
Militarism and radical nationalism

Roger Chickering

In October 1906 Wilhelm Voigt, a petty criminal who had recently been released from prison, visited several used-clothes stores in Berlin in order to piece together the uniform of a captain in the Prussian army. Attired in it, he commandeered a squad of soldiers off the street and led them into the town hall of Köpenick, a suburban district of the capital, where he placed the mayor under military arrest and ordered the cashier to hand over nearly 4,000 Marks. Then he fled with the loot. The incident created a worldwide sensation. It subsequently provided the material for a famous play—and a movie adaptation—from the pen of Carl Zuckmayer; and to this day, the adventures of this ‘Captain of Köpenick’ stand as a symbol of the slavish deference to the military uniform that reigned in Imperial Germany.¹ However, as recent scholarship has made clear, the story of Wilhelm Voigt was more complicated and its implications more ambiguous. Much of the German uproar was critical not only of slavish deference to the uniform, but also of the police chicanery that had made Voigt’s plight desperate enough for him to pull the stunt. This chicanery figured large in the trial that followed his capture, and it led to a lenient sentence, as well as to a great deal of public sympathy for the defendant.²

The incident in Köpenick offers a good point to begin an analysis of both militarism and radical nationalism in Imperial Germany. Whatever else it revealed, Voigt’s feat did dramatize the power of the uniform—the immense influence and prestige that the army commanded in German politics and society. But the incident

revealed as well that military matters provided the occasion for loud criticism of public power in Germany. While the concept of militarism is central to the one dimension of the story, the growth of radical nationalism is inseparable from the other.

Soldiers and policy

The word 'militarism' is itself a product of the late nineteenth century. The foremost student of the problem, the historian Gerhard Ritter, offered a useful definition when he wrote of the 'exaggeration and overestimation' of the military in politics and society.³ While Ritter's own scholarship traced the heavy influence of soldiers in political councils everywhere in Europe in the era before the First World War, he concluded that the problem was nowhere as pronounced as in Imperial Germany. What appeared elsewhere in Europe as a 'necessary evil', he wrote, represented in Germany 'the nation's highest source of pride'.⁴

The reasons for this state of affairs were many and complex. They involved questions of Germany's political institutions, patterns of socio-economic growth, and the sorts of attitudes and habits of mind suggested in the word 'culture'. In all events, the fact that the German Empire was born on the battlefields of France in 1870–71—as the issue of one of the most splendid military campaigns ever fought—was of signal importance. The Franco-Prussian War certified the army as the agent and symbol of Germany's national destiny, and it ensured that soldiers would enjoy elite status in the state that emerged out of the conflict.

The constitution of the new state made this point immediately clear. It shielded the army from control or supervision by the civilian parliamentarians in the Reichstag.⁵ Matters of command, military planning, personnel, organization, training, and justice remained in practice the exclusive prerogatives of the army's commander-in-chief, the Prussian king (and German emperor). The powers of the Reichstag were limited to approving the military budget, which came to the attention of parliament every seven years (after 1893 every five years), and to interpollating the minister

of war, a soldier empowered to provide only narrow answers. The powers of this minister, who was technically a member of the Prussian government but became effectively a national official, were carefully circumscribed by the constitution; then, in the early 1880s, they were further whittled away in intrigue. The beneficiaries of the war minister's weakness were the Prussian General Staff and Military Cabinet—the latter of which oversaw questions of personnel in the army. As long as he served as the head of the government, Otto von Bismarck provided a degree of civilian oversight to the political ambitions of the military leadership, but his departure in 1890 removed this check. The direction of military affairs fell now to the new commander-in-chief, Kaiser William II, who was less alive to the perils of soldiers in politics, and less inclined or able to provide coordination among the civilian and military agencies of his government.

The result was the growing prominence of military (and naval) officers in the determination of German policy. Several notorious episodes marked the worsening of this problem. One involved a growing network of naval attachés, who were placed in German embassies abroad but circumvented the Foreign Office in Berlin as they reported directly back to Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, the chief of the Imperial Naval Office. During the delicate negotiations over an Anglo-German naval pact in 1912, which would have relieved the competition between the two countries to build large warships, Tirpitz used information supplied to him by the attaché in London to sabotage an agreement that the German civilian leadership was seeking. The most fateful instance of military policy-making occurred in connection with German planning for the war that eventually broke out in 1914. On the basis of strategic calculations alone, the chief of the General Staff, Alfred von Schlieffen, had determined that the German army should invade the Low Countries immediately upon the beginning of hostilities. This decision had far-reaching political implications, insofar as it would likely bring Great Britain into the war on the side of Germany's enemies. This likelihood did not perturb Schlieffen, in part because he had not bothered to consult the diplomats in the Foreign Office, who might have been more sensitive to the problem. In the event, these civilian officials registered no protest when they learned of the army's decision.

The militarization of culture

The fact that civilian leaders deferred in this way to the judgement of soldiers spoke to the broader, cultural dimensions of militarism in Imperial Germany. The political prominence of soldiers was due in large part to the fact that important segments of the civilian population agreed with the soldiers' view of the world. Militarism rested on a perception of international relations that emphasized the importance, desirability, or inevitability of violent conflict. This proposition ratified the elite roles of soldiers, who were the professional custodians of national security and technicians of violence—men who had been trained to recognize and defeat the threats that lurked in the international arena. The same proposition lent cultural weight to 'military virtues'—vigilance, discipline, obedience, and a salutary anxiety about the nation's many enemies. The circumstances of Imperial Germany's birth and the military traditions of its dominant state, Prussia, fed the power of this analysis of international affairs, as both factors underwrote the systematic militarization of national symbols in the new state. To the extent that there was a central national holiday in the German Empire, it was Sedan Day, the annual celebration on 2 September of the crushing German victory over the French army in the Battle of Sedan in 1870.⁶

The cultivation of the corresponding civic habits of mind took place in several institutional contexts. After unification, the educational systems remained within the jurisdiction of Prussia and Germany's other constituent states. Nevertheless, curricula and instruction—particularly in history, literature, geography, and civics (*Heimatkunde*)—quickly adjusted throughout the land to the lessons of unification. In schoolbooks in Saxony, Bavaria, and Baden, the performance of local troops in the war of 1870–71 became the regional mark of validation and belonging in the new imperial state.⁷ In these and other textbooks, the reigns of monarchs constituted the stuff of history, and battlefield triumphs were the measure of success.⁸ 'Is this a history book or a manual of war?' asked a critic upon reviewing a number of history

texts in circulation in 1904.⁹ In these and other texts, German unification stood as the climactic moment in a historical narrative whose nadir lay in the humiliation of the Prussian army at the hands of Napoleon in 1806. Military motifs also shaped the early encounters of schoolchildren with their language. One popular *Primer for Urban Children*, which was introduced into the schools in 1910, offered instruction in the alphabet by linking individual letters to military motifs. When pupils came to the letters 'P' and 'K', the list of associated objects that they encountered included 'powder' (*Pulver*), 'bullet' (*Kugel*), 'cannon' (*Kanone*), 'cannonier' (*Kanonier*), 'king' (*König*), 'arrow' (*Pfeil*), 'pistol' (*Pistole*), and 'cuirassier' (*Kürassier*).¹⁰

Primers were only one element in the comprehensive military ambiance that prevailed in the public schools. The harsh discipline here could appeal to military practices, as it sanctioned the corporal punishment of children. Whether in connection with the curriculum or in school celebrations, such as those on Sedan Day, song and play were likewise geared to military themes. The goal of patriotic celebrations in the schools, as one Prussian official explained in 1888, was to cultivate in children a 'powerful stimulus to emulate their fathers', the veterans of the war of 1870–71, who had 'risked everything to ensure the highest earthly blessings for their descendents'.¹¹ The songs best designed to provoke sentiments like these, counselled a school director in 1912 on the basis of his own experience, were set to march-time and had 'fresh patriotic and enthusiastic military content'.¹²

Boys were the principal objects of this pedagogy. Girls did not face the military service towards which much of the public school system was oriented. In theory, every German male was subject to this service, although for budgetary and other reasons only about half of each year's eligible conscripts were in fact called to the colours. Those who were inducted, normally at the age of twenty, spent the next three (after 1893, two) years of their lives in active service; thereafter they moved through a system of reserve levies that kept them liable for periodic training, as well as call-up, until they were forty-five. At every stage in this process, the training that they received at the hands of officers had to do not only with tactics and weaponry; it was political, too, and it dwelt on the virtues of obedience, sacrifice, loyalty, and hierarchical authority. Even after

the expiration of their formal military obligations, old soldiers were encouraged to join veterans' associations, which in 1913 comprised nearly three million members. The political attitudes of these veterans were of no less concern to the army than their continued camaraderie.¹³

In cities and towns throughout the land, the veterans' associations represented a central component in an organizational network that underpinned what one might call—because it so enjoyed official sanction—'statist' or 'official' militarism. These groups cultivated skills, activities, and attitudes that had immediate military relevance. Male glee clubs and societies of gymnasts and sharpshooters, all of whom boasted their collective discipline, joined veterans in this network.¹⁴ So did an assortment of women's groups, such as the Women's Patriotic Societies of the Red Cross, who supported the training of nurses for duty in wartime.¹⁵ A national system of paramilitary youth organizations, which the army collected during the final years of peace into the Young Germany League, made up still another component of the network.¹⁶

The militarized culture of patriotism found expression in local public festivities and at monuments like the *Hermannsdenkmal*, the shrine to the Germanic hero who in 9 AD had defeated the Roman legions in the Teutoburg Forest.¹⁷ This culture blossomed on national holidays and during the army's many colourful acts of self-display, which ranged from the spectacular army manoeuvres held each autumn to the parades of local garrisons. The 'Kaiser parade' in Berlin brought the rituals to fulfilment. 'How much might they wish to march along!' exclaimed an observer of the young people who watched one such parade in 1908. 'Not only the boys, but the girls too. How a day like this educates! In a couple of hours their hearts breathe in more enthusiasm and patriotism than in a hundred weeks of school.'¹⁸ Heinrich Mann's depiction of the same phenomenon in his novel, *The Loyal Subject*, suggested that the spectacle made a similar impression on adults like Diederich Hessling, the novel's protagonist. 'There on the horse rode Power', wrote Mann of Hessling's fictional encounter with the Kaiser in Berlin. 'The Power which transcends us and whose hoofs we kiss, the Power which is beyond the reach of hunger, spite and mockery! Against it we are impotent, for we all love it! We have

it in our blood, for in our blood is submission. We are an atom of that Power, a diminutive molecule of something it has given out.¹⁹

The appeal of these rituals was particularly strong among the Protestant middle classes; and the political colouration of organizations that anchored them was principally National Liberal. In these circles, the symbols of military power stood as bulwarks of social and political order in a young state, whose civic unity had not only been problematic from the start, but was quickly challenged by wrenching social and economic change during the 'second' industrial revolution at the end of the nineteenth century. The symbolic language of war provided orientation to urban social groups that felt most threatened in this era of socio-economic flux.

War and the discourse of politics

To judge from Heinrich Mann's novel and many other sources, the use of this language and the embrace of military values also had important effects on the behaviour of these social groups. Diederich Hessling has stood as a crown witness for the 'feudalization of the German bourgeoisie'. This term suggests the uncritical adoption by the Protestant bourgeoisie of the values, social practices, and political attitudes of the military aristocracy—hence the abandonment of its own legitimate aspirations to social and political hegemony in Imperial Germany. Additional indicators of the same process could be found in the pursuit of reserve-officers' commissions and aristocratic wives by male members of the German middle class, their grateful acceptance of patents of nobility or honorific titles from the government, and the avid duelling in which university fraternities engaged. The result of the duelling, wrote Hans-Ulrich Wehler in 1973, was 'to commit the sons of the bourgeoisie to a neo-aristocratic code of honour and behaviour' and to bind them to 'the pre-industrial aristocratic ruling groups'.²⁰ However, as Wehler himself has in the meantime conceded, to write of the feudalization of the German bourgeoisie raises as many problems as it resolves. To the extent that the term

implies an effective technique of social control, the submission by one class to the values of another, it oversimplifies the complex dynamics of militarism in Germany. In particular, it obscures the extent to which 'military values' and the spectre of violent struggle were pervasive features of political and social conflict within the German Empire.

The idea of 'feudalization' is most plausible as a description of political intent. It is difficult to deny that the army leadership hoped to inculcate military values generally, in the interests of social control and authoritarian rule. In this respect, the army served by design as the 'school of the nation'. The pupils who were thought to need this education the most were the sons of the German industrial working class, because they were increasingly tempted by ideological schooling of another kind.²¹ The ideology of German socialism was Marxist; it was itself riveted to conflict, but not the sort that the army emphasized. In the eyes of Germany's civilian and military leaders, the spectre of conflict at home—class war and social revolution—justified expanding the definition of the 'enemy' to include members of the Social Democratic Party (SPD); and against them the army mobilized. Common soldiers who were caught carrying socialist literature or frequenting socialist meetings or taverns were prosecuted and expelled from the army. The civic training carried out under the army's auspices not only featured the dangers that lurked in international affairs; it also emphasized the threats to Germany's security posed by a range of domestic enemies, in which socialists played the lead. The same themes pervaded the activities of the veterans' associations, from which the military authorities also sought to purge the socialists.

The results of this attempt to invoke military values in the campaign against the socialists were ambiguous and full of paradox. Despite the Social Democrats' role as the loudest critics of Germany's official militarism, many committed socialist workers recalled their military service in a favourable light; with no evident feelings of divided loyalty, they continued to hold the associated national symbols, such as the Kaiser and the army itself, in high regard.²² More remarkable, however, was Social Democracy's own militarization. As the growth of the socialist labour movement gained momentum after 1890 (when its legal banishment ended),

leaders of the movement could pride themselves on the discipline, organization, and resolve in their ranks. They also propagated their own vision of conflict, now in the name of a more just and equitable society. The popularity of martial images in this ‘army of workers’ was hardly inadvertent. Military accents seeped into the activities of Social Democratic voluntary associations—the myriad educational societies and recreational clubs that underpinned the ‘alternative culture’ of the socialist labour movement. The ‘Workers’ *Marseillaises*, which was regularly sung at socialist meetings of many descriptions, invoked the images of war:

It is a heavy fight [*Kampf*] that we are waging
 Countless are the troops of the enemy,
 Even if flames and danger
 May break loose over us,
 We do not count the number of enemies,
 Do not worry about danger,
 We follow the path of courage.²³

Festivals and parades were standard rituals in this milieu, too. Both were designed to display the militant solidarity of the working class. One festival of workers’ singing societies, which was held in Hamburg in 1905, offered a programme that was punctuated by cannon blasts and featured marches, ‘The Two Grenadiers’ (a ballad for baritone solo), a ‘character piece’ called ‘Reveille’, and a ‘Quadrille in the Military Style’.²⁴ A ‘mighty procession’ followed another socialist festival, this one in Gera in 1913. The parade featured, an observer wrote, ‘several hundred gymnasts, in matching uniforms’, who ‘marched briskly and carried a whole series of flags’.²⁵

Decades before the Social Democratic labour movement became the most traumatic symbol of social conflict, the militarization of domestic tensions had turned dramatic in another arena. The confessional conflict known as the *Kulturkampf* might be loosely translated as a ‘culture war’, for participants on both sides understood it in just this light, as they employed military metaphors to describe both themselves and their opponents.²⁶ In fact, it is difficult not to describe this conflict in the same metaphors today, for it featured a bitter assault by Protestant public authorities on the fortresses of Catholic power and identity during the

first decades of the new empire. Germany found itself, as one Protestant deputy in the Reichstag characterized the situation, ‘in a state of war with the Jesuit order’, because Jesuits posed ‘the most urgent, the most burning, the most immediate danger to the German Empire’.²⁷ Catholics found themselves branded generally as enemies of the state. So they mobilized in their own defense, and they too found a ready supply of martial tropes to guide them. The ‘embattled church’—wounded, bleeding, but disciplined under fire—became what Helmut Walser Smith has called the ‘root metaphor’ of German political Catholicism, in which motifs of war and martyrdom combined easily.²⁸ Although the *Kulturkampf* abated in the 1880s, confessional relations remained tense in Germany. Militant organizations on both sides, such as the Protestant League and the People’s Association for Catholic Germany, continued to deploy military imagery in public campaigns that broadened, after 1890, to encompass Social Democracy, the self-proclaimed foe of both Christian confessions. ‘We must build a well-trained, well-equipped *army* out of *Christian workers*’, as one Catholic explained. ‘Our clergy—the officers of the Catholic Church—must appear on the battleground, train the men for the struggle, and arm them!’²⁹

No less than international rivalries, domestic tensions were thus moulded in martial language.³⁰ Well beyond the circles that nurtured ‘official militarism’, images of battles, armies, enemies, victories, and treachery populated German political discourse, to the point that the idea of ‘militarism as political culture’ does not seem like an exaggeration.³¹ The popularity of social Darwinism both symptomized and fed this process, as existential struggle became a basic idiom for the proponents—and opponents—of causes across the political spectrum. Metaphors of military conflict pervaded discussions of confessional parity, class enmity, welfare legislation, free trade, agrarian resettlement, and land reclamation (which David Blackbourn has recently analyzed as the ‘conquest of nature’).³² Antisemitism, whose politicization began in earnest during the 1870s, was another symptom of domestic tensions that traded in these images.³³

The pervasiveness of military values in Imperial Germany thus symptomized more than the subjection of one class to the interests of another, or, to use the language once employed by East German

historians, a ‘class alliance of the Junkers and bourgeoisie’.³⁴ Military tropes governed the language of domestic politics broadly. Every political camp sought to deploy military values to its own advantage—to anchor what in German are called ‘*Herrschaftsansprüche*’, or claims to authority and power. In the calculus of official militarism, the deployment of military tropes was in fact supposed to anchor the authoritarian features of the German constitutional system—the claims of the monarch and the military aristocracy to authority, power, and precedence. Outside military circles, however, the same language was used to contest these claims. Moreover, within each political camp, the same language had important implications for questions of authority, power, and precedence. The appeal to military values encouraged the concentration of executive power and bureaucratic order in political organizations of all kinds, in the name of discipline and collective solidarity. In this respect, the widely remarked bureaucratization of Social Democracy and the ‘ultramontanzation’ of German Catholicism in the era of the *Kulturkampf* were dimensions of the same phenomenon. Finally, the currency of military values fortified patriarchal gender roles in every camp. Insofar as military tropes were coded male, they prescribed that authority in the public realm be vested in men. They fostered the exclusion of women from leadership roles and basic forms of political participation (such as voting).

Populist militarism

Thanks in no small part to the militarization of domestic conflict, the prospect of war took on growing urgency in the realm where it was most indigenous, in international affairs. The links between foreign and domestic policy were tight in Imperial Germany. Bismarck himself set the tone when, in 1875, he conjured up a war-scare with France as the German army’s budget navigated its way through the Reichstag. Bismarck’s decision in the 1880s to establish formal German protectorates in Africa and Asia reflected his calculation that colonial empire would provide an outlet for social and political tensions at home.³⁵ This project rested on

the hope that the spectre of international conflict (in this case, struggle for empire among the great powers) would generate consensus at home, or at least isolate the ‘enemies of the state’ like the socialists, who opposed imperial conquest. Bismarck’s successors followed the same logic with less caution. Bernhard von Bülow, who became foreign secretary in 1897 and chancellor three years later, was devoted to the principle that foreign policy could have agreeable effects on domestic politics. ‘The national moment must always be placed at the forefront by means of [pursuing] national goals,’ as he explained it, ‘so obligations to the nation do not cease to motivate, bind, and divide the parties.’³⁶ Bülow’s principal object in foreign policy was to enlarge Germany’s colonial empire—its ‘place in the sun’—and to this end he encouraged the militarization of international politics as he pushed for the construction of a German battle fleet, whose purpose was to challenge British hegemony on the seas.³⁷

Germany’s pursuit of ‘national goals’ significantly complicated the dynamics of domestic conflict at the end of the nineteenth century. It encouraged a new, aggressive species of patriotic society, which accepted the values and virtues signalled in official militarism, as well as the underlying belief in the inevitability or desirability of war. The new societies embraced these principles, however, with a fearless logic that bred a new, ‘populist’ variety of militarism and ultimately challenged Imperial Germany’s authoritarian constitutional structure. These patriotic societies embraced a new, ‘radical nationalism’, the proposition that the font of political power and authority lay not in the emperor and his ministers but instead in the ‘*Volk*’, the nation as a collective actor. The nationalists who congregated in these organizations invoked the symbols of the nation as they criticized public power and official policies, but they were not democrats; they did not believe that the genuine representatives of the nation were to be found in parliament.³⁸

Radical nationalist organizations represented a response to two problems that increasingly marked international tensions at the turn of the century. One was Germany’s growing involvement in imperial rivalries outside Europe. The German Colonial Society, which was born in 1887, and the German Navy League, which was founded eleven years later, mobilized popular support for

Germany's colonial empire, as well as for the warships that this empire appeared to require. In the meantime, several other patriotic societies had been founded to mobilize popular emotions in connection with another problem, which grew out of intensifying conflicts over language and culture on the European Continent.³⁹ These conflicts pitted communities of Germans against other ethnic groups throughout central and eastern Europe, particularly in the Habsburg monarchy. This order of conflict had an additional dimension, for ethnic tensions were rife within Imperial Germany too, particularly among Germans and the Polish, French, and Danish minorities that inhabited the peripheries of the country. The German School Association (which in 1908 became the Association for Germanism Abroad) was founded in 1881 in order to support German schools in Austria-Hungary, while the German Society for the Eastern Marches, which was established in 1894, promoted the settlement of Germans in eastern Prussia.⁴⁰

The challenge these organizations posed to the structure of power in Germany was not immediately apparent. Most of the patriotic societies took shape with encouragement not only from commercial and industrial interest groups, but also from the German government. The German Navy League, to cite the most dramatic instance, expanded to over a million members on the strength of industrial subsidies and massive support from public officials around the country. The imperial government rewarded the German Colonial Society for its support with lucrative concessions and other financial inducements.⁴¹ Because of the dependencies created in this way, a condominium emerged between the government and most of these organizations, whose mobilization of opinion in favour of official policies was calculated to bring popular pressure to bear whenever so-called 'national issues'—such as the navy, the colonies, or the rights of Poles to use their own language—came before the Reichstag. This practice has led some historians to write of 'manipulation' of national opinion from the top down, or the government's 'mobilization of plebiscitary approval' for its own policies.⁴²

Many of these groups continued to provide the government with welcome support, so this view is plausible; but it is too easy. Both the programmes and the political activities of the patriotic societies contained the seeds of conflict with the government.

The aggressive nationalism that they espoused was different in fundamental respects from the state-centred nationalism (*Staatsnationalismus*) that Bismarck had cultivated in the early years of the empire. To advocate colonial empire and to provide succour to German communities elsewhere in Europe both implied the insufficiency of the Reich as it had been constituted in 1871. Support for the communities of ethnic Germans was particularly problematic, insofar as it rested on an expanded, ethnic or 'völkisch' definition of the 'German nation', which included all people who spoke German—wherever in Europe (or the world) they lived. Finally, the mobilization of popular sentiment in support of 'national' policies presupposed that the will of 'the nation', however defined, could not be ignored in the formulation of these policies.

The founding of another patriotic society in 1891, the Pan-German League, laid bare all these problems.⁴³ This organization grew out of a rebellion among members of the Colonial Society, who were furious over the German government's signing away large tracts of east African territory to Great Britain in exchange for the island of Heligoland in the North Sea. Frustrations of several kinds thereupon found a home in the Pan-German League, whose broad-ranging programme called not only for a more expansive colonial policy, but also for 'the support of German ethnic [*deutsch-völkisch*] aspirations in all countries in which members of our *Volk* have to fight for the affirmation of their distinctiveness'.⁴⁴ Over the next decade, as the League grew to over 20,000 members (many of them simultaneously members of other patriotic societies), it became the spearhead of a 'national opposition' to the German government. The militancy of its criticism bred a succession of clashes with Chancellor Bülow over colonial policy, ethnic struggle in Austria, the pace of naval building, and German support for the Boers in southern Africa (whom the Pan-Germans regarded as an integral part of German '*Volkstum*').

The activism of the Pan-German League has suggested another reading of the politics of radical nationalism in Imperial Germany. In this view, the mobilization of radical-nationalist opinion proceeded less from the top down than from the bottom up. It resulted, as Geoff Eley has argued, from the 'widespread self-motivation of the subordinate classes', a revolt of the petty-bourgeois 'outsiders' in a political system that had been dominated by men of property

and education.⁴⁵ Radical nationalism's challenge to the established structures of power was thus related generically to the mass mobilization of Catholics and socialist workers.

This view is also too easy. The leaders and members of the patriotic societies were not outsiders. They were Protestant men of property and education. A majority of the leaders in all these organizations had trained at Germany's universities. Of these leaders, a remarkable proportion (76 per cent of the Colonial Society, 75 per cent of the Eastern Marches Society, 72 per cent of the Navy League, and 54 per cent of the Pan-German League) were themselves publicly employed—in the secondary schools or the higher reaches of local and state bureaucracies.⁴⁶ They were notables (*Honoratioren*), who played leading roles in local politics. Their position in local hierarchies of power and prestige was the source of the images of peril and conflict that permeated their programmes and ideologies. As an academically educated and cultivated elite, these men held themselves to be custodians of German *Kultur* and *Bildung* (self-cultivation); as public officials, they held themselves to be custodians of German authority. They were, as a consequence, sensitive barometers of threats to German culture and authority wherever these threats arose, whether in Germany itself, at the hands of Catholic Poles or atheistic socialists, or in the broader world, at the hands of Czechs in Bohemia, black Africans, or British imperialists. Radical nationalism represented the ideological vehicle of their claims to power.

The patriotic societies quickly became pillars in the broader nationalist milieu in cities and towns throughout the land, particularly in Protestant northern and central Germany—in places like Netzig, the fictional setting for Heinrich Mann's novel. The political geography of radical nationalism resembled that of the National Liberal Party, whose local committees also populated this milieu and were run by many of the same men who led the patriotic societies.⁴⁷ At the same time, the nationalist milieu expanded, drawing from an assortment of other Protestant middle-class organizations, which were linked primarily by their belief in the German *Volk* as a central reference point—an ethnic body that transcended the political boundaries of the German Empire. In one way or another, most of these groups regarded themselves as 'reformist'; but in many cases the reformist impulse was politically

ambivalent, as likely to be pacifist as nationalist, because it was directed in the main toward lifestyles. Conservationists, preservationists, eugenicists, naturopaths, Nordic enthusiasts, nudists, anti-vivisectionists, and vegetarians could be found in their ranks.⁴⁸ So, however, could arrant racists whose politics were not ambivalent. These men believed that the *Volk* was an organic entity whose health required both territorial expansion and the forcible elimination of foreign impurities, like Jews.

The translation of racism into radical nationalism, the synthesis of biological and martial motifs as a guide to political action, became increasingly marked after the turn of the twentieth century, as the Pan-German League became both its leading proponent and central vehicle. A book published in 1912 by the leader of this organization, Heinrich Class, carried the most chilling statement of its ideological tenets. It identified the Jews as the source of all Germany's domestic ills. For Class, Jews provided the bond among every subversive force in Imperial Germany, from socialism and Catholicism to Poles, Danes, and people who spoke French in Alsace. The book accordingly advocated depriving Jews of their civil rights and outlawing the Social Democrats. To rally national opinion, it called for an 'active' and 'aggressive' foreign policy, as well as 'national rallies' and 'patriotic festivals for the people'. It proposed the refashioning of Germany's suffrage laws in order to produce a 'parliament of the best', which would be dominated by just the kind of propertied and educated men who ran the Pan-German League and other patriotic societies.⁴⁹

The national opposition and the military

Class's book was entitled *If I Were the Kaiser*. The title captured one of the most provocative features of radical nationalism. Its protagonists had begun to question the authority and capacity of the Kaiser and his government to defend the national interest; they now portrayed themselves as the true representatives of the *Volk*, the chosen custodians of the national symbols. Class's provocation formalized claims that had been more broadly staked since the turn of the century, as the 'national opposition' grew in

size and confidence. Of particular importance were two dramatic confrontations between patriotic societies and the government over military issues. The army and navy, the two central symbols of German militarism and nationalism, had now become the objects of conflict among their leading champions.

The first confrontation originated in the Navy League.⁵⁰ Admiral Tirpitz's plans for the phased building of the German battle fleet rested on careful political calculations, which aimed from 1897 onwards to secure a parliamentary majority at home and to minimize anxieties among the other naval powers abroad, particularly the British, as the German fleet took shape. These calculations governed the role that the Navy League's agitation was supposed to play, but after 1905 they encountered growing resistance among a group of radicals who had gained control of the organization's leadership and who began to argue that the darkening international situation mandated the more rapid construction of German warships. Accordingly, the charges that began to emerge from the Navy League insisted that Tirpitz's plans were inadequate to the military challenges that faced the country; they also implied that the country's naval leadership was not competent to judge these challenges. The crisis festered for several years, before Tirpitz persuaded the Kaiser and the chancellor that the position of the Navy League's leadership rested on untenable assumptions and posed a challenge to the government's authority in the most essential matters. Resolution of the crisis came in 1908 with the intervention of the Kaiser himself, who forced the resignation of the radical leaders in the Navy League by withdrawing his brother's protectorship over the organization—a dramatic gesture that threatened the removal of bureaucratic patronage from the organization.

Many of the Navy League's leaders then migrated to the Pan-German League, where they prepared an even more troubling challenge to the government's prerogatives. This one involved the army. It was triggered in the aftermath of the Second Moroccan Crisis, which had brought the European powers to the verge of war in the summer of 1911. In Germany the diplomatic crisis mobilized the Pan-German League and other patriotic societies, now in the name of expanding and modernizing the army in light of an imminent war. To achieve this end, leaders of the League oversaw the

founding of still another patriotic organization, the German Army League. This group, which remained formally independent of the Pan-Germans, began its activity early in 1912, just as the spectacular victory of the Social Democrats in parliamentary elections brought an additional shock to nationalist opinion.⁵¹ Within months, the Army League had grown to over 100,000 members—a figure that reflected the forging of alliances among existing patriotic societies in some 300 localities around the country.

The demands of this organization for expanding the army far exceeded what the War Ministry thought prudent. In this ministry, political calculations rested on the central social corollary of official militarism—the belief that the army not only fought wars, but also served as the prop of domestic order and authority. This vision of the army's role prescribed limitations on its size, lest commoners take over the officer corps and socialist workers inundate the ranks. Leaders of the Army League, by contrast, recognized only the technical imperatives of war, which, they argued, mandated the uncompromising build-up of the army to the limits of Germany's demographic and financial capacities. The wide ideological gulf thus opened between the two poles of what the historian Stig Förster has called Germany's 'double militarism'—the official one and its populist variant. As it had earlier during the conflict over the navy, the central question again had to do with where the authority to judge the country's military requirements ultimately resided.⁵²

The leaders of the Army League, who included prominent retired generals, insisted that this authority lay in the popular will, which their organization embodied. 'The pressure of opinion', they insisted, had 'in the final analysis to compel even the parties and the government to do their duty'.⁵³ The immediate issue became an Army Bill that the government laid before the Reichstag in 1912. The Army League's popular campaign featured an assault on the insufficiency of this legislation, as well as on the judgement and competence of the chancellor and war minister who had framed it. Passage of the bill later in 1912 only fed demands for further increases in the army. The energy of the popular agitation gained force as the Army League grew to almost 300,000 members and acquired allies in high places. The most important of these allies were soldiers in the General Staff, who themselves now

began to pressurize the chancellor and war minister into a much greater expansion of the army. In 1913 these soldiers and the Army League got their way, as the Reichstag passed a massive new Army Bill. However, its price tag laid bare the paradox of German militarism.⁵⁴ Expanding the German army now fed domestic strife. It required the introduction of direct federal taxes. These taxes were bitterly opposed by the Conservative representatives of the country's 'military class'—and endorsed by the socialist 'enemies of the state'.

Shortly thereafter, war broke out. It provided the scenario for a final confrontation between the government and the radical nationalists. For a brief time the experience of war appeared to reward all those who had long claimed that war would forge domestic unity in Germany. Within months, however, domestic accord had broken down, owing in no small part to a new debate over the government's competence and authority in basic matters of military security. This debate had to do with Germany's foreign-policy aims during the war and the question of who was entitled to determine them. Leaders of the Pan-German League and other patriotic societies were prominent figures in a variety of committees that submitted angry petitions to the government, insisting that German security required extravagant annexations in the territories of the country's enemies. In their agitation these nationalists also calculated that, as one of them observed, the 'distraction' offered by such aggrandizement would help 'avoid internal difficulties'.⁵⁵ Regardless of his personal views, which have been the subject of lively debate among historians, Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg could not publicly embrace these goals lest he alienate the Social Democrats, whose continuing support for the war was vital. In 1917 the left-wing parties in the Reichstag (including the socialists) repudiated aggressive war aims and passed a resolution that called for a negotiated peace with no annexations. The so-called Peace Resolution called forth a final, furious reaction from the nationalists, who, again with the connivance of the General Staff, founded the German Fatherland Party in the autumn of 1917. Now the object of popular agitation was a 'victorious peace', by which the nationalists meant a programme of far-flung annexations. The Fatherland Party looked at its core much like the Army League, only much larger; it counted more

than a million members. This organization comprised an alliance of the familiar players, and it signified at once the culmination and last gasp of the radical nationalism of the Wilhelmine era. The Fatherland Party represented, as its historian has written, an outgrowth of the 'classic politics of notables in the German Empire'.⁵⁶

The outcome of the First World War sealed the fate of this kind of nationalist politics and its leaders. While the radical nationalists who came to prominence during the Weimar Republic also embraced military values in their assault on the country's constituted leadership, they represented a new breed, socially and politically. But the soil in which their ideas took root had been well tilled.

¹ Carl Zuckmayer, *Der Hauptmann von Köpenick. Ein deutsches Märchen in drei Akten* (Berlin, 1930); cf. Wilfried von Bredow, *Moderner Militarismus. Analyse und Kritik* (Stuttgart, 1983), 24–7.

² Benjamin Carter Hett, *Death in the Tiergarten: Murder and Criminal Justice in the Kaiser's Berlin* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 182–91.

³ Gerhard Ritter, *Staatskunst und Kriegshandwerk. Das Problem des 'Militarismus' in Deutschland*, 4 vols (Munich, 1956–68), i. 13; cf. Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism, Civilian and Military* (New York, 1959); Volker R. Berghahn, *Militarism: The History of an International Debate, 1861–1979* (Cambridge, 1981); Bredow, *Moderner Militarismus*, 9–22.

⁴ Ritter, *Staatskunst*, ii. 117.

⁵ See *ibid.* 148–70; Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640–1945* (New York and Oxford, 1956), 217–98.

⁶ Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1997), 52–60.

⁷ Siegfried Weichlein, *Nation und Region. Integrationsprozesse im Bismarckreich* (Düsseldorf, 2004), 332–3.

⁸ See Horst Gies, 'Geschichtsunterricht und nationalen Identitätsbildung in der Volksschule des Wilhelminischen Kaiserreichs', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 57 (2006), 492–509; Horst Schallenberg, *Untersuchungen zum Geschichtsbild der Wilhelminischen Ära und der Weimarer Zeit. Eine vergleichende Schulbuchanalyse deutscher Schulgeschichtsbücher aus der Zeit von 1888 bis 1933* (Ratingen, 1964); Marieluise Christadler, *Kriegserziehung im Jugendbuch. Literarische Mobilmachung in Deutschland und Frankreich vor 1914* (Frankfurt a.M., 1979).

⁹ Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and a World without War: The Peace Movement and German Society, 1892–1914* (Princeton, 1975), 171.

¹⁰ Heinz Lemmermann, *Kriegserziehung im Kaiserreich. Studien zur politischen Funktion von Schule und Schulmusik 1890–1918*, 2 vols (Liliental bei Bremen, 1984), ii. 671.

¹¹ *Ibid.* ii. 745. ¹² *Ibid.* ii. 797.

¹³ Thomas Rohkrämer, *Der Militarismus der 'kleinen Leute'. Die Kriegervereine im deutschen Kaiserreich 1871–1914* (Munich, 1990).

¹⁴ On this tradition see Dieter Düding, *Organisierter gesellschaftlicher Nationalismus in Deutschland (1808–1847)* (Munich, 1984).

¹⁵ Jean H. Quataert, *Staging Philanthropy: Patriotic Women and the National Imagination in Dynastic Germany, 1813–1916* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2001).

¹⁶ Derek Linton, *Who Has the Youth, Has the Future: The Campaign to Save Young Workers in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge, 1991).

¹⁷ Charlotte Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum. Nationale Symbole in Deutschland und Frankreich im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1995).

¹⁸ Jakob Vogel, *Nationen im Gleichschritt. Der Kult der 'Nation in Waffen' in Deutschland und Frankreich, 1871–1914* (Göttingen, 1997), 77.

¹⁹ Heinrich Mann, *The Loyal Subject* (London, 1998), 44. This is but one of several unhappy translations of the title of Mann's novel, *Der Untertan* (Berlin, 1918).

²⁰ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871–1918* (Göttingen, 1973), 137; cf. Kevin McAleer, *Dueling: The Cult of Honor in Fin-de-Siècle Germany* (Princeton, 1994); and the most relentless statement of this argument in Arno Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York, 1981).

²¹ Reinhard Höhn, *Die Armee als Erziehungsschule der Nation* (Bad Harzburg, 1963).

²² Nicholas Stargardt, *The German Idea of Militarism: Radical and Socialist Critics, 1866–1914* (Cambridge, 1994).

²³ Vernon Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (New York and Oxford, 1985), 113.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 214–19. ²⁵ *Ibid.* 90–1.

²⁶ Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (eds), *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 2003).

²⁷ Margaret Lavinia Anderson, *Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany* (Princeton, 2000), 98. See also Michael B. Gross, *The War against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2004).

²⁸ Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870–1914* (Princeton, 1995), 46–7.

²⁹ Raymond Chien Sun, *Before the Enemy Is within Our Walls: Catholic Workers in Cologne, 1885–1912. A Social, Cultural and Political History* (Boston, 1999), 69 (italics in the original). See also Róisín Healy, *The Jesuit Specter in Imperial Germany* (Boston and Leiden, 2003).

³⁰ See Michael Jeissmann, *Das Vaterland der Feinde. Studien zum nationalen Feindbegriff und Selbstverständnis in Deutschland und Frankreich* (Stuttgart, 1992), 241–94.

³¹ Bredow, *Militarismus*, 38–41. See also Benjamin Ziemann, 'Sozialmilitarismus und militärische Sozialisation im deutschen Kaiserreich 1870–1914. Desiderate und Perspektiven in der Revision eines Geschichtsbildes', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 53 (2002), 148–64.

³² David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York and London, 2006). See also Martin Baumeister, *Parität und katholische Inferiorität. Untersuchungen zur Stellung des Katholizismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Paderborn, 1987); Alfred Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860–1914* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1981); and (with care) Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York, 2004).

³³ See Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge, 2006), esp. 67–158.

³⁴ Helmut Otto, 'Der imperialistische deutsche Militarismus am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts', in Karl Nuss et al. (eds), *Der deutsche Militarismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Studien—Probleme—Analysen* (Berlin-GDR, 1980), 103.

³⁵ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Cologne and Berlin, 1969).

³⁶ Volker R. Berghahn, *Der Tirpitz-Plan. Genesis und Verfall einer innenpolitischen Krisenstrategie unter Wilhelm II.* (Düsseldorf, 1971), 148.

³⁷ *Ibid.*; cf. Michael Epkenhans, *Die wilhelminische Flottenrüstung, 1908–1914. Weltmachtstreben, industrieller Fortschritt, soziale Integration* (Munich, 1991); Rolf Hobson, *Imperialism at Sea: Naval Strategic Thought, the Ideology of Sea Power and the Tirpitz-Plan, 1875–1914* (Boston and Leiden, 2002). One product of Bülow's efforts was to draw the British increasingly into the camp of Germany's enemies and to lend growing plausibility in Germany to the metaphor of 'encirclement' (*Einkreisung*) as a guide to this country's diplomatic plight. The metaphor derived originally from hunting, but its military overtones were clear. See Ute Daniel, 'Einkreisung und Kaiserdämmerung. Ein Versuch, der Kulturgeschichte der Politik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg auf die Spur zu Kommen', in Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (ed.), *Was heisst Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?* (Berlin, 2005), 279–329.

³⁸ See Lee McGowan, *The Radical Right in Germany: 1870 to the Present* (London, 2002), 16–42.

³⁹ Richard Victor Pierard, 'The German Colonial Society, 1882–1914' (Ph.D. diss., State University of Iowa, 1964); Geoff Eley, 'The German Navy League in German Politics, 1898–1914' (Ph.D. diss., University of Sussex, 1974).

⁴⁰ Gerhard Weidenfeller, *VDA. Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland. Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein (1881–1914). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Nationalismus und Imperialismus im Kaiserreich* (Berne and Frankfurt a.M., 1976); Adam Galos et al., *Die Hakatisten. Der Deutsche Ostmarken-Verein (1893–1934). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Ostpolitik des deutschen Imperialismus* (Berlin, 1966).

⁴¹ Roger Chickering, 'Patriotic Societies and German Foreign Policy, 1890–1914', *International History Review*, 1 (1979), 470–89.

⁴² Wehler, *Kaiserreich*, 92–3.

⁴³ The literature on this organization is large. See Rainer Hering, *Konstruierte Nation. Der Alldeutsche Verband 1890 bis 1939* (Hamburg, 2003); Michel Korinman, *Deutschland über alles. Le pangermanisme 1890–1945* (Paris, 1999); Michael Peters, *Der Alldeutsche Verband am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges (1908–1914). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des völkischen Nationalismus im spätwilhelminischen Deutschland* (Frankfurt a.M., 1996); Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural History of the Pan-German League, 1886–1914* (Boston and London, 1984).

⁴⁴ Chickering, *We Men*, 49.

⁴⁵ Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1980), 9.

⁴⁶ Chickering, *We Men*, 314.

⁴⁷ Anthony J. O'Donnell, 'National Liberalism and the Mass Politics of the German Right, 1890–1907' (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1973).

⁴⁸ Uwe Puschner et al., *Handbuch zur 'Völkischen Bewegung' 1871–1918* (Munich, 1996); Puschner, *Die völkische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Kaiserreich. Sprache—Rasse—Religion* (Darmstadt, 2001). See also Diethard Kerbs and Jürgen Reulecke (eds), *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen 1880–1933* (Wuppertal, 1998); Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890–1914* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), esp. 215–327; Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890–1930* (Chicago and London, 2003); Matthew Jefferies, 'Lebensreform: A Middle-Class Antidote to Wilhelminism?', in Geoff Eley and James Retallack (eds), *Wilhelminism and Its Legacies: German Modernities, Imperialism, and the Meanings of Reform, 1890–1930* (Oxford and New York, 2003), 91–106.

⁴⁹ Daniel Frymann [pseud. Heinrich Class], *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär'. Politische Wahrheiten und Notwendigkeiten* (Leipzig, 1912); Chickering, *We Men*, 285–6.

⁵⁰ Wilhelm Deist, *Flottenpolitik und Flottenpropaganda. Das Nachrichtenbüro des Reichsmarineamts 1897–1914* (Stuttgart, 1976), 147–247; Eley, ‘Navy League’, 179–253; Eley, *Reshaping*, 239–79.

⁵¹ Marilyn Shevin Coetzee, *The German Army League: Popular Nationalism in Wilhelmine Germany* (New York and Oxford, 1990); Roger Chickering, ‘Der “Deutsche Wehrverein” und die Reform der deutschen Armee 1912–14’, *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, 1 (1979), 7–33.

⁵² Stig Förster, *Der doppelte Militarismus. Die deutsche Heeresrüstungspolitik zwischen Status-quo-Sicherung und Aggression 1890–1913* (Stuttgart, 1985).

⁵³ Chickering, *We Men*, 270.

⁵⁴ See Volker R. Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914* (New York, 1973).

⁵⁵ Gerald D. Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany, 1914–1918* (Princeton, 1966), 136.

⁵⁶ Heinz Hagenlücke, *Deutsche Vaterlandspartei. Die nationale Rechte am Ende des Kaiserreichs* (Düsseldorf, 1997), 18.

Growing militarism. Interwar foreign policy contradicted desires of military to grow and expand state. Military success and humiliations led to a desire for a stronger military. >>Japan now clearly and important military power. Increased military spending and growing radical nationalism. As Japan became confident in their strength they wanted maintain this position of power -> hence the military spending. Their confidence also lead to growing radical nationalism. See full transcript. What are maps and why are they useful? The link between Shinto and nationalism. Shinto legend tells that the emperors of Japan are descended in an unbroken line from the first Emperor, Jimmu Tenno, Amaterasu-Omikami's great-grandson. The native Japanese people themselves are descended from the kami who were present at the founding of Japan. This story contains a very clear message that Japan is an old country, whose people are descended from the founding kami, and an Imperial family with an unbroken line of descent from Amaterasu herself. The Imperial family is older than the people of Japan, and descended from a kami of high This chapter explores the emergence of radical far-right ideological agendas in contemporary post-conflict settings. The author examines four political parties and youths responding to the weakening of nationalism, militarism and masculinity in Cyprus. These radical far-right parties favour preserving and evoke the need to revive the post-1974 national struggle in the form it was before the opening of the border and accession to the EU. Moreover, their agendas are fused with radical far-right ideological elements. This is a preview of subscription content, log in to check access.

Appendices. Manifestations of Radical Nationalism : Violence : Vandalism : Spontaneous Mass Conflicts : Activity of Right-Wing Radical Organizations : Nationalism and Xenophobia as Electoral Resource : Expansion of Nationalism in Public Life. Counteraction to Radical Nationalism : NGO activities and spontaneous opposition : Cases Brought before the European Court of Human Rights : Criminal Prosecution of the Right-Wing Radicals : Other Measures of Counteraction

Taking advantage of the popular rhetoric of national insularity and militarism, right-wing radicals enjoy the United Russia Party endorsement in the creation of such clubs. In light of the above, we can expect further, and quite possibly dramatic, escalation of right-wing terror.