibid., p.121. Will Vesper's prayer in his Rufe der Zeit stresses dedication to truth:

Herrgott, gib uns zu aller Zeit
Männer, die lieber zu sterben bereit
und die lieber verbrennen,
as sich von der Wahrheit zu trennen,
und die das brauchen wie Atemluft,
dass sie einen Schuft
Auch Schuft nennen. (p.13.)

Who could also fail to see the blasphemy and insidious corruption of young minds in the simple prayer:

Hände falten, Köpfchen senken
Und an Adolf Hitler denken,
der uns Arbeit gibt und Brot,
und uns hilft aus aller Not.19


In addition to the feast days which the Party instituted, Christian holidays were also celebrated, albeit with a secularization typical of the Nazis. There are poems written on the occasion of a Christian festival, but the sentiment connected with it in the Christian world is hardly noticeable. The Nazis' intended dechristianization of Germany thus takes on a similar form as the christianization by English-Irish monks around the ninth century. The monks tried to eliminate heathen concepts and ideas, very often retaining the day of the heathen celebration; here the poet keeps the day of
Christian celebration, but stresses heathen virtues. Hein­rich Anacker's "SA Weihnacht" speaks of the outer paraphernalia of Christmas, of trees and candles, but in the same breath of murder and hate:

Kameraden, lasst uns Weihnacht feiern!
Stecht am Baum die goldnen Lichter an!
Lasst das Schicksal warten hinter Schleiern—
Keiner weiss es, wenn's ihn treffen kann . . .
Heute Freudenlicht,
Morgen Totenlicht—
Denn Rotmord geht um zur Weihnachtszeit!

Kameraden, lasst uns bei den Kerzen
Glaubensstark in wache Augen seh'n!
Deutschland wächst als Baum aus unsern Herzen—
Grünen wird er, wenn wir all vergehn . . .
Heute Freudenlicht,
Morgen Totenlicht—
Denn Rotmord geht um zur Weihnachtszeit!

Kameraden, lasst uns Lieder singen!
Eimal werden wir nach der langen Not
Wahren Friedens Christnachtglocken klingen,
Und der wilde Bruderhass verloht.
Heute Totenlicht,
Morgen Freudenlicht—
Keiner schändet mehr die Weihnachtszeit! 20

20 Kämpfen und Singen, p.69. In his Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts Rosenberg also makes the point that the Catholic Church took over the heathen feast days:

Die Festtage der christlichen Kirche aber traten an die gleichen Tage, wie das Urvolk sie feierte, ob dies nun das Fest der Fruchtbarkeitsgöttin Ostara war, das zum Auferstehungsfest, oder das Fest der Wintersonnenwende, das zum Geburtstag Jesu wurde. So ist die katholische Kirche in wesentlichen Formen Nordeuropas auch nordisch-rassisch bedingt. (p.167)

Just before Hitler came to power, his most active political opposition came from the Communists. Prior to the
election of 1933, Nazi SA terrorism reached its peak; since everything was at stake for them, the Communists were no less militant. Nazi propaganda was unrelentingly anti-Communist and its contentions were supported by bloodshed in the streets. To sway public opinion to their side, the Nazis focused the attention of the people on the dangerous enemy.

The poem above was written during this time. It hopes to win sympathy for the Nazi cause. "Rotmord" has become part of Christmas. It is a seemingly relentless force which does not respect the feast and allows no one else to celebrate it either. Implicit in the poem is the idea that the Nazis are waging a crusade, a holy war, against "Rotmord." They pose here as the protectors of Christian institutions. The repetition of the last three lines and the inversion in the last stanza describe the present celebration. When the "Rotmord" is over, no one will desecrate Christmas again and the "Freudenlicht" will reign.

Easter, the remembrance of the triumph over the death of Christ provides the author of the following poem with a metaphor for Germany's "resurrection":

Hört ihr die Osterglocken frohlocken?
So haben wir noch zu keiner Frist
Des Festes Sinn verstanden
Wie heute . . . Denn Deutschland selber ist
Leuchtend auferstanden.

Hört ihr die Osterglocken frohlocken?
Auch Deutschland erlitt sein Golgatha,
Und ward ans Kreuz geschlagen--
Nun hat das Bittre, das ihm geschah,
Herrliche Früchte getragen.
Hört ihr die Osterglocken frohlocken?
Auch Deutschland hatte der Mütter viel
Mit dem Schwert im blutenden Herzen—
Nun lässt sie das österlich-hohe Ziel
Vergessen alle Schmerzen.

Hört ihr die Osterglocken frohlocken?
Auch Deutschlands Grab ist heute leer:
Das Volk hat heimgefunden—
Und ward der Stein auch noch so schwer,
Es hat ihn überwunden.

Hört ihr die Osterglocken frohlocken?
So haben wir noch zu keiner Frist
Die Botschaft tief verstanden—
Denn Deutschland ist, wie der Heilige Christ,
Leuchtend auferstanden!\(^{21}\)

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\(^{21}\)Heinrich Anacker, *Kämpfen und Singen*, p.118.

The poem begins with a bland statement that the resurrection of Germany illustrates Christ's resurrection. The author then clarifies his point: the events in Christ's life are known and understood. "Golgatha," "Kreuz," "Mutter," "Schmerzen," "Grab," "Stein," "überwunden"—all words used in connection with Christ are now used with respect to Germany, and this in order to deify it. Having overcome death Germany is now "leuchtend auferstanden."

The poets not only used Christian feasts as a springboard for their own illustrations and interpretations; on occasion they used parts of well-known hymns and songs.

To the music of the Christmas hymn, "Es ist ein Reis entsprungen," Carl Maria Holzapfel adds his own words; instead of Christ, it is Hitler who, though never mentioned
by name, is called the "Licht":

Es ist ein Licht geboren,  
deutsch und von selt'ner Art!  
SA ist auserkoren,  
zu schirmen seine Fahrt!  
Es durch die Nacht zu führen,  
Dass ihm kein Leid geschieht  
durch Mord vor dunklen Türen  
wenne es durch Deutschland zieht!

Es klopft an alle Räume,  
begehrt in jedes Haus,  
Es strahlt durch Weihnachtsbäume  
heute die Botschaft aus:

Es ist ein Licht geboren,  
deutsch und von selt'ner Art!  
Wacht auf, schlafende Toren!  
Auf! Um den Baum geschert!  
Seht, wie er grünt am Holze,  
trotz Winter und trotz Not,  
wie er im Lichterstolze  
nicht Dunkel scheut und Tod!

Es ist ein Licht geboren,  
deutsch und von selt'ner Art!  
SA ist auserkoren,  
SA schirmt seine Fahrt!  

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The imagery of Christmas reminds one of Christ's birth and the message of salvation. Holzapfel uses it here, but in a Nazi context; the Christian redemption is perverted and replaced by the "Botschaft" of Hitler. The central, indeed the only, point the poet wants to emphasize is the messianic character of Hitler. That is as true for the foregoing as it is for the following verses by Fritz von Rabenau:

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,  
Alles schläft, einsam wacht  
Nur der Kanzler treuer Hut,
Wacht zu Deutschlands Gedeihen gut.
Immer für uns bedacht.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Adolf Hitler für Deutschlands Geschick,
Führt uns zur Grösse, zum Ruhm und zum Glück,
Gibt uns Deutschland die Macht.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Unser Führer für deutsches Land,
Von uns allen die Sorgen er bannt,
Dass die Sonne uns lacht. 23

Rabenau retains the first two lines of the well-known Christmas hymn and repeats them in all three stanzas. Appearing immediately after each refrain is a reference to Hitler, either by name or appellative. There is no progression, only a simple heaping of praises on Hitler. The poem no longer concerns itself with Christmas; it only provides another occasion for the adulation of the German "Messiah."
CONCLUSION

In behalf of nationalism and their own ideology the Nazi exploited the traditions of German history, idealizing a past which never existed as they presented it. They borrowed and altered freely, using whatever was most advantageous for the moment. They presented half-truths or erected verbal smoke-screens in order to hide the truth.

The Nazi poets sought examples in the past. They went back to the beginnings of German history, to the ancient Germanen, of whom little is known or written. The poets idealized these warriors who put honor, commitment to the feudal lord and "Haltung" before all else. To the new generation of 1933 the poets presented the old Germanic-heroic virtues as they are presented in the Nibelungenlied and the Hildebrandslied, offering thereby a new non-Christian set of moral values. Ideological content and metrical forms support each other: the attempt to infuse this "Reckenhaltung" is mirrored in the poetry by the frequent use of the sonnet form. Its rigidity of form was to indicate inner control.

In the poetry we have studied the enumerative technique is frequently used; figure is piled upon figure, rhetoric upon rhetoric; it is mere heaping for effect. And it is astonishing how often the same images and metaphors
are used in almost the same way by different authors. That
does not, however, necessarily indicate plagiarism; it does
indicate that the poets were unimaginative and that repe-
tition took the place of originality. Because of this lack
of content and originality, interpretation is neither possible
nor necessary; very often to quote a poem is all there is to
say about it.

The reader of these poems must gain one impression over-
whelming all others: in the center of everything stood Hitler.
Around him grew a cult and a myth. He contributed to this
himself; he used his dangerous talent for oratory to enhance
the myth of the charismatic aura which surrounded him. He
shouted at vast and delirious audiences; in their ovations he
saw the mandate of the people, here he found their approval.
It was enthusiasm voiced by crowds overcome and intoxicated
by enormous spectacle. But it was more than just spectacle:
it was part of a ritual. In his memoirs, *Ich glaubte an Hit-
ler*, Baldur von Schirach makes the following admission:

So habe ich aus ehrlicher Überzeugung an der Ent-
stehung jenes Führermythos mitgewirkt, für den das
deutsche Volk so empfänglich war. Diese grenzen-
lose, fast religiöse Verehrung . . . hat in Hitler
selbst den Glauben gefestigt, dass er mit der Vor-
sehung im Bunde sei. (p.160)

A myth, however, cannot exist without myth-makers; and
to these the poets must be counted, for they helped to give
the atmosphere surrounding Hitler a religious hue. They
tried to create the impression that Hitler had been sent
by God to save the nation and that he was infallible because he had divine sanction.

The praise of Hitler, the comparison of him to religious figures as well as the idea that he was the expression of the will of the people were only part of a far-reaching use of religious words and symbols. We have seen that Nazism was more than just a political party; it was a Weltanschauung which reached into and encompassed every segment of German life. Little was left untouched or unaffected. The Nazi state was able to control the individual; it could allow to be published only what helped it or concurred with its ideas. But it could not openly put Christianity aside. The Nazis had to proceed against Christianity much more cautiously; yet their aim was ultimately to replace it.

The poetry shows that the Nazis tried to undermine Christianity in several ways. They turned to the past and resurrected the medieval concepts of honor and the ideals of chivalry. Reaching back still further, they tried to revive ancient Germanic mythology. This northern mythology was praised as intrinsically German; in contrast, Christianity was depicted as having been imposed from the outside, thus not an organic part of German life. But the people had to be re-educated to this mythology because it was no longer part of modern life. It is one thing to remind a nation of its cultural heritage, quite another to try to superimpose an ancient mythology on
a modern society. What the Nazis praised as organic was no longer so. And their attempts to revive this mythology had to fail because it was sterile.

By reactivating this mythology the Nazis were establishing the rituals and ingredients which were to comprise their national German church. The Thingstätte, Morgenfeier and Sonnenwendfeier, taken over from pagan religion and ritual, became part of their secular religion. In addition, the Nazis imitated many of the rituals and symbols of Christianity, attempting thereby to make the eventual transition from Christianity to their secular religion more palatable. National Socialism regarded itself as a movement primarily concerned with the salvation of the German people. The use of the words "redeemer" and "deliverer" no longer apply only to Christ, but to Hitler as well. Time and again and in almost every chapter we have seen how the Nazis used words having religious connotations in a secular sense. The effect is that the word retains its original religious connotation but at the same time enhances the secular context in which it is used. It raises the secular into the established religious sphere.

It is apparent that the Nazis could not immediately destroy Christianity. Indeed, it was not in their interest to do so. What they did instead was to imitate or borrow what was useable, to take over words, symbols and rituals
and to transfer them to their own movement. That would in the end sufficiently corrode Christianity so that it could be replaced. The plan of redemption consisted in the gradual dethronement of Christianity so that the secular, political idea could enthrone itself.

In countless poems one finds lines ending with dashes. The English word does not sufficiently convey the meaning of the German, "Gedankenstriche," which indicates an open end where the reader is to fill in the gap. If there was anything that the Nazis did not want, it was logical thinking. And the poetry, often lacking in inner content and logic, did not want the reader to think either. The political poets appealed to the irrational propensities of man. This could not be done with subtle literary means; conviction and belief were the decisive prerequisites for these writers. Their poetic message was to be believed, not analysed and interpreted. Key words, emotionally loaded either by constant repetition or religious connotation, were to quicken the pulse and elicit a positive response. The rhythm too contributed its part: the steady stress and unstress gives order to movement and lulls the reader, causing him to surrender to the cadence. The rhythm indeed carries Nazi poetry; in this way the poems are unlike much of modern poetry which offers content without the help of metrical regularity.

The poets and propagandists spoke in half-truths in an attempt to camouflage the truth; they made analogies with the
truth and thereby sought to make the analogy seem formidable. The biblical passages, the comparisons of Hitler to Christ, the juxtapositions, allusions and similarities all seek to bring added stature to the movement. Yet an imitation remains, in the end, merely imitation.

Many of the poems were pure ideology, out of contact with reality and real events. This is as apparent in the poems concerning the romanticized existence of the peasant as it is in the poems about soldiers, where the heroism of war and death are glorified and the sufferings and privations are completely glossed over. But even this provides an important key: everything was subordinate to the triumph of an idea; and the individual human life counted for nothing.

What the Nazis professed to have was absolute truth: the Third Commandment, as we have seen, was "Das Programm sei die Dogma; es fordert von dir ‚übserste Hingabe an die Bewegung." Absolute truth allows for no modification by the addition of further facts or events; rather, as the word "Dogma" indicates, it must be simply believed. One cannot bring reason against it nor give reasons for it. Whoever then does not believe, whoever questions the myth, questions "truth" itself--one is reminded of the First Commandment of Nazism: "Der Führer hat immer recht . . . ."

A history of German literature which takes into account all of the writings of the Nazi era has not yet been written.
In spite of the inferiority of the literature, such a work should be written, for the danger of a new totalitarian regime in Germany has not been eliminated. Should such a regime begin to emerge, it could conceivably come from the left, in which case one suspects that the key-words and slogans would be of a different shade and orientation than in Nazi or even in pre-Nazi times. Or it could come from the right again. If so, there is good reason to believe that a large number of the central topics, themes and political key-words discussed here would reappear in literature. In either case, the literature would reflect the impending danger. It would therefore seem important and necessary to examine the Nazi literature with all of its socio-political ramifications, in the hope of arriving at a pathology of the evil. To such a comprehensive history of Nazi literature, the present author hopes to have contributed some modest spadework.
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