THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS
OF NAZISM

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS
OF NAZISM

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Hitler in many of his speeches claimed that World War II was caused by the economic depression occasioned by the enforcement of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Students of philosophy disagree with Hitler. McGovern says that the Nationalist Socialist Party of Nazism was not a new or casual development, but was the product of a long, slowly developing, deep-rooted tradition. He writes:

It is undoubtedly true that the rise of Fascism and National Socialism was greatly aided by the economic stress which existed in Italy in 1922 and in Germany in 1933, but it is also true that this economic stress would not have permitted the establishment of a permanent basis of the Fascist and Nazi regimes if there had not existed a widespread and deep-rooted feeling in both countries that liberal institutions were especially pernicious; and this feeling, in turn, can be traced back to a political tradition and to a political philosophy which had been slowly emerging and crystallizing throughout the nineteenth century and during the early years of the twentieth century.

Morgenthau, in his recent book Germany Is Our Problem, agrees with McGovern. He says the German people have been elaborately and deliberately miseducated over a long period of time. The medieval belief that war was the only profession fit for a gentlemen and the best trade for a common

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1 William Montgomery McGovern, From Luther to Hitler, p. 7.
soldier had been meticulously cultivated and kept alive. In addition the German children were assiduously taught that "the German is not only a better man than any foreigner . . . but that the German is destined to rule over the inferior people too". German teachers preached a gospel of war and racial superiority to the children, while the adults were fed a mental diet of philosophy that glorified the State and magnified its powers. Concerning this, Morgenthau writes:

This paladin of German philosophy taught that the state was the most perfect manifestation of God in the world of men; that the Prussian state was the noblest expression of that heavenly mandate, and that its emergence was the culmination of the historical process.2

Morgenthau, in the above quotation, had specific reference to the philosophy of Hegel. He says that neither Hitler nor Mussolini was the creator of a new political philosophy, but that they were merely the popularizers of doctrines which began centuries ago and which slowly developed and transformed until they formed a political philosophy which was taken over by Hitler as the foundation of his Nazi State. If a true knowledge of what constitutes Nazism is desired, it is not enough to study the speeches and writings of Hitler and his followers, but an attempt must be made to understand the underlying political philosophy

2Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Germany is Our Problem, p. 106.
of which Nazism was but a concrete expression.

The purpose of this study is to examine the work of a number of prominent German philosophers to determine the philosophical basis of Nazism, if it is granted that there is such a basis. That is the province of this paper.

Interest in this study has been aroused by a number of factors. A philosophy course in college gave the basic knowledge concerning the work of the German professors who were Idealists. Chance attendance at a lecture resulted in the creation of an interest in the political philosophy of these German professors and the part that they played in preparing the German people for Hitler. Reference was made in this lecture to a comparatively new book in the field of philosophy: McGovern's *From Luther to Hitler*. When this book was examined it was found to contain such a wealth of new information on the subject of German philosophy and the part it played in the Hitler regime that other modern writings in the field were examined to see if they corroborated McGovern. Out of these readings has come this study.

Since the study is mainly concerned with the political philosophy of the German professors, the problem is restricted to this phase of their philosophy. Special attention is given to the study of Kant, Fichte and Hegel. Hitler's regime, as he built it, is then compared with the framework of the German philosophers.

The source of the materials is varied. For the foundation philosophical studies, the works of the German philosophers
have been examined. Modern histories were consulted for the history of the Hitler regime. Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* and his numerous speeches furnish data on his viewpoints and actions.

The study is divided into five parts. Chapter I gives the introduction and the purpose of the study, the limitations of the subject, the source of the data, and the general plan of the procedure. Chapter II gives some background reading material concerning the nature of the German people and their philosophy prior to the time of Kant. The nature of the previous government is also considered. Chapter III presents a study of the philosophers, Kant, Fichte and Hegel, and their political writings. In Chapter IV Hitler's government, as he built it, and his diplomatic dealings with other nations are compared to the theoretical governments favored in the philosophy of the German professors. Chapter V summarizes the study and gives the major conclusions formed from it.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF GERMAN IDEALISTIC

PHILOSOPHY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

At the opening of the fifth century there were no separate, independent states in western Europe such as we find on the map today. The whole territory now occupied by England, France, Spain and Italy formed at that time only a part of the large area ruled over by the Roman emperor and his administrative officials. As for Germany, it was still a region of forests, familiar only to the barbarous and half-savage tribes who inhabited them. The Romans tried in vain to conquer these barbarian tribes, but had to be content finally with keeping the German hordes out of the Empire by means of fortifications and guards along the Rhine and the Danube rivers.

At first the movement of these German tribes down into Roman territory was motivated by the love of adventure and desire for trade with the civilized people, but in 375 A.D. Vandal tribes to the north of the Germans moved down into the Germans' territory and the tribes fled southward to escape them. In the conflicts which followed with Roman troops, the barbarians soon learned that they could conquer them and more and more moved in. In 476 A.D. the German barbarians
captured Rome and began to set up governments of their own in all the conquered territory.\footnote{James Harvey Robinson, \textit{History of Western Europe}, p. 25.}

Like the tribes of American Indians, these German tribes had various names - the Goths, the Lombards and the Franks. None of these except the Franks ever succeeded in establishing a permanent kingdom. The Franks were destined to conquer most of the other German tribes, and to extend their boundaries to districts inhabited by Slavs, other barbarian people of the far North. When the Franks were first heard of in history they were settled along the lower Rhine, from Cologne to the North Sea.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 34.} Their methods of settlement differed from those of the other German Tribes; the Franks maintained a close connection with their fatherland and remained in constant touch with the barbarian reserves behind them. Even in the beginning, it appears as if this particular German tribe was bent on retaining its identity and its individuality as a nation. One of the things that this connection with the homeland made possible was the retention of their own language and the purity of Germanic stock. The barbarian tribes who moved farther into the interior of Italy and migrated to Africa lost their identity and merged to a large extent with the peoples of the conquered areas.

These Germanic tribes were of a different race from the
people of Italy and Greece, and naturally did not speak the same language. The Germans who moved down into the interior of Europe used their own language in combination with that of the conquered peoples and modern French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese languages, all based on the mother Latin tongue, resulted. Out of the welter of barbarian dialects grew modern German, English, Dutch, Swedish, Danish and Icelandic languages. The tribes who occupied the land that is Germany today retained their own dialect.

Not too much is known about how the literature of the Germans first began, but it is known that at least one of the Germanic tongues was reduced to writing before the fall of Rome in 476 A.D. Ulphilas, a bishop in the Christian Church, had undertaken to convert the Goths to Christianity and he translated the Bible, which was written in Greek, into the Gothic language. With this single exception, there is no example of writing in any German language before Charlemagne's time. There is no doubt, though, that the Germans possessed an unwritten literature, which was passed down by word of mouth for several centuries before any of it was written out.

During the long period of the Middle Ages civilization was apparently static in its growth, but underneath the surface growth and development were gradually going on. Schools were established by the clergy for the training of church officials, and gradually a system of great universities developed. The students in these universities were of all ages,

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3 Ibid., p. 252.
from thirteen to forty, and even older. Since the main purpose of the universities was to train members of the clergy, it is natural to presuppose that the curriculum of these schools was composed mainly of theological subjects. Arguments along theological lines flourished because man has never been able to agree for any length of time on theological doctrines. Other studies besides canon law were logic, various sciences, and some philosophy and ethics.

The study of the works of Aristotle was part and parcel of the school's work. In view of the fact that Aristotle was a pagan, had never heard of the Bible, and knew nothing of the Christians' belief of salvation through Christ, it is remarkable that the Church fathers would have allowed his works to be studied. But the teachers of the thirteenth century were fascinated by his logic and astonished at his learning. He was accepted along with the Bible, the church fathers, and the canon and Roman law, as one of the unquestioned authorities which together formed a complete guide for humanity in conduct and in every branch of science.

The term scholasticism is commonly given to the philosophy, theology, and the methods of discussion of the mediaeval philosophers. However, all the philosophers did not agree with some of Aristotle's theories, especially those concerning the source of knowledge. There were those who criticised the schools for relying upon Aristotle as the source of all knowledge. The best known of these fault-finders was Roger
Bacon, an English Franciscan monk who died in 1290 A.D. 
Bacon said that Aristotle, even if he had been very wise, 
could not have known everything that was to be known. He 
said:

Even if we could continue to live for endless 
centuries we mortals could never hope to reach full 
and complete knowledge of all the things which are to 
be known. No one knows enough of nature completely 
to describe the peculiarities of a single fly and 
give the reason for its color and why it had just 
so many feet, no more and no less.4

Then, too, Bacon said that truth could be reached a 
hundred thousand times better by experiments with real things 
than by poring over the bad translations of Aristotle. He 
declared if he could have his way he would burn all the books 
of Aristotle because he thought the study of them could only 
lead to a loss of time, "produce error and increase ignorance."5

Before the time of Bacon, however, there had been a 
growing movement towards Pantheism in the Germanic tribes. 
Hugo, a monk of German origin, declared in the eleventh 
century that it is impossible to have uniform notions of God, 
because God transcends all human conception.6 This feeling 
is a characteristic trait of mysticism. Later, a number of 
critical thinkers, influenced by Arabian pantheism, were bold 
enough to defend the philosophy of immanency.

4Quoted from Robinson, op. cit., p. 273.

5Ibid.

6Alfred Weber and Ralph Barton Perry, History of Phil-
osophy., p. 172.
They regarded the three persons of the Trinity either as three successive manifestations of the Divine Being, or as three different stages in the development of the human conception of God. The Father is the God of the Old Testament, God dwelling in Heaven; the Son is the God of the New Testament, God bridging the chasm and coming nearer to man; the Holy Ghost is the God of the future, the true God conceived as the universal and omnipresent Being. God is everything and produces everything in all things. He is, therefore, not only present in the consecrated host, but also in the daily bread. His spirit manifested itself in the great men of Greece, as well as in the Prophets, Apostles and Fathers. There is no other heaven than a good conscience, no other hell than remorse; and the worship of saints is idolatry.  

With the religious fervor that was present at this time, it is little wonder that the Church frowned upon such thoughts and that those who expressed them were punished and banished wherever possible. In the German tribes, however, the spirit of mysticism grew, and in the Renaissance they turned to Neo-Platonism instead of to the scholastic philosophy. Germany, from the very beginning, it appears, chose to travel in the ways of idealism and mysticism.

Neo-Platonism was a renewal of the philosophy of Plato, who, it will be recalled, had some very definite ideas on government as well as philosophy. In his Republic he outlined a scheme of government wherein the community should completely dominate the private citizen. He thought that control over the community should rest not with the vulgar mob, but in a small gifted minority. Plato had a contempt for the masses of the people. He thought that "justice is in

the interests of the stronger". The German tribes were never known as democratic in government. We find nothing in their history of democratic assemblies and Magna Carta and Declarations of Independence. In the different provinces, before the unification of these in 1871, the prevailing governments had been monarchies. Robinson has this pertinent comment:

The union was a true federation like that of the United States, although its organization violated many of the rules which were observed in the organization of the American Union. It was inevitable that a union spontaneously developed from a group of sovereign monarchies, with their tradition of absolutism, would be very different from one in which the members, like the states of the American Union, had previously been governed by republican institutions. These things should be remembered as background to the study of the philosophy of the German people:

1. Germany from the beginning has preserved its entity as a nation. The boundaries have changed from time to time, but the nation itself has preserved the core of its being in race and language.

2. The German people were believers in idealism in the Middle-Ages when the remainder of the European countries began to embrace materialism and empiricism.

3. The German people never organized republican governments like the Western European nations. They embraced tradition of absolutism in government long before the days of the

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8Quoted in McGovern, op. cit., p. 480.

9Robinson, op. cit., p. 661.
ideas of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. These philosophers merely extended and enlarged the premises which were already ingrained in the German people.
CHAPTER III

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AS DEVELOPED

BY THE GERMAN PHILOSOPHERS

One of the distinguishing things about the great German philosophers is that they were all members of the idealist school. Not one of them was a realist. Then, too, they were all professors of philosophy. At first the doctrines worked out by these men were ignored, especially the political doctrines. There has always been a great deal of interest in the world in metaphysical aspects of a man's philosophy, and Kant's theory of the "free moral will" received far more attention than his theory that the state must have supreme absolute authority. McGovern says:

At first the doctrines enunciated by the idealist school were little noticed by the world at large. The leading members of this school had very little contact with the world of practical politics. Most of its members were university professors and led quiet more or less secluded lives. For this reason they themselves and their doctrines were more or less ignored by the busy politicians of their own generation. The active "men of affairs" of their own time either ignored, or misunderstood, or laughed at the idealist attacks on the basic assumptions of liberalism. But the political theory of one day not infrequently becomes the political practice of a succeeding generation. . . Before long idealist doctrines began to infect many outstanding writers in the fields of history and law and thus came to appeal to a much broader public. . . As decade followed decade the idealist dogmas, in some form or another,
began to permeate many different levels of European culture until at last they reached the man in the street.\footnote{McGovern, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 130-131.}

The use that was made of the political philosophy worked out by these German idealists, then, is the important thing to be considered in this study.

Kant, one of the greatest names in the history of philosophy, was the founder of the German idealist school. He was born in 1724 and was sixteen years old at the time of the accession to the Prussian throne of Frederick II.\footnote{James Harvey Robinson, \textit{An Introduction to the History of Western Europe}. p. 518.} Frederick's vigorous rule and his desire to increase the power of Prussia by annexing its neighbors could not have helped but have an effect on the brilliant mind of the then young Kant, and to have caused him to give attention to matters of government as well as metaphysical meditations. However, Kant did not take any part in the political life of the country, but rather lived a quiet, secluded life much as hundreds of others college professors did. Kant, too, was not radical in his views on the state, but his importance to this study is the use that was made of his views by later philosophers. Kant laid the foundations on which others built.

One of Kant's contemporaries was the great English philosopher and political theorist, Edmund Burke. Burke was a strong adherent to the doctrine of individual liberty. He believed that a man should be "free" to follow his wants or wishes
as long as he did not interfere with the life, liberty, or property of others. It was during Kant's lifetime, too, that the colonies of the British Empire in the New World revolted from the mother country, won their independence on the field of battle, and set up a government whose major premise was that of individualism. The liberal spirit was very much alive in the world at the time that Kant in his quiet university nook was formulating the basis of the doctrine that was the antithesis of liberalism.

It was Kant's theory of the "free moral will", however, on which he based his conclusions that the state should be supreme over the individual. According to Kant, every man possesses a rational will at the very root of his existence, this will is his own self. It is the "still, small voice of conscience", perhaps; at any rate it is that something within man that directs the entire workings of his life. Kant firmly believed that this rational will in each man is fundamentally moral. A man, led astray by his selfish desires, will feel remorse on account of his misdeeds because this rational will tells him that he is wrong. This will is free, Kant argued, because of the very fact that it makes man feel that he has committed a wrong. Maybe he has stolen something, and has not been detected. His inner will knows that it is wrong to steal; no one, not even an external deity, can tell the rational will that it is wrong; it knows it without being told. For this reason the rational will is "free".
If a man defied this rational will of his and lived as he pleased, he was a slave to his lower nature; "he was free only when he was doing what universal abstract reason told him that he ought to do." 3

The individualists in America regarded the state as a necessary evil. Kant argued that the state is, or should be, a positive good. A man can exercise his free, moral will only when he is protected by compulsory law from the evil acts of his comrades. Such a condition is found only where there is a state. The state, therefore, is a positive good, and every man has a moral obligation to join a state or to create one where none exists. He believed, too, that men are morally justified in forcing other men to stop their lawless acts and become a part of the state, even if they do not wish to.

As for the doctrine of natural rights that the liberal thinkers promulgated, Kant believed that property rights came into being only with the state. From this belief he formed the conclusion that all such rights are derived from the state. However, he did not believe that the state should own all the property; man's right to private property is derived from the state by assignment, and for that reason the state has a right to tax private property. All private corporations, temporal or ecclesiastical, should be subject to

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3 Alfred Weber and Ralph Barton Perry, History of Philosophy, p. 379.
state inspection and control. He claimed, too, that the state had the right to regulate the influence of public teachers, which at that time were priests and ministers, upon the political administration of the state.

The Government of the United States was based on the premise that the state originated with the free consent of the governed. This doctrine grew out of Rousseau's Social Contract wherein he stated that it is necessary for men to "combine . . . without the loss of individual liberty". Kant denied that the state was, or should be, based upon the consent of the governed. The consent of the governed was not necessary to make a state legal; it was the duty of man to obey the government regardless of its origin.

Kant believed, too, in the theory of progress. According to him, every phenomenon is a quantity; every quality has a certain degree of content and a certain degree of intensity. From the standpoint of relation, all phenomena are united by the tie of causality. In the process of development, there is a gradual rise from a lower, simpler order to one more complex. When this was applied to man, the survival of the best, not the fittest, resulted. Darwin's theory of the

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6 McGovern, op. cit., p. 149.

evolution of the species had been that the fittest survived. This law of progress, as developed by Kant, is significant when the Germanic idea of "racial superiority" is considered later in the study.

To summarize briefly, Kant advocated the following:
(1) The state was supreme over the individual; (2) the state was not a necessary evil, but was a necessary good; (3) the state did not derive its rights from the individual, but vice versa; and (4) according to the law of progress, man had not degenerated but progressed slowly from a lower order to a higher, wherein the best, not the fittest, survived. These ideas of Kant's, it should be stressed, were merely those of a quiet, studious college professor and, as such, had no connection whatever with the political life of the country at that time. Kant lived at a time when a great deal of thought was being given to government and to theories of government. Interested as he was in everything about him and in the condition of man wherever he lived, it is only natural to find him expressing his opinion on the rights and duties of the state and the individual. Very little attention was paid to Kant's political philosophy at that time, but his metaphysical theories became very popular. It was but a short step from the reading of them to the reading of his political philosophy. It is his influence on others, especially the later German philosophers, wherein his real importance lies in the development of the Nazi philosophy.
Johann Gottlieb Fichte, born in 1765, was a disciple of Kant's, and he gave voice to the new doctrines. He was a ministerial student in his youth, and this training influenced much of his life. He was not orthodox in his views, however, and, being accused of atheism, he resigned his position as teacher in Jena University. For ten years he wandered over Germany and pursued his philosophical studies which were colored by his resentment against what he called the "privileged class". He was at first an ardent advocate of democracy, but in later life he became a fervent apostle for the nationalism of the government. Some of his new political ideas were delivered in the form of lectures to the public, and others were outlined in such books as The Closed Commercial State, the Theory of Law and the Theory of State.

Fichte was violently opposed to the philosophy of materialism. Likewise, he could not accept the idealistic theory that the mind was absolute in all things. Truth, according to him, could only be ascertained by the use of reason plus "intellectual intuition". This latter feature is most significant in that it introduced a mystical element into man's reasoning. Hitler's "intuition" more than likely had its inception in this philosophy of Fichte's.

The salient points in Fichte's political philosophy, as they concern this study, will be outlined in the following paragraphs.

8 Weber and Perry, op. cit., p. 392.
1. All states and all governments were good in so far as they benefited mankind as a whole; they were bad if they only looked after their own selfish interests.  

2. The idea of a single empire ruling the earth is no longer practical; there should be a large number of political units. War, sometimes useful and sometimes necessary, is a handicap to progress and should be abolished. War can be abolished through the establishment of a world court and a league of nations.

3. The nation, as embodied in the national state, must in practice be the supreme object of man's devotion. The state is the concrete expression of the dynamic spirit of the nation.

4. It is the function of the state to grant to the individual his property rights, to look after his physical and economic welfare, and to aid industry, agriculture, mechanical arts, and the natural sciences.

These ideas of Fichte's, important as they were, did not go much farther than Kant had in his political philosophy. Fichte, however, outlined what he considered to be three conditions for the smooth functioning of the national state. These were:

The first was that a national state must be based upon unity of language among its citizens. The second was that nationalism in the political sphere cannot function smoothly without nationalism.

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10 Ibid., pp. 232-233.  
11 Ibid., p. 234.  
12 Ibid., pp. 234-235.
in the economic sphere - the basic principle of economic nationalism. The third condition was that inside its own borders the state must assume far-reaching control over all the economic activities of its citizens.\textsuperscript{13}

These ideas of Fichte's are highly important in the light of succeeding events: A state based on unity of language was something new and revolutionary. Heretofore there had been no thought that political boundaries should coincide with linguistic boundaries. Fichte raised the question of Pan-Germanism. He wished to unite the many small German states into a great empire where the German people could be free and where the all-important German culture could survive.

There was only one exception Fichte made in his idea of creating a great nation based on those who spoke the German language. Fichte hated Jews. Jews, he declared, were not Germans and could never be Germans, even if they had been born in Germany and spoke the German language. He demanded that all civil and political rights be denied them, and, if possible, they were to be deported.

Economic nationalism was almost a new word at the time of Fichte. During the nineteenth century, the philosophy that was popular was that of international economics. The political philosophers believed that separate nations were right and just, but that a system of trade should be carried on between them. "Tariff and revenue only", "low tariffs", and "free trade" were advocated for all the countries of

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 236.
the world. It was considered highly unfair for any nation to raise artificial barriers in the way of international trade. It was into this atmosphere that Fichte injected his "economic nationalism" theory with his book called The Commercial State. His program, in this respect, called for a planned economy, barter trade with other countries, blocked currency, concealed inflation, ersatz materials. The objective of this program of economic nationalism was Lebensraum - living space - and to achieve this Fichte called for intensive armaments, the occupation of desirable territory, and the transfer of populations.

These words have a familiar ring to those who have been following world events in the last decade. Fichte's views on the state's control over the economic activities of its citizens are also significant. He thought that legal ownership of property was derived from and granted by the state. The state in granting property rights to an individual granted only the right of exclusive use; if the individual failed to use it well or according to conditions stipulated by the state, the property he had been granted could be taken away from him. If a farmer did not cultivate his land, or misused it, the state had the right to take it away from him by taxation or otherwise. The state, too, should limit the number of people in three main groups—producers, artisans and industrialist, and the merchants.

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14 Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 105.

15 Ibid., p. 105.
Furthermore, the state should control the total amount of production of each basic commodity.

In studying the political philosophy of Fichte, it would appear that he had reached the zenith where the glorification of the state was concerned, but there was still another German philosopher who went farther than Fichte. This man was Hegel, perhaps the greatest of the German philosophers. Fichte, more or less, was a political and social outcast, and his words, therefore, did not carry as much weight as they otherwise would have done. Hegel was one of the best-known and the best-liked of the professors at the great universities. Then, too, he was President of the University of Berlin and as such was influential in the administration of the German government. When he spoke, attention was given to his words.

Hegel's political philosophy, if it can be compressed enough, will be outlined in the following paragraphs.

1. The national state is the supreme goal of cosmic development. In other words, there could be no further progress over the national state. 16

2. The state is of divine origin - not in the old way of the "divine right of kings", not in the orthodox Christian

16 McGovern, op. cit., p. 318.
way of a spiritual God, but in the sense of the creation of a world spirit.\textsuperscript{17}

3. The individual must be completely subordinated to the state, and his wishes and desires must be rejected in favor of the state.\textsuperscript{18}

4. The dictates of the state supercede natural law or the so-called "natural rights" of man.\textsuperscript{19}

5. Among the social institutions that dominate mankind society is higher and more important than the family, but the state is higher and more important than society.\textsuperscript{20}

6. The courts of justice derive their authority not from society but from the state only.\textsuperscript{21}

7. The chief function of the police power of the state is to "oversee and foster" ways of promoting the public welfare. In this respect, part of the work of the police power is to regulate trade and industry and control commerce.\textsuperscript{22}

8. War is not only necessary, it was also good.\textsuperscript{23}

9. The national state is greater than humanity as a whole; an international nation or tribunal is not to be thought of.\textsuperscript{24}

10. Conditions change; a state may violate any treaty it pleases on the plea that conditions have changed.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 319.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 319.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 317.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 317.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 310.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 315.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., pp. 315-316.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 319.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 320.
11. Sovereignty within this national state must be embodied in the person of the sovereign.\footnote{26}

12. The vast majority of all governmental matters should be regulated, not by laws requiring the consent of the legislative assembly, but by administrative decrees.\footnote{27}

Philosophy, it may be seen, had come a long way from the time when Kant first began to formulate his views on the state. However, Hegel's sponsorship of the above policies did not mean that they were put into operation in the government immediately. Kant had sowed the seed, Fichte had cultivated the soil, and Hegel intensified the cultivation with the addition of many more seed.

Hegel died in 1831. During his long lifetime, much history had been made in the land that today is called Germany - in Hegel's time a number of independent provinces were called "The Germanies". One of these provinces was Brandenburg. At the time of the Council of Constance, 1414, the old line of electors had died out and the penniless ruler, Emperor Sigismund, had sold his rights as ruler to a hitherto inconspicuous house, the Hohenzollerns. At that time the province consisted of a small strip of territory extending some ninety to a hundred miles east of the small town of Berlin. Just before the Thirty Years War, the elector

\footnote{26 } \textit{Ibid.}, p. 321.

\footnote{27 } \textit{Ibid.}, p. 321.
of Brandenburg, annexed Cleves, the neighboring Rhine dis-

trict. Far to the east of Brandenburg was the province of

Prussia. One of the relatives of the elector of Branden-

burg held the province as a part of Poland, and he declared

his independence and became Duke of Prussia. In time the

family died out, and the duchy fell to the electors of

Brandenburg. In 1701 the elector, who now had Prussia as

well as Brandenburg and Cleves, declared himself King of

Prussia. Frederick William (1713-1740) created an abso-

lute monarchy patterned after the Bourbon monarchy in

France, and his son, Frederick II continued the tradition.

Under Frederick II Prussia annexed Silesia, and part of Poland. Frederick William III was a weak king, and dur-

ing his reign Prussia was conquered by Napoleon Bonaparte.

Napoleon united the province of Hanover with Prussia and
gave it to his brother. After Napoleon's retreat from

Russia, Frederick, the deposed Prussian ruler, joined hands

with Russia to regain his country. In the meantime, much

of the revolutionary sentiment smouldering in Europe against

absolute monarchies had taken root in Prussia and reforms

in government were advocated. After the defeat of Napoleon,

the Congress of Vienna, 1814, began its debates concerning

the disposition of various countries.

The French Revolution, the organization of the French

Republic, and the restoration of the French monarchy or dicta-
torship under Napoleon had happened during the lifetime of
Hegel. Kant and Fichte had been his immediate predecessors. It is not to be supposed that all these changes had occurred without some repercussions from the universities. In addition to those who favored the Hegelian theory of the place of the state, there were a number of students who favored the new liberalism. Both these groups voiced their opinions in the proposed settlements at the Congress of Vienna. Poland, one of the disputed countries, was settled mostly by Slavs, people different in race and language from the Germans. The treaty gave most of this country to other nations, and the Prussian state was comparatively free from the presence of non-German races. This movement was in line with the thought of both Fichte and Hegel. On the other hand, the liberals succeeded in getting through a number of reforms concerning the economic reorganization of society. With the coming of the industrial age society had changed overnight, and capital and labor's problems emerged.

In 1858 a new King, William I, became the head of the government. Under his rule, Germany built a strong army, placed Bismarck as its prime minister, defeated Austria in war, and set up the North German Federation of States which eventually became the strong German Empire of modern times. Bismarck started the German nation on the way towards becoming a powerful absolute monarchy or dictatorship in the hands of Adolf Hitler.
The creation of the new German Empire was largely the work of Bismarck and military leaders, but the enthusiasm among the people for such a government was due in no small degree to the books and lectures of a group of German historians. McGovern says:

Of special importance is the fact that the doctrines they (historians) preached have survived the empire they glorified and the monarchy they flattered. The German Empire as they knew it fell in 1918 and with it hereditary monarchy and the House of Hohenzollern, but their news on the nature and the function of the state and the need for autocratic rule remained popular with a large section of the German population and aided in the subsequent development of the Nazi ideology.

The main ways in which the historians served as the link between two systems of thought - that of the German philosophers and those of the Hitler school of thought - were to popularize the philosophical theories of Kant, Fichte, and especially Hegel. These philosophers, like a great many other learned men, expressed their thoughts in abstruse language far above the heads of the average person. In Germany many of the historians looked upon themselves as political prophets, and they tried to make history as well as record it. Their enthusiasm for a national state aided in the repression of the democratic element which would have had Germany follow the example of the United States in setting up a republic of free states founded on individualistic philosophy.

One of the most important of the German historians who

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McGovern, op. cit., p. 359.
bridged the gap between two spheres of thought was Heinrich Von Treitsche, 1834-1896. He was a personal friend of the German rulers and he continually, in his writings, defended the Prussian point of view. In addition he gave his own personal views, and those views, more or less, led to the radical Nazi doctrines of modern Germany. For this reason, his viewpoints on political questions are important. They are outlined in the following paragraphs.

1. The private citizen has no right to resist the will of the state on the ground that such resistance is based upon his conscience or some higher law than the state; there is no higher law than the state.31

2. International law was not needed unless it was to serve to lay down certain conditions under which war should be based.32

3. States are not bound to hold to treaties they have made. Circumstances change; each state has the right to be the judge of the circumstances.33

4. War should be waged in the most effective manner possible; the use of the most formidable weapons was justified.34

5. It is the duty of small states to seek to become bigger and more powerful.35

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30 Ibid., p. 358.  
31 Ibid., p. 372.  
32 Ibid.  
33 Ibid., p. 373.  
34 Ibid.  
6. The idea of one universal empire is anathema.  
7. Frequent wars between nations are good and salutary.  
8. The state was not to be the means to an end, but an end in itself; it was to have absolute and unquestioned supremacy over it white citizens.  
9. Wars are not waged for the sake of material advantage, but the enhancement of the state.  
10. The state is the instrument of civilization. It must regulate most of the economic and the intellectual activity within its borders.  
11. The state should regulate and control commerce and industry.  

From the above paragraphs, it can be seen that Treitsche was not only a strong Hegelian disciple, but that he had individual views of his own. Perhaps his most important mission, however, was that he put the philosophy of the German idealistic professors in the common language of the people, and thus made it available to all.  

With the study of Treitsche's attitudes and the nature of his work the study of the philosophy underlying Nazism is brought to a close. There are many more names and ideas that have their influence, but it is felt that enough of the

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36 Ibid., p. 375.  
37 Ibid.  
38 Ibid., p. 376.  
39 Ibid.  
40 Ibid., p. 379.  
41 Ibid., p. 380.
philosophic creeds of the German Idealists have been presented to show the nature and development of the political philosophy of nationalism. The next chapter will endeavor to link this philosophy with the actions of Hitler and his Nazi leaders.
CHAPTER IV

RELATIONSHIP OF NAZI PHILOSOPHY TO THE
POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE
GERMAN PHILOSOPHERS

Was Hitler familiar with the philosophy of the great
German philosophers, Kant, Fichte, Hegel and others? Did
their expressed opinions influence him in his actions, or
did he work out his own theories for himself and then
convert the German people to his way of thinking? We are
yet too close to his time for these and other facts to be
fully known or investigated, but an investigation of his
writings and of his actions may provide some clue in answer
to the questions.

History tells us that Adolph Hitler was born into a
middleclass family in Austria in 1889. His immediate ances-
tors had been peasants, but the elder Hitler had managed
to overcome this humble standing to the extent that he had
become a civil servant of the Austrian government. He was
ambitious for his son, Adolph, to follow in his footsteps,
but the young Hitler wished to be an artist. The father
died when Hitler was thirteen years old and his mother died
when he was eighteen. When Hitler was left to his own re-
sources, he went to Vienna where he hoped to enter the Academy of Art, but he failed to pass the entrance examinations. He was thus left penniless, friendless, and faced with the necessity for making his own living. He stayed in Vienna for four years, a period which he described as "the living memory of the most miserable time of my life". In the publisher's note to Mein Kampf the miserable existence is described.

Hitler's mother died on December 21, 1908, leaving him virtually penniless. He left Vienna again in the spring of 1912. During the period intervening, he lived generally in the Refuge for Men, in Vienna-Brigittenau. Information concerning his activities has been supplied by various people who then knew him... It is often difficult to determine whether these traditions are historically accurate, since the Hitler of Vienna days was a bit of human flotsam... But we know that he slept in a ward with other derelicts, that he was fed at the gate of the monastery in the Gumpendorferstrasse; that in winter he earned an occasional schilling with a snow shovel; and that he drew little water colors and sketches which Hanisch peddled around at the humbler art shops. It has been proved that at that time he had Jewish acquaintances and a number of Jewish friends. More important, however, is the fact that he spent much time in the cafes, reading the newspapers constantly available there. He was never, then, a 'house painter', but remained a young man with a poor scholastic record who had time to read political journalism.

Hitler liked to read; he read the newspapers and political journalism. These two facts are important items in our study. It has been brought out that there was a great deal of political discussion among the philosophers, teachers, and the German people. The fact that Hitler liked to read

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Publisher's Note: Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 28.
"political journalism" tells us that he must have read a great many of the political ideas of the time. Hitler, himself, confirms this in his book, *Mein Kampf*. He said that the reason he made poor scholastic grades in school was to deter his father from making him take training for an official career. Even as a boy he had liked history and he highly praised one of his teachers who had early taught him that "to learn history means to search for and to find the forces which cause those effects which we later face as historical events".\(^2\) This teacher, he said, not only knew how to throw light on the past by utilizing the present, but he drew conclusions from the past and applied them to the present. From his own writings, it is apparent that Hitler was of a studious nature in the respect that he liked history, was interested in government, and social questions, and liked to read voraciously.

Hitler's poverty brought him into contact with all kinds of people and all kinds of living conditions. At that time Vienna was a city of glamorous wealth and repulsive poverty. Hitler said that there was hardly any other German city where social conditions could have been studied better than in Vienna. His study, however, was not "carried out from above",\(^3\) but learned in the hard school of reality. For this he was thankful. He said that once his interest in the social question was awakened, he began to study it in a thorough

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\(^3\) *Idid.*, p. 33.
manner. He supplemented his practical experiences with reading every book on the social question that he could find. He said:

From my early youth I took pains to read in the right manner, and in this I was happily assisted by my memory and intellect. And in this light the time I spent in Vienna was especially fruitful and useful. The experiences of everyday life gave me the stimulus for my renewed study of various problems. As I was thus finally enabled to substantiate theory with reality, to examine theory in its relation to reality, I was spared being suffocated in theories and from becoming shallow through reality.4

It is apparent from the above quotation that Hitler, even in his early twenties, was much concerned with social problems and with political philosophy. It was in this hard field of reality that he said he formed two opinions that were to influence all his after life - his attitude toward the Marxism theory of economy and towards the Jews.

Karl Marx was another German philosopher who lived about the time of Hegel, but who differed from him in his views on economic questions. Marx thought that the laws of supply and demand were the ultimate things in the universe, and that man's actions were determined by economic questions and not the workings of his own mind. He also believed in common ownership of property, hence the term, Communism. Marxism had never been too popular in Germany, but it was espoused by a faction in Russia. At the time when Hitler was in Vienna, Marxism was in the more or less theory stage.

Ibid., pp. 49-50.
and there was much discussion about it. Social Democracy, Hitler called it, and he writes that at first he was impressed favorably with the doctrine. He said that he was secretly glad to know that it stood for general suffrage, the secret ballot and better living conditions for the working class. He had not approved the hostile attitude of the Marxists towards the fight for the preservation of the German nationality and towards the Slav workers. Up until the time when Hitler went to Vienna he said he had only known the Social Democratic Party from a spectator's point of view, but when he came headlong into contact with the products of the education of Marxism and its views of life, he found it to be a pestilence. Mankind, he said, must rid itself of this pestilence, or perish in the end.  

In an endeavor to fully understand the workings of Social Democracy, Hitler began to read everything that he could find on the subject.

The daily reading of the Social Democratic newspapers enabled me better to study the inner meaning of these ideas than all of the theoretic literature put together.  

The more insight he gained into the externals of the doctrine the more he wished to learn all he could of the nucleus of its doctrine. He wanted to know fundamentals. Some idea of his reaction and the nature of the man himself may be gained from the following quotation:

5 Ibid., p. 52.

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The official literature of the party, of course, was of little use. As far as economic problems are concerned, it is wrong in assertion and proof; as regards the political aims, it lies. In addition, I was disgusted with its modern pettifogging methods and its writings. With an enormous amount of words of unclear context or unintelligible meaning it piles up sentences which are supposed to be as ingenious as they are meaningless. Only the decadent bohemianism of our big cities may feel at home in this labyrinth of reason, to pick up an 'inner experience' from the dung heap of this literary dadaism, supported by the proverbial modesty of part of our people, which senses deepest wisdom in the most incomprehensible things.  

It is apparent from the above quotation that Hitler, in addition to his desire for knowledge and his voracious appetite for reading, was the type of man mentally and psychologically to whom doctrines appealed very strongly. He hated intensely and approved just as strongly. Doctrines, therefore, were something for him to pounce on, to study, to favor, or to bitterly condemn. Regarding Social Democracy, he said:

If Social Democracy is confronted by a doctrine of greater truthfulness, carried out with the same brutality, then the latter will be victorious, though the struggle may be hard.

Hitler, then, it is evident was concerned in the search for a "doctrine of greater truthfulness". Inasmuch as it is known that there were a great many pamphlets and other writings in circulation at that time, it is not too far-fetched to suppose that Hitler read a great many of them with their praise of the great German idealistic philosophers. McLovin says:

7 Ibid., p. 65.
8 Ibid., p. 56.
It is true that indirectly, and to a certain extent unconsciously, Hegelianism has played an important role in shaping Nazi ideology. If the Nazi theorists have read very few of Hegel's own works, they have read and accepted the views of many persons who themselves were influenced by Hegel. Moreover, when we read any of the major works composed by Nazi leaders, we constantly come across phrases and arguments taken over bodily from one or the other of the numerous second-hand popularizers of Hegelianism who lived.

...When we read that the Volk or nation is a 'permanent, supernatural, mystical entity, real beyond the existing totality of all inhabitants', we are certain that National Socialism has incorporated within its creed much of the Hegelian system. The belief is strengthened when we hear the Nazis say that the Volk has a soul, a mind, a real or 'objective' will of its own which is different from the subjective caprices and desires of the individual citizens, and that the Fuehrer (Hitler) in making his arbitrary decrees is only expressing or revealing the real will of the Volk. The whole doctrine is obviously a mild transformation of the Old Hegelian principles.9

Hitler's cognizance of Idealism as a philosophy is shown in Mein Kampf. In the chapter, "Nation and Race", he states that "true idealism is nothing but subjecting the individual's interest and life to the community".10 Idealism was part of patriotism, and not some abstract ideal. He consoled the German people on losses incurred in war with these words:

In giving up one's own life for the existence of the community lies the crowning of all will to sacrifice. Only this prevents everything that human hands have built from being overthrown again by human hands, or destroyed by Nature for herself.11

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10 Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 441.

11 Ibid., p. 410.
Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* in 1924 while he was in prison, and at that time he was thirty-five years old. He said in the beginning that his ideas about life, philosophy, and of the place of the State in the life of man were formed before he left Vienna. Certainly, he had some definite ideas while he was still a young man because in *Mein Kampf* he writes very forcefully on what he considered the main function of the State.

He who speaks of a mission of the German people on this earth must know that it can exist only in the formation of a State which sees its highest task in the preservation and the promotion of the most noble elements of our nationality which have remained, even of the entire mankind, unharmed.12

By the most "noble elements of humanity" Hitler meant the Nordic-Germanic peoples who had remained unblended with other people. Fichte, it will be remembered, sought to base a German nation on linguistic grounds; Hitler improved on this by excluding all those who were not born pure Germans regardless of the tongue that they spoke. In no conceivable manner would Hitler have allowed the assumption that a Jew who was born in Germany, had lived there all his life, and who spoke the German language could be considered a German. To him the German—

... Reich as a State, should include all Germans, not only with the task of collecting from the people the most valuable stocks of racially primal

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12 Ibid., p. 600.
elements and preserving them, but also to lead them, gradually and safely, to a dominating position.\textsuperscript{13}

This hatred of the Jews Hitler shared in common with Fichte. Karl Marx was a German Jew and Hitler's hatred of the Jew probably stemmed from this fact as much as anything else. He said that he did not have any hatred for the Jew before he lived in Vienna, but he formed an antipathy for the Jew there that colored all his later thought. Hitler attributed the defeat of Germany in World War I directly to the disunity of the German people; he attributed this to the presence of the German Jews who lived in Germany. In a speech he made at Munich April 27, 1923, he declared:

\begin{quote}
Clear away the Jews! Our own people has genius enough - we need no Hebrews. If we were to put in their place intelligences drawn from the great body of people, then we should have recovered the bridge which leads to the community of the people.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

This hatred of Hitler for the Jews became almost an obsession. It went with him through all his life, and was the main theme of a great many of his speeches. He had precedent for this feeling in German political philosophy. Years before Fichte had declared that the only way to make Jews worthy of citizenship was to cut off their heads and give them new ones wherein there was not a single Jewish idea. Hitler would not have granted this much; he would have demanded the infusion of pure German blood.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[14] \textit{Adolph Hitler, My New Order}, Edited with Commentary by Raoul de Roussy de Sales, p. 60.
\end{footnotes}
Hitler's conception of the National State also coincided with that of the philosophical view that the state was supreme over the individual. As quoted before, he said that the citizen should put the community's good ahead of his own. The folkish state, he said, had to care for the welfare of its citizens by demanding that those in charge of the government should be the right people.

The best state constitution and state form is that which, with the most natural certainty, brings the best heads of the national community to leading importance and to leading influence.\footnote{Adolph Hitler, \textit{Mein Kampf}, p. 411.}

In this government, though, there must be no decisions by the majority, but only by a council of responsible persons. However, in the final adjudication, one man makes the decisions. In his ideas here Hitler somewhat agreed with Plato in his political ideas as expressed in the \textit{New Republic}. Plato advocated government by one man or a council of aristocrats, and scorned the masses of men and denied that they had any rights. The Nazis, both before and after their accession to power, agreed that the individual counted for nothing, and that he must always be subordinated to and sacrificed for the community. "The right of personal freedom stands back in the face of the duty of the preservation of the race".\footnote{Ibid., p. 669.} Certainly Hitler stood for the dominance of the
National Government as well as the rule by a dictator with the aid of a special group of men.

Hegel had said that war was not only necessary, but that it was good. Hitler held that it was only through war that Germany could hope to become great. In the place of a fundamentally stabilized condition appears a period of fighting. Hitler said: "He who rested would rust. Victory is contained only in attack and again attack".¹⁷ Even the men in the street today would recognize this sentiment as being that of Adolph Hitler, and would know that in World War II he put the doctrine into actual practice.

Hegel, too, had said that a state may violate any treaty it pleases on the plea that conditions have changed. Hitler did not hesitate to violate treaties, and he always had a plausible excuse that "conditions had changed". For example, the Versailles Treaty under which Germany lived during the first years of the Hitler regime had provided that there would be no universal military service in Germany. On March 16, 1935, Hitler decreed the reestablishment of universal military service.¹⁸ His excuse was that France had decided to extend her own military service from one to two years. Conditions had changed.

March 7, 1936 Hitler's troops reoccupied the Rhineland.¹⁹ This was in direct defiance of the Treaty of Versailles. He,


in a speech of the same date to the German Reichstag, declared that the action was justified by the action of France and Soviet Russia. These two countries had ratified a treaty, February 27, 1936, and Hitler professed to see in this agreement a threat to Germany because French troops were supposed to occupy the Rhineland area. An article in The New York Times, September 3, 1939, describes subsequent actions of Adolph Hitler where his pledged word was concerned:

Since he came to the leadership of Germany. . . Adolph Hitler has built up such a record of mendacity and duplicity which makes it all but impossible to negotiate with him. Regarding the specific issue of Poland, for example, Hitler has repeatedly declared since 1933 that the issue in effect was settled. . . .

In 1934 Hitler declared that Germany had no territorial ambition beyond the return of the Saar. . . . A year ago he twice asserted that if the Sudeten territories were ceded this would be the last territorial claim he would make in Europe. Hitler has broken each one of his pledges in turn. In turn he has made the new demands he promised not to make. In turn he has used each capitulation on the part of other statesmen to demand further concessions and surrenders.20

Hitler never lacked for an excuse for his changes in mind. His speeches justifying these changes were long harangues in which he went over and over the details and the reasons for his actions.

Hagel, too, said that war must be waged in an aggressive pattern, and that the use of the most formidable weapons was justified. Hitler's philosophy of war was "attack and

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20 Quoted from Commentary, Adolph Hitler, My New Order, p. 592.
and then attack" and, as history has recorded, he used the most formidable weapons that German ingenuity had been able to fashion. One of the most outstanding things about the struggle that was World War II was the formidable weapons that were designed and used by all parties concerned in the war.

Fichte's philosophy had held that inside its own borders the state must assume far-reaching control over all the economic activities of its citizens, and that nationally, it must be independent from the standcint of economic nationalism. McGovern says that the Nazis took over almost completely Fichte's theory of the nature and function of property. Both Fichte and the Nazis claimed that property of the individual was more or less a stewardship; if the individual misused it, it could be taken away from him. The Nazis declared that it is the duty of the state to provide employment and a subsistence wage to all persons able and willing to work. They also agreed with Fichte when he said that the government could not do this unless it had full control over all possible forms of economic activity. In trying to realize such a program, the Nazis did the following things:

1. All farmers were subjected to very severe regimentation. They were required to plant certain things at certain times, and market according to directions. All food prices were fixed, and any business not cooperating was closed.

2. The state had complete control over the currency, and
complete control over banking and credit expansion.

3. The state had complete control over industrial and commercial firms. It might at any time force an individual firm to enter a cartel. Inside the individual firm the government could prescribe types, quality, and quantity of production.

4. On the labor front, the conditions of the working man were rigidly controlled by the government, and no employee could leave his job without the permission of the government representative. Strikes and lockouts were prohibited. The government controlled every phase of working conditions.\textsuperscript{21}

Hitler, then, carried out in detail Fichte's theories about economic conditions in a country. He first applied the theory of economic nationalism, too. This was an effort of Germany's to be self-sufficient, and at the same time to dominate or strangle the trade of other countries. The chief weapon that was used in this was the cartel, which strictly speaking is

\textbf{...an organization by which producers in a given line combine to carry out a policy of production, prices or sales. It is frequently meant to apply only to an arrangement by which producers restrict their output. In either case, the members retain individual identity although the cartel sets production quotas and prices, divides exclusive territories and sometimes even operates branch plants and sales offices for all members jointly.}\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} McGovern, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 656-666.

\textsuperscript{22} Morgenthau, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 37.
In Germany cartels were made compulsory in 1933. More than one hundred operated on an international scale. Through cartels Germany dominated not only her own trade but a large portion of the world's as well. Morgenthau says that it was a menace inasmuch as it kept other countries from a natural, healthy, industrial growth. By means of intensive scientific research, Germany endeavored to create synthetic materials to replace those which she could not produce in her own country. In every way possible, economic nationalism was fostered and practiced in Nazi Germany.

Fichte also had held that it was the duty of the state to look after the education of its children. Hitler's own idea of this is found in his own words:

The folkish State, through this realization, has to direct its entire education primarily not at pumping in mere knowledge, but at the breeding of absolutely healthy bodies. Of secondary importance is the training of the mental abilities. But here again first of all the development of the character, especially the promotion of will power and determination, connected with education for joyfully assuming responsibility, and only as the last thing, scientific schooling.

This recital of Hitler's aims might go on almost indefinitely for the more Mein Kampf is read the more it appears to be a reflection of many thoughts, ideas, and theories that had been growing up in Germany for centuries. Hitler's peculiar psychological temperament plus his gift for oratory and exaggeration, seized upon the trenchant ideas

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23 Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 38.

24 Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 613.
of many men and carried them to their zenith and culmination in the greatest war of all time.

Hitler, in his endeavors to arouse the patriotism and fighting spirit of his people, continually dwelled on the accusation that the Treaty of Versailles was the cause of World War II. It is true that the enforcement of the terms of the treaty worked great hardships on the German people. This was due, not so much to the terms, as the financial depression that engulfed the whole world in 1929. German trade descended to new low levels and there was great suffering and privation. Hitler took advantage of the occasion to impress it on the German people that the Versailles Treaty was the cause of all their misfortunes. The German people, however, had been conditioned by a philosophy glorifying the nation and preaching the necessity of war.

To a country humiliated by defeat, impoverished by postwar inflation, and profoundly demoralized by the sense of its own weakness and impotence, Hitler spoke of hopes for the future, of conquest, wealth and power. He told the Germans that they had not lost the war, but had been betrayed, and that, provided they had faith in themselves and in him, all the glorious dreams of the past would come true—that they would be strong and proud again and masters of the world.25

These were sweet words to the people who had been assiduously drilled in the doctrine that they were superior people and destined to rule the world. Morgenthau says that

the desire for war has been as firmly planted in the German as desire for freedom in the American.\textsuperscript{28}

The question now arises: What effect will the disastrous defeat of the German armies have on the people of Germany? Will they change their ways of thinking and subscribe to the principles of democracy? Morgenthau has this to say:

The greatest mistake of those who urge a democratic form of government upon a reluctant German people is that they fail to grasp the realities of their subject. Democracy is one of those priceless things that cannot be given to anyone. It must be taken; it must be worked for; it must be earned.\textsuperscript{27}

If the war had been altogether the result of the ambition of a man like Hitler, there might be more feeling for optimism. Twenty years before the first World War the Kaiser had remarked: "Those who preach the nonsense of eternal peace do not understand Aryan life".\textsuperscript{28} Old Kaiser Wilhelm had proclaimed to the German people in 1914:

Remember that you are the chosen people! The spirit of the Lord has descended upon me, because I am Emperor of the Germans! I am the instrument of the most High. I am His sword, His representative. . . . May all the enemies of the German people perish! God demands their destruction, God who through my mouth, commands you to execute His will.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{28} Morgenthau, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 114.

\textsuperscript{27} Morgenthau, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 141.

\textsuperscript{26} Quoted from Morgenthau, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 111.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. 110.
Previous to this in 1905, he had cried: "We are the salt of the earth... God has created us so that we should civilize the world." Such ideas do not perish overnight when they have been instilled into a race for centuries. An idea cannot be beaten by a battle, but must be beaten by another idea. Instilling such an idea into the German people is something like trying to change an American's idea about his freedom. We Americans are taught from our earliest childhood that freedom is one of our most precious rights and heritages. It cannot be taken away from us overnight. Likewise, the German people, if there is any truth in this study as developed, will not be changed overnight even though their armies are defeated and Hitler is dead. Morgenthau says that they have the will to try it again. When we consider such a thing as ever realizing international peace, we must indeed face the hard reality that in truth and in fact: Germany is our problem.

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Ibid., p. 108.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

German philosophy has always tended to be idealistic in nature, and has contained a strong mystical element. Exponents of it have not only formulated many outstanding metaphysical theories, but they have also developed a strong political philosophy. This philosophy, it has been claimed, has been the cause of most of the German wars, because it has instilled into the German people that they are superior people, and that it is their duty to subjugate inferiors. The purpose of this study has been to examine the political and economic philosophy of the German philosophers and then to compare the ideas of these philosophers with the foremost ideas advocated by the Nazi philosophy. The results of this study are presented in the following conclusions:

1. The German nation, from its first inception, has developed as a unit. It has preserved the purity of its language and its race of people.

2. The German philosophy in its earliest development was idealistic in nature. When the other European countries were developing materialistic concepts, the German people
espoused Neo-Platonism, a philosophy that encouraged government, not by the many, but by the "fittest" or best minds.

3. The type of government developed by the German people has been monarchical in nature. There have been no great democratic movements in the country, and when unification was made of the German states in 1871, the union comprised a number of independent monarchies.

4. The German philosophers, who have been acclaimed as some of the world's greatest thinkers, have continuously, over a long period of years, developed a philosophy which has maintained that the State is supreme in all things, that frequent wars are salutary, that any means for achieving victory are permissible, that the German people are superior to all other peoples, and that the State should control all the activities of its citizens, politically, educationally, morally, and socially.

5. Hitler, by his writings and his speeches, indicated that he was a great reader and that he was interested in the problem of social conditions as well as political. It is within the bounds of reason to suppose that he read much of the philosophical writings of the German historians who put the dialectic writings of the German philosophers into the everyday language of the common people.

6. Hitler's ideas on the nature and function of the state coincided with those of the great German philosophers.
7. Hitler subscribed to the ideas that the State should control the economic life of the people, and that the policy of the State should be economic nationalism. The State, in his belief, should control every phase of German life from the cradle to the grave.

8. Hitler hated the Jews and preached the superiority of the German race. In this he agreed with the major teachings of German philosophy.

It is concluded from the study that the philosophical basis of Nazism was one of the contributing factors in bringing on World War II. Hitler was an opportunist, but even the greatest of opportunists, it is felt, could not have bent the German people to his will so completely if they had not been conditioned for centuries for such leadership. Even though Hitler is dead, the problem of Germany still remains with us because we were fighting ideas as well as men. Ideas do not die overnight.
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