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The Rhine: Germany's river, not Germany's boundary

Ernst Moritz Arndt

'The Rhine is France's natural boundary' is what Sully proved 1600 and 1610; 'the Rhine is France's natural boundary,' proclaimed Richelieu in 1625 and 1635; 'the Rhine is France's natural boundary,' declared Count d'Avaux in the 1640s at Münster, in the holy places where Hermann the Cheruscan had once made a different type of declaration to the Romans; 'the Rhine is France's natural boundary,' resounded from 1670 to 1700 in Louvois' and Colbert's speeches in Louis XIV's council of state, and the court poets Boileau and Racine sang it in the antechamber; 'the Rhine is France's natural boundary' cried the monsters on the Seine from 1790 to 1800. The vain attempts to prove this two hundred, then one hundred years ago were successful this time as a result of our misfortune and our disunity. Thanks to the unhappy peace of Lunéville, France retained all the German land beyond the Rhine with all its fortifications and defences, but all the strongholds this side of the Rhine were torn down and demolished, so that Germania, once the terror of those living on the other side, lay unprotected before them. Thus times change. We could give the French – who have always coveted our fortune and our honour and freedom – this proof with the pen and the sword, but the fact that many Germans also regarded this natural boundary as perfectly natural and sought to prove it with the French and for

the French was as bad as it was foolish. One would have thought that ten years, indeed twenty years, of blindness and misfortune might have sent a little light into their dark minds and brought the errands back into line, especially since the French had long ago overturned their own proof, but far from it. There are still many who behave, indeed who exhaust themselves in deductions and proofs, as if the Rhine as the border between France and Germany is something indisputable and settled. So effective is constant repetition, and so little are most Germans – who pride themselves on their profundity in thought and speech – accustomed to thinking. The empty echoing of foreign opinions, especially the echoing of French hocus-pocus and sophistries, has sadly become too much of a fashion on this side of the Rhine, in the country where thoroughness and depth of thought is supposed to reside. Given this state of affairs, especially this sad state of German minds and hearts, I consider it not superfluous to present our ancient, magnificent and holy River Rhine, what it was, is and will be, to the good German people, who are confused by too many political prattlers and quibblers, and to set out the whole dispute in its true proportions and correct relations, so that every loyal and unprejudiced German man can decide for himself the significance of the question of and struggle for the River Rhine.

What Henri IV with his Sully had in mind and veiled under the disguise of a general European republic; what Richelieu spent almost twenty years working for and merely initiated; what Louis XIV waged forty years of war for and achieved so little of – in our time the French have succeeded in bringing it about in five years, not because they were too brave for us but because we were too disloyal to ourselves. They have announced to the world that the Rhine is the



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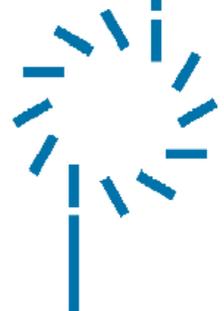
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ultimate goal of their domination; they will never demand any more land. That is what Napoleon openly proclaimed to the whole of Europe in 1800 and 1805. But how long did they keep their word? As early as 1806 the fortified town of Wesel with its outskirts on this side of the Rhine was occupied and declared to be French territory because it was a necessary and indispensable outer defence of France. The same thing happened for a few years to the entire north-west coast of Germany, from Emden to the mouth of the Elbe; indeed the Trave with Lübeck and the Baltic had become a necessary border of the great people and empire. The perpetrator apologised, as if hurt by his own violence, citing a necessity that often governs even the most moderate and just rulers, obliging them to reach out where they would not wish to. Oh, the insidious tricks of despots! But oh, the three times more disgraceful tricks of slaves! For this necessity in which the great and just Napoleon found himself, to pillage and oppress, met with exponents and apologists among German writers. May the wretches be damned, both here and there! Soon afterwards the newly created Kingdom of Holland was destroyed, Holland was referred to as a sediment of (why not an allusion to?) the French rivers and was turned into a French territory. As ideas about France's natural boundaries grew ever greater among the French and Napoleon each year, it could be foreseen that the Elbe, the Oder, the Vistula – indeed, if French arms well and truly ushered in the proof, the Danube and the Dnieper – would soon be referred to as France's natural boundary. Time and time again German delight in literature and forgetfulness of the fatherland helped the French to prove their contention with upright sedulity and beguiled the masses, who merely hear and read. But no more of this sad misery! Rather a word about the question, what are the natural boundaries of a people?

I say that the only truly legitimate natural boundary is language. The diversity of languages has been ordained by God so that the earth should not be inhabited by one great idle and base mass of slaves. The various languages form the natural partitions between peoples and countries; they form the great inner disparities between peoples, so as to bring about the excitement and struggle of lively powers and urges that keep spirits alive; for the human race has been created here for the exercise of the spirit. Peoples and countries usually settled and separated into their constituent parts on the basis of language, and towards the close of the Middle Ages they were happy enough with their respective regions, until three centuries ago a conquering frenzy began to upset God's natural order and to fling together and mingle everything foreign and dissimilar.

Look at our fatherland, Germany: how happy our border was three hundred years ago, in the time of Maximilian I and Luther! Germany meant merely the land of the German tongue, but it was entirely German. In Italy and France, and in the eastern borderlands, Germany did not directly rule anything at that time; German rulers did not hold any Italian or French territories; the 'imperial rule' over particular lands there was more name than deed. Language formed the natural boundary in the south, along the Alps and the Ardennes, and wherever German and Flemish were spoken was known as Germany; only the county of Little Burgundy (Franche-Comté) and part of Artois and Flanders could have been called non-German. In the north our Scandinavian half-brothers were cut off from us in their natural linguistic boundaries. We had no subjects in either in Poland or Hungary. In Bohemia and Moravia some millions of slaves belonged to Germany. They had to belong to us, being surrounded on all sides by German lands and left



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behind as foreign elements from the teeming masses of earlier centuries. There were also a few such elements in southern Austria, Lusatia, Silesia and Eastern Pomerania, but too few to be counted. A large, extensive coastline running along the Baltic from the Vistula to the Neva was still reckoned as part of Germany, as brave German knights had conquered it three centuries earlier for the empire and Christianity, populated it with German inhabitants, embellished it with towns and villages and introduced the German constitution, manners and language there. A similar German colony lay beyond the Tisza and at the foot of the Carpathians, namely Transylvania; it served Hungary as Bohemia served Germany, since as a smaller, enclosed area it had to obey the larger state. As Germany then stood, so stood almost all the other countries of Europe, and they were named after the languages, so that e.g. Navarre and other territories this side of the Pyrenees were also known as Spain because the Spanish or Basque language held sway there. From time immemorial languages have also mostly determined the names of countries. Rome had long ruled the whole of Italy up to the Alps, but the land this side of the Apennines on both banks of the Po up to the Alps was still called Gaul because it was inhabited by Gauls.

Language, then, forms the true boundary of peoples. Only a particular segment of a people living surrounded by other peoples as a smaller part of a larger whole must of course accept that they belong to the larger state and not the distant ancestral homeland; the remainder, who live together and speak the same language, belong together by God and by nature, and these wise custodians of human happiness have usually organised things in such a way that a language rarely goes beyond the bounds within which a people can be overseen and governed by a government.

In addition to language, centuries of experience – which is the best and most solid basis for resolving our question – show that mountain ranges and seas form natural boundaries, not in themselves but because they form linguistic boundaries and thus separate peoples through diversity and dissimilarity, and through the resulting aversion and hatred. The mountain range above Thessaly and Acarnania and Aetolia separated the Greeks from the barbarians. The Alps form the linguistic boundary between the Italians and the Germans and the Italians and the French. The Ardennes Forest, the Vosges and the Jura separate the German and French languages; but only to the extent that the languages are mixed along and occasionally across the borders. The sea has made the Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic languages much more different from today's German language than they would have been if it had been possible to walk from Mecklenburg and Pomerania to Zealand and Sweden. England – if we consider the events and developments of its history from the eleventh to the fifteenth century – would probably be almost French, had not God cut the narrow Channel between England and France. The sea does indeed form a connection between peoples, in fact one of the greatest, but it does not connect the masses; it merely hastens people's journeys to one another, the traffic of goods and necessities and the communication of customs, arts, sciences and inventions. What keeps the masses of peoples apart, however, also keeps languages apart; it becomes a natural boundary. Thus mountains and borders become natural boundaries, as do large deserts and swamps, because they form an obstacle to the connection of one country with another. But rivers have never been, and can never be, natural boundaries.



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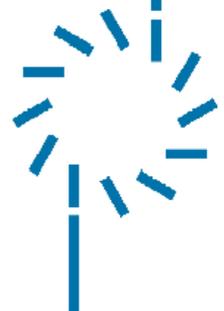
Where rivers flow – those that deserve to be called rivers – the land generally drops down and levels out; it becomes a plain, usually a fertile plain, where the most people live, the richest fields flourish and the fattest flocks graze: in other words where there are the fewest difficulties for large groups of people to support themselves and to pass from one side of the river to the other. Whereas a sea or gulf can often be defended by two or three ships, or a mountain range by 5,000 or 10,000 brave men for months against 50,000 or 100,000 men, a force of 100,000 can rarely bar another 100,000 from crossing a river. A river, then, is not a boundary, either in peace or in war. In peacetime people come together on both banks with the greatest of ease and communicate languages, customs and manners with one another; they become and remain a people. In wartime a river does not form a defensive border like a mountain range, sea or desert; it only provides one artificially if it is fortified, but an artificial border of this kind can be created anywhere. The French and Germans used to have such a border along their entire boundary. History, the most legitimate teacher and judge of such matters, does not recognise rivers as natural boundaries between continents and countries. It is not the Volga or the Ob that forms the border between Europe and Asia in the north; it is not the Neva that separates the Swedes and the Finns but the Gulf of Bothnia; it is not the Ganges that forms the border between India and the countries beyond it, but large forests, bogs and mountains twenty to fifty miles to the east; it is not the Indus that forms the natural boundary between India and Persia, but a desert further westwards in the south and mountain ranges in the north: both banks of the river are Indian; it is not the Danube that forms the border between Germany and Italy or between Poland and Hungary but the Alps and the Carpathians. Only the Euphrates has at times been like a natural border; but it is not so much the river as the desert that runs along it. The Atlas, the Taurus, the Caucasus, the Imaus, the Alps, the

Pyrenees – also extensive swamp regions and most seas – but seas less than high mountains – those are natural boundaries, and the only true ones, and with them the greatest natural boundary, language.

Following these preliminary and not untimely remarks, I should now explain the meaning of my title, The Rhine, Germany's River but not Germany's Boundary. By this title I mean that both banks of the Rhine and the surrounding lands must be German, as they previously were; the stolen lands and people must be reconquered for the fatherland. German freedom cannot exist without the Rhine. This opinion is based first of all on my love for my fatherland and my people; that love may seem honourable to the upright, but it is unsatisfactory for putting proofs on paper. Secondly it is based on Justice, Politics, Honour and Loyalty to the German name. These four witnesses can confirm their statements with letters and seals; they can make their testimony comprehensible and legitimate to everyone. I shall interrogate each one of them and allow any impartial judge to reach a verdict.

My first witness can be heard: it is Justice. Its verdict is in its speech itself. Wherever Fleminglandish (a dialect of the greater German language) is spoken in the south-west of Germany, that area was German from time immemorial and must become German again.¹ My German border with

¹ "Fleminglandish": Arndt's own awkward reference (*vlamländisch*) to the dialects of the Southern Netherlands; that this area is seen as the Southwestern outpost of his notional Germany illustrates Arndt's Prussian outlook. The opportunistic slippage of *deutsch* to refer, sometimes narrowly to the German language, sometimes more inclusively to the Germanic language family, is also characteristic of this discourse. [SPIN note]



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France takes a straight line from Dunkirk to the south below Mons and Luxembourg, runs from there to Saarlouis, then follows the Saar and the Vosges where German is spoken to Montbéliard, whence it continues to the Rhine bend at Basle. Justice reaches its deductions historically; it must be based on possession: thus it gives a brief outline of the history of the land situated between the Rhine and this line that I have just drawn.

The earliest information we have about this land and its inhabitants, which goes back to about half a century BC, is from Caesar, the conqueror of Gaul. His description explicitly says that Gaul was inhabited by three peoples very different in language, customs and constitutions. In the south-west, around both banks of the Garonne and the Cévennes up into the Pyrenees, lived the Aquitanians, a people related to the northern Spanish; in the centre, between the Seine and Marne and the Atlantic Ocean and the Alps, dwelt the Celts or Gauls; and in the north, across the Seine up to the Rhine, ranged the Belgae, who lived not only in the so-called Netherlands of later centuries but also in a large part of the territories later known as Champagne, Île de France, Artois, Picardy and Normandy, i.e. far to the south of the Ardennes Forest, the Scheldt and the Vosges. These Belgae were the most warlike and bravest of all the inhabitants of Gaul and cost Caesar the fiercest and bloodiest battles. But let us hear what he had to say about them.²

“When Caesar asked them what tribes there were and how many under arms, and what they were capable of in war, he was told this:

Most of the Belgae were descended from the Germani. They had crossed the Rhine in earlier times on account of the fertility of the land and settled there, driving out the Gauls who

inhabited those regions; and they were the only ones who had defended their borders against the Teutons and the Cimbri, when the whole of Gaul was overrun in the time of our forefathers. Based on the recollection of those deeds they enjoyed great esteem and took great pride in their military prowess. As to their number, the Remi said that they had accurate information, since, being connected with them by kinship and intermarriage, they had learned how many troops each member of the general council of the Belgae had pledged for war. The mightiest of them in bravery, repute and number of men were the Bellovaci; they could muster 100,000 armed men and had pledged 60,000 hand-picked men out of that number, and demanded for themselves the command of the whole war. Their nearest neighbours were the Suessiones, who held the most extensive and fertile lands; they had twelve towns and had pledged 50,000 armed men. An equal number had been pledged by the Nervii, who are reckoned the fiercest of them and live far away to the north; the Atrebates pledged 15,000, the Ambiani 10,000, the Morini 25,000, the Menapii 9,000, the Caleti 10,000, the Veliocassi and Viromandui the same number, the Condrusi, the Eburones, the Caeroesi and the Paemani, who are called by the common name of Germani, about 40,000.”

We shall make some remarks on this period and give an approximate outline of the situations, homes and nature of those tribes. We shall proceed from east to west across Belgium, highlighting the most important points, following Caesar’s descriptions and hints and those of Tacitus, one-and-a-half centuries later.

If one travelled from east to west, the first Belgae one encountered were the Treveri, living on the banks of the Moselle and Saar along the Hunsrück and Vosges up to the Meuse. Their infantry was strong but they were mainly

² Caesar, de Bello Gallico II, 4. [Arndt’s note]



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famed for their superb cavalry of terrible, almost Germanic bravery and defiance. Tacitus explicitly says of them that they and the equally brave and freedom-loving Nervii were proud of their claims of Germanic descent, as if this bloody fame distinguished them from the cowardly Gauls. They were the head of many small tribes, among which Caesar mentions the Eburones and the Condrusi.

To the immediate west and north-west of them up to the Rur and along both banks of the Meuse dwelt various small tribes, the Segni, Condrusi, Eburones, Caeroesi and Paemani, which Caesar explicitly refers to as 'Germani'. In later times they formed a single mighty people known as the Tongri or Tungri. The sound of their name still lives on in the city of Tongeren on the other side of the Meuse.

To the west of these, in the flat lands where the walker now travels the road to Leuven and Brussels, lived the bold and belligerent Aduatuci, who were descendants of the all-conquering Cimbri and Teutons. When they began their march into southern Gaul and Italy they left a large part of their baggage which they were unable to take with them on the Rhine, and several thousands of their warriors remained behind to guard it. Following their defeat, those who had been left behind waged war for many years with the neighbouring peoples in various configurations, until finally peace was concluded by common consent, and they chose to settle in this region.

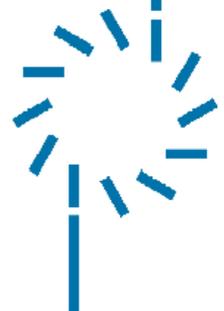
In the swampy and wooded country to the north and north-west of these and the Eburones, from the Scheldt to the lower Meuse, dwelt the Nervii, one of the most numerous and defiant peoples, whose terrible belligerence Caesar experienced in many dangerous battles. Just as the Treveri had the most famed and strongest cavalry of all the Belgae, the Nervii were particularly terrible and powerful as infantry. When Caesar first

obtained intelligence on them, their vanquished neighbours reported of them that they forbade all merchants access to them, as well as the import of wine and other luxury goods, because they believed these weakened spirits and male virtue. They were defiant and very brave men; they condemned and reviled the other Belgae who had submitted to the Roman people and abandoned the virtue handed down to them by their forefathers; they declared that they would neither send envoys nor accept any peace terms.

Further north-west of these, near the mouth of the Meuse and the island region of present-day Zeeland, which undoubtedly looked different at that time, the Menapii lived in swamps and fens, long defying the Romans from their inaccessible location when most of the other tribes of the Belgae had already been vanquished.

To the south-west, beyond the Menapii and the Nervii, dwelt the Bellovaci, in broad marches extending beyond the Somme; they were the most numerous of all the Belgic tribes. Their principal fortified town was called Bratuspantium. They ruled over many small tribes and long held out with an unshakeable love of liberty.

These were the most warlike and significant Belgic tribes. Following brave struggles for their freedom they were defeated by superior Roman power and military discipline and Caesar's spirit, because they did not hold together in solid unity, and because sadly, Gauls and Germani helped to suppress their fellow countrymen and tribesmen. Roman treachery and cunning also helped in their subjugation; a conqueror, even one as gentle and kind as Julius Caesar, cannot subjugate countries without committing atrocities. History should never should forget how splendidly the Nervii, Treveri, Bellovaci, Aduatuci and Eburones fought for



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their freedom, and with what heroism Juduciomarus of the Treveri and above all the great Ambiorix of the Eburones held out against the greatest Roman of their age. Caesar himself recounts quite openly that he had men who had fought for the honour and liberty of their fatherland executed as criminals, that he had the Belgic general Commius attacked by assassins, that under the guise of peace negotiations he most shamefully betrayed the Usipetes and Tencteri who had advanced across the Rhine – but that openness does not make the disgrace honourable. These unhappy Belgae were vanquished by Caesar at first by cunning and violence; gradually Roman pleasures to which they became accustomed placed them in servitude; finally, most of them learned to serve in patient ignominy like the other Gauls; indeed, they finally gained a taste for idleness and weakness – abhorrent to their forefathers –, having forgotten how they had once been.

We should think of these Belgae, explicitly referred to by the Roman writers as ‘Germani’, as being most Germanic in the north and more mixed with Gaulish manners and language in the south. The northern ones were also distinct from the others by their greater belligerence and more ardent love of liberty since their brothers, the Germani, as neighbours afforded them constant practice in war and a vivid example of freedom.

Alongside these Belgae, on the edge of the Rhine, lived various Germanic tribes, whose borders and manners I shall briefly outline.

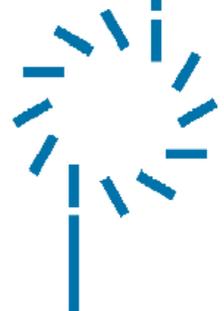
From where the Jura drops down towards the Vosges, from Montbéliard and Porrentruy towards Mainz, between the Vosges mountains and the Rhine lived the Tribocci, Nemetes and Vangiones, of whom the Romans merely report the names but no warlike deeds.

To the north of these, beyond the Rhine, dwelt the Chatti, the bravest, freest and most warlike people of all the Germani, also the most expert in the art of warfare, who even had an order of warrior knights. They are the forefathers of the Hessians, and their much praised virtue has not degenerated in their descendants.

Further away, around the Sieg, the Ubii were transplanted across the river at the time of Emperor Augustus to help guard the borders. A city and colony were founded for them, known as Colonia Agrippina or Colonia Ubiorum, and later known by the illustrious name of Cologne. The Ubii soon became loyal servants of the Romans, and they and their city were long loathed by the free tribes around them.

Alongside these, further west, dwelt the Usipetes and Tencteri, famed for their superb cavalry; then the Sicambri, fierce and warlike. 40,000 of them were transplanted across the Rhine thirty years after Caesar, through Tiberius’ trickery, so that they would learn to love and defend Roman servitude. Somewhat further from the Rhine lived the Bructeri, Chamavi and Angrivarii, then the Frisii on the North Sea coast.

Lastly, the Rhine ended in the country inhabited by the Batavi and Mattiaci, who lived between its arms down to the sea. The Romans merely called their country the ‘Rhine island’ or the ‘island of the Batavi’. The Batavi were a Chatti people who had migrated further west as a result of an internal revolt, and were equally famed for their bravery. They soon became more or less confederates of the Romans; they were ruled by various kings and did not pay tribute but often received a kind of tribute under the heading of subsidy; they were the Swiss of the Romans, to whom they supplied



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men and cavalry. Their bravery often endangered Germanic freedom, and it was mainly through their arms that Britain was eventually vanquished by the Romans.

The Cananefates, a small tribe, were of the same origin.

Alongside them at the very ends of the Meuse and the Rhine lived the Mattiaci, similar to them, except that land and sky made them even more defiant.

All these tribes living on the other side of the Rhine, the right bank, often roamed across the river and dwelt for years in certain areas, until the Romans reinforced the Rhine with castles, fortifications, bridgeheads and earthworks, making crossing more difficult and more hazardous, though not preventing it. Caesar had only defeated and vanquished the Belgae because there was a lack of unity and consensus among the tribes, and because they failed to come to the timely aid either of one another or of their neighbours and brothers, the Germani. Caesar's successors in command of the Rhine followed the old Roman policy of enslaving the peoples by stirring them up and dividing them against one another and by weakening and bribing them with gold, subsidies and military service in the Roman camp, with Roman titles and honours. On the other bank of the Rhine too, Germani began to become subservient and Germanic rulers flaunted their Roman necklaces and brooches and Roman names and titles, as if jewellery and finery made servitude a virtue. Then Hermann arose, a ruler of the Cherusci, united the armies of several Germanic tribes and dampened the arrogance of Rome to such an extent that it was unable to regain the upper hand on that side. Hermann would also have liked to carry the war across the river into Belgium and incite the Germani living in those territories and subjugated to the Romans and the whole of Gaul to rebel and fight for freedom; but all the Germani wanted was to defend and assert their

damaged liberty. Once the dangers had been driven away they returned to their respective homes; among them there were also rulers – traitors to the fatherland bought by the Romans – who prevented a general conspiracy and a joint rebellion of the peoples against them.

And yet the Belgae under Roman rule had not yet completely degenerated from their old virtue and bravery. The freedom-loving and warlike Treveri and Nervii had often made vain attempts to shake off the heavy foreign yoke. Finally, from the year 68 after Christ, when several Roman generals were fighting for world dominance after the death of the odious Nero, a great hope of liberty arose. The Batavi had rebelled, led by Claudius Civilis of the royal clan, and had called upon the surrounding Germani and Belgae to fight for freedom and revenge against Roman tyranny. Roman fortifications were taken, Roman camps stormed, and legions lay slain; the confederates fell away; many Germani, those dwelling closest to the banks of the Rhine, and among the Belgae the Treveri, Nervii and Tungri bestirred themselves. But it was all conducted with more impetuosity and savagery than steadfastness and unity. Because the whole enterprise lacked a stable alliance, because there was no one man in command of all, the bold gesture did not succeed. Once Vespasian was certain of his power in Rome, Roman legions moved from all sides towards the Rhine; the Germani returned to peace and quiet, as Veleda, their prophetess, had been bribed with Roman gold; the Belgae, who never planned anything in common, became separated and were vanquished one by one; finally Claudius Civilis too concluded peace with the Roman general Cerealis, and everything returned to the way it had been before.

Following the great and mighty wars that Drusus, Tiberius and Germanicus had waged against the Germani on



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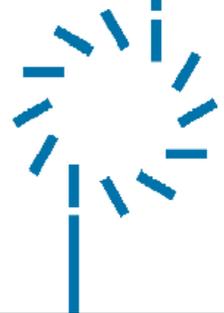
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the Rhine and the Weser, the Romans abandoned their hope and their attempts to subjugate Germania. They guarded their Rhine borders with a chain of fortifications and castles; the surrounding Germanic tribes merely baited them from time to time with skirmishes, which rarely turned into wars, for they were careful not to force them into an alliance by waging large-scale campaigns within their borders. Often relations were so friendly that many thousands of Germanic youths reinforced the Roman legions as paid auxiliaries and travelled as far as the Orient and the furthest coasts of Caledonia. The situation towards the close of the second century AD changed, however: two mighty Germanic confederations arose on the Rhine, namely the Alemanni on the Upper Rhine and the Franks on the Lower Rhine between the colony of the Ubii and the Batavi. Several German tribes merged, and the new names came into being, although it is not possible to be certain about their meaning and when they began to develop. Most likely the Sicambri, Usipetes, Tencteri, Bructeri and Marsi, who lived closest to the Rhine, contributed the main constituents of the Franks; we are told that the Alemanni included many from Gaulish tribes. The heaviest and bloodiest wars were waged against these two peoples for two centuries; in Italy the Romans often saw Alemanni beyond the Alps, indeed a few times on the other side of the Po, and several times the Franks penetrated deep into Gaul, causing terrible devastation; indeed, around the middle of the third century they even crossed the Pyrenees and pillaged in Spain as far as the Ebro. Finally, at the beginning of the fifth century, when Rome's inevitable destiny approached its fulfilment, and the legions were withdrawn from the Rhine on account of the desperate situation in Italy and Gaul, the Germani flooded unhindered across the lands that had been Germanic since the earliest times. The Burgundians settled on the Upper Rhine, the Alemanni on the Middle Rhine up to the Vosges and the Moselle, and the Franks flooded across the Lower Rhine

ever further into the fertile marshes of western Belgium, where the warlike Tungri, Nervii and Menapii and the northernmost Bellovaci dwelt; they spread out around the Rur, the Meuse and on both banks of the Scheldt down to the sea. Those Romans and Roman sympathisers who had lived in these lands fled before the swords of the barbarians deeper into Gaul, where, once all the surrounding area had been occupied and subjugated by the Germani, a remnant of Roman rule survived for half a century around the strongholds of Sigdunum and Paris. In this way the Germani swept everything foreign out of the Rhine area and central and northern Belgium. Then around the year 450 came the mighty Attila, king of the Huns, with his devastating forces and shattered many Roman towns and strongholds on the Rhine and elsewhere, wiping out Roman culture and Roman vices at the same time. God had ordained that this ancient Germanic land should become truly Germanic and be and be known in future as German.

Finally, towards the close of the fifth century, after so many German tribes had already founded states on the rubble of the Roman empire, it fell almost at last to the Franks to found the mightiest of all the Germanic empires. Clovis (or Louis), one of their kings, had united the disparate tribes of the Franks under a single rule, and within thirty years conquered almost all of Gaul up to the Rhône and the Cévennes and imposed tribute on the Alemanni on both sides of the Rhine. His successors continued his work for two centuries, requiring tribute from the lands of the Burgundians around the Saône and between the Alps and the Rhône, and beyond the Jura Helvetia, most of which was also Burgundian by now, and the Bavarians in former Germania and Hermunduri (or Thuringians) in Francia and Thuringia and the Chatti. A few slave tribes in north-east Germania



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also paid tribute from time to time. Only the Saxons, Angarii and Frisii along the North Sea and in the lands sacred to freedom around the Weser, Lippe and Ems still lived in unconstrained heathendom and unbroken liberty.

The dynasty of the conqueror Clovis of the Franks was weakened and degenerated by vice and crime. In the eighth century it was overthrown by the Germanic dynasty of Pepin of Herstal. The fourth and most formidable member of this dynasty to rule the kingdom of the Franks was Charles, who has gone down in history as Charlemagne. He was a great and warlike king and founded an empire from the Pyrenees to the Elbe and from the Leitha to the Ems, the like of which had not been seen in Europe since Roman times. Conscious of his power and majesty, he had himself crowned by the Pope in Rome in the year 800 and adopted the title of Roman Emperor. Charlemagne had united France, Italy and most of the country henceforth known as Germany by force of arms, and on his death in 814 he left this vast empire to his son Louis, who went down in history as Louis the Pious and ruled the peoples without his father's prestige. Louis divided the land among his three sons, and that which had been unnaturally forced together purely by violence soon fell apart again, for only kindred things hold together in the long run. Louis' eldest son Chlothar was given the title and dignity of Emperor of Rome and was granted Italy, most of the former Burgundian kingdom and the whole area bordered by the Rhine, the Ardennes, the Somme and the sea; his second son Louis, generally known as 'Louis the German', was given all the land beyond the Rhine; his third son Charles was granted the south-western part of France, then customarily known as 'Neustria'. But towards the close of the ninth century, once the line founded by Chlothar had died out, all the lands between the Rhine and the sea where German language and customs held sway joined with north-eastern Francia, which henceforth

existed as a kingdom of its own and was known as the 'German Empire'. This large, beautiful south-western area was long known as Lotharingia or the Duchy of Franconia; what subsequently became known as Lorraine was only a small part of it. The rulers and nobles who had ruled almost independently here in the far south-west of Germany since the extinction of the great dynasties of the Salian Franks and Hohenstaufens still cleaved to the German Empire and were regarded as imperial princes; on the other hand, many of the former Burgundian lands that had been added to the empire of the Germans since the eleventh century had become increasingly alienated from the German Empire because of the diversity of language and customs, which were Romance and French, and finally almost split off from it.

2

In the fourteenth century King John, the second king of the House of Valois, had granted one of his sons the French Duchy of Burgundy. Through fortune, the virtues of justice and bravery, through marriages and treaties, he and his descendants gained such extensive and rich lands in the north-west of their domain that they could be compared with the most powerful kings. Around the middle of the fifth century Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, not only ruled over the Duchy of Burgundy and the county of Little Burgundy but was also ruler over almost all the land that extended across the Somme and the Ardennes around the Scheldt and Meuse up to the Zuiderzee. A powerful medium-sized state developed between France and Germany, a new Kingdom of Burgundy, more powerful than any of the former Burgundian kingdoms. But not long after his death that state disintegrated. The treacherous, insidious cunning of Louis XI, King of France, wove such dense, fine spider's webs around Philip's son and successor, Charles the Bold of



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Burgundy, that he could not escape his downfall. When Charles fell in the Battle of Nancy in 1476, Louis XI, who was ready for anything, stripped away the Duchy of Burgundy and many French-speaking towns and villages from the lands of the Burgundian empire and reunited them with France. The remainder, the northern part of the domain, consisting mainly of German-speaking lands, and the county of Little Burgundy were saved for Charles' daughter, Mary of Burgundy, who married Archduke Maximilian of Austria. Burgundy thus became Habsburgian, and forty years later Spanish, as Maximilian's descendant Charles, Archduke of Austria and Duke of Burgundy, also became King of Spain at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Towards the end of his life this Charles, known as the German Emperor Charles V, forged the closest links between his Burgundian patrimony and Germany again, incorporating it under the name of the Burgundian Circle, partly – so some say – so as to gain influence over German affairs and perhaps the honour of the German crown for his son Philip, and partly so that these lands would have a strong foothold and protection in the German part of the Empire against France's power and lust for sovereignty. Because this Philip II wished to rule free men tyrannically and imposed his will as law, the northern part of the Burgundian Circle started to break away from Spanish rule in the 1570s. After a long struggle, it founded a republic of its own, known as the Republic of the Seven United Provinces or of the United Netherlands, comprising the land that the Frisii, Batavi, Mattiaci, Cananefates, Menapii and northern Nervii, the Eburones and Sicambri had once inhabited, ancient homes of freedom; the rest remained part of Spain and Germany.

The unhappy Thirty Years' War finally enabled the French to achieve what they had so long striven for: they moved part of their border to the Upper Rhine. Alsace was ceded to

them, and several German fortified towns on the other bank of the river remained occupied by them, so that unarmed Germany lay permanently open to them. Over a period of forty years, Louis XIV tried to continue by violence the process initiated here, but he did not succeed. He merely stripped away part of the Spanish Burgundian lands, mainly French-speaking towns and villages; the remaining Flemish and German-speaking lands between the Rhine and the ocean remained part of Germany. In the 1730s the Duchy of Lotharingia, which was virtually hemmed in by French territories and the Alsace, was united with France. It took the French revolutionary war to wrest the splendid lands around the Rhine, the Moselle, the Meuse and the Scheldt – originally and from time immemorial German-speaking lands – from German freedom and the lineage of the fatherland. We lost them too easily and gave them up too thoughtlessly, because we did not recognise their value and the significance and importance of owning them.

One might say to me: these lands are really Frankish, except for the part between the Rhine, the Vosges and the Moselle, where Alemanni last ruled before the dominion of the great Frankish monarchy. When the Romans relinquished the Rhine at the beginning of the fifth century, the Franks did indeed rule the land between the Ardennes, the Rhine, the Moselle and the sea. From there they went further south, penetrating into Gaul and conquering it. Hence they have done nothing but retake their land and reunite their true fellow clan members with them, for many descendants of the old Franks undoubtedly lived in Brabant and around Liège, Maastricht and Jülich.

This argument does not seem implausible. I would answer it as follows:



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The Franks that we speak of here are no longer part of world history. Some of them intermixed with the Gauls and Romans and became a new people of half-breeds known as 'French', so little similar to the old Franks as the present-day Lombards on the Ticino are to the Margravians around the Havel, where Lombards may have dwelt 2,000 years ago. Those who remained in their old homes are true Teutons and Germans to this day, apart from a few French traits, and have little in common in terms of manners and spirit with the people descended from Gauls, Romanised citizens and Franks. Hence even in the period from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, when the German Empire had absolutely no compelling and coherent power, they always stood by and formed part of the German Empire, not the French, instinctively drawn by the inclination and nature of the people. They remained parts of Germany until the last fifteen years, which have overturned and destroyed so much that was ancient and venerable. With the same justice with which the French claim these lands could the Castilians and English, who are no longer Germans, claim the lands around Kherson and Kiev or around Münster and Hamburg, saying: here is the country of the old Visigoths, here dwelt once upon a time the Angles and Saxons, we are retaking the land of our forefathers; and the people of Rouen and Salerno could enter the ports of Christiania and Drontheim, crying: here, Normans! and Norman Empire! we are retaking what is ours. Descendants of the old Franks lived on the Rhine, the Rur and the Meuse, in Brabant and Flanders, and some French are descendants of the Franks; but the land of the Franks is not the land of the French. As it remained German and did not become Romanic, it has justly always claimed to belong to the Germans. Germans, therefore, ought not thoughtlessly to give up their brothers who are so desirous of belonging to them, but fight to the death for their liberation, and willingly leave to the French what is French.

Justice has spoken and stated that the possession, descent, language, nature and inclination of these lands and peoples is for the German Empire. Now Politics takes the stand and proves that Germany's independence and Europe's security cannot exist if the French hold the Rhine and the German lands beyond the Rhine. The general interest of rulers and peoples agrees with Justice that France must give back not only the booty of recent years but also Alsace, and restore it to its old borders, which are also the borders of its language.

Politics speaks as follows, simply and concisely, for truth needs no rambling circumlocutions:

For centuries the French have cried: The Rhine naturally belongs to France; without the Rhine France has no completion and foundation of power, but with the Rhine its border is determined and closed for ever, and further it will and must not strive. Many have even allowed themselves to be beguiled by this claptrap and echoed it, saying that the opinion, the claim is not entirely unreasonable. They have not realised, or have indeed been too stupid to realise, that the French have merely put forward the Rhine and the natural boundary of the Rhine as a pretext; however they were perfectly well aware how the Rhine ensured their dominion over Germany, for that dominion was their undeclared aim. Scarcely had they gained a foothold on the Rhine, scarcely had they taken Landau, Breisach, Philippsburg and other strongholds on the river, than their pernicious influence on Germany began: their schemes to dissolve the last ties of German unity never stopped; even German nobles stood on their side against their own fatherland and its freedom. I would merely recall the war that began against the United Netherlands in 1672 through the arrogance of Louis XIV and the War of the Spanish



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Succession. The most recent years with their woeful memories are so fresh in our minds that I need only hint at them.

I say openly, if France retains the River Rhine with its lands, it retains its equilibrium-destroying ascendancy not only over Germany but also over the rest of Europe. And I can prove my assertion.

The north-western course of the River Rhine from Basel to Rotterdam bends like a knee. If it had chosen to continue its initial direction from Konstanz to Basel in a straight line towards the west, it would have entered the sea somewhere near Boulogne or Calais, and then it could perhaps have become a French border river. Now, however, due to its various twists and turns it roars a hundred German miles to the north-west, flanking the whole of southern and north-western Germany, and under foreign power it dominates the German territories beyond for a breadth of forty to fifty miles. It is a bent knee that France, if it so desires, can place on Germany's neck to strangle it. We have felt the terrible pressure of that knee and are scarcely able to draw breath. If France has the Rhine, all the western land up to the Elbe lies open to it, and it can push its armies eastwards with impunity as far as the Lech and the sources of the Main and Saale; in other words a good half of Germany lies powerless before it, and the other half will soon have to follow the subservient, trembling part. For France's geographical situation and strength with its other borders are such that with possession of the Rhine the whole of Switzerland and Upper Italy become dependent on it, so that – not even counting the augmentation of resources and population – it gains a superiority that places its neighbours at its mercy whenever it so desires (and it will always so desire).

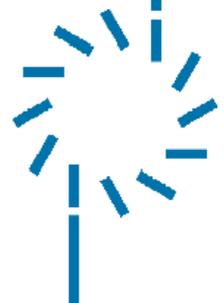
To make what has been said here crystal clear to everyone, let me set out the two extremes.

I presuppose Germany in its old borders. To the south these separate it from Italy by the Alps, from France by the Ardennes; in the east they run alongside Dalmatia, Croatia, Hungary and Poland; in the north the Baltic and the Eider separate the Germans from their Scandinavian brothers; in the west they are enclosed by the North Sea. Likewise I take France in its old borders between the Ardennes Forest, the Jura, the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Pyrenees and the Atlantic Ocean. I assume that Germany with all its lands is a single monarchy under one ruler, as France is, and assert that under this condition the two states are approximately equally powerful.

Germany in those borders under one ruler would perhaps have a population of around 30 million, France perhaps five or six million fewer; thus Germany's population would be larger by a fifth or a sixth.

France, on the other hand, has a double – indeed threefold – superiority in terms of its situation, thus amply compensating for that small population superiority. France has been given defences by nature that Germany lacks. Thanks to the Atlantic Ocean, the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean and the Alps it is surrounded by bulwarks against foreign attack. Only part of its northern border with Germany, about one eighth of its expanse, is more easily accessible and needs to be protected rather by artificial defences. In contrast, Germany's entire eastern border with Hungary and Poland, part of its northern border with Denmark, and most of its south-western border with France is by nature open and needs to be defended artificially: in other words, half of Germany's borders are easily accessible.

This places Germany at a severe disadvantage vis-à-vis France, amply offsetting the insignificant advantage of its



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population size! The other disadvantage is known by everyone who knows his history: that Europe is always threatened by a danger from the east that can never come from the west. From the east extends the broad expanse of countries with their teeming peoples and all the present and future dangers, who must first assail Germany and destroy Germany before they can reach Italy and France. From the west danger can only come by ship; but armadas have never brought hundreds of thousands into a country, let alone hordes numbering millions. So –

But someone may object, saying: you have just been speaking so eloquently against France about the dangers that threaten others through its possession of the River Rhine, and about the dominion over Switzerland and Upper Italy that must proceed from that river; tell me, does the Rhine suddenly become something different, does its effect become different, if it lies in the power of the Germans rather than the French? Certainly: very, very different.

If the Germans hold the Rhine, that influence on the countries just mentioned hovers in equilibrium between them and the French; if the French hold the Rhine they have that influence alone.

This is easy to prove. For anyone who understands history and geography a mere hint should suffice, so clear is the truth.

France, imagined in its old borders, which we would call its natural boundaries, already has a powerful influence over Switzerland and Italy thanks to the long mountain range that extends down the Jura along Lake Geneva to the Mediterranean as far as the Var at Nice. It presses on these two weaker countries as a great, formidable monarchy. If it were to add the Rhine to these borders they would be forced to serve it. If Germany regains its Rhine, however, it will also have pressure

of its own, which by no means cancels out the French pressure but does curb it, and which is in turn curbed by the French pressure.

These are the main reasons why the Rhine and its lands must become German again. Another very important reason lies in the constitution and character of the two peoples under discussion here. The constitution of the German people is federal, and it will always remain more or less federal or republican in future; hence it will never be possible to use and abuse the people by the fiercest and most arbitrary violence – at least not for long, even if an exceptional and monstrous person were to succeed in this for some time, or if a monstrous, all-shattering event were perhaps to tear the people out of their normal state. The character of the German people is quiet, moderate, fair, rather too calm than too wild. Its history proves that it always prefers to retain its own rather than conquer something foreign. It was praised for this 1,700 years ago by Tacitus, when Roman armies lay beaten by the Germani on the River Rhine. The Germans have never been a conquering people, except in the wild period of the fifth and sixth centuries when everything was overturned, when the world was to become a new and different world and take on a completely new form; then all the continents and peoples fell upon one another and exhausted themselves for over a century in fierce revolutions and bloody battles, until Rome lay in ruins and the foundations for a new life had been laid. The constitution of the French is monarchic, and always has been; under capable, meddling rulers it always becomes despotic, so that the French can often be abused in the most arbitrary and cruellest way for half a century, to their own and others' ruin. The French character is thoughtless, erratic, restless, unfair, always veering between too much and too



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little, hence not capable of a stable freedom; because they cannot rule themselves through their own will they have to blindly obey a stranger. They have propensities to be a conquering people, but few propensities to use what they have conquered. Their neighbours will never have peace from them. We Germans can tell stories of their restlessness, treachery and injustice, as can the Italians and the Spanish. This is not merely true of them today; they have not merely become thus as a result of the revolution; it is not merely thanks to Napoleon that they have overstepped all bounds. They have been that way since the beginnings of their history; they will remain that way until its end. Superiority is dangerous in the hands of every people; it is most dangerous in their hands.

Many of the minor political reasons why the Rhine must be German and not French could be adduced and highlighted. We could also shed light on the major reasons just set out from many sides and represent them in such a way that three or four new reasons emerge from each one: an art of representation in which the French are past masters and by which they delude many dunces with appearances that ultimately look almost like truths. We, however, disdain such un-German conjuring tricks, which the justice and truth of our cause does not need; indeed, we shall only be understood by those who are accustomed to weighing up reasons and not counting them.

Having rehearsed these major reasons, it is as clear as day that the great, holy battle in which we are engaged with the French can have no first and last objective other than to regain the land that has been torn away from us and to restore freedom to the people of our language and nature who have been turned into French by violence. God, who has done so much for us, will help us in this and instil in the hearts of the rulers and peoples responsible for the present-day decision the necessity of achieving this goal, so that they do not let up until they have

achieved it. So much fortune from God will have been in vain, so many noble and good Spanish, English, Russians and Germans will have died in vain with the greatest loyalty and courage, if we stop with the goal only half achieved. It is not only this Napoleon, these French now living who are terrible: God will certainly punish them, and all those who with them have brought so much misfortune to the world with the most evil of intentions. But if the Rhine with the beautiful lands beyond remains with the French, the future rulers will stand against us like him, the future French will pillage, overrun and plague us like the present ones. Yes, I say openly, a more moderate, gentler and more able man at the head of France, with the same resources and armies at his disposal, would have been a thousand times more dangerous than he, and such a man in future would be the greatest threat to Germany's freedom and in that the freedom of Europe; for whoever has France's, Italy's and Germany's forces at his disposal and plays a not too daring game of dice with them, to him the other powers of the European continent must eventually yield. Hence when Napoleon is no more, when this bold and bloody spawn of the latest revolutions is gone and forgotten, we and our children will soon lament the same evil from which we now hope to be saved, if France's borders with us remain as they are now. However many pithy clauses, pledges and oaths safeguard the future peace document, the paper force of the pen is always less than the metal force of the sword: the rulers and lands to the east, indeed to the north of the River Rhine for thirty, indeed fifty, miles will be forced to feel French pressure and the French political pull; they will have to dance like planets around that sun, from which they receive no warmth but only fire; they will be forced to tremble and serve; Switzerland and Italy will be like French territories and be forced to take their orders from Paris. Indeed – and this should be considered



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above all – because justice has not been done now, it will scarcely be possible to do it in future; for ultimately habit will become all-powerful: foreign language, foreign customs and laws will increasingly creep in or impose themselves, souls will lose their defiance, hearts their memories. What was first an abhorrence and a horror to our forefathers will through custom become more tolerable to the children, then indifferent, and finally even dear to them – in the end the most dog-like patience will wag its tail to tyranny, where furious pride would otherwise have brooded on vengeance.

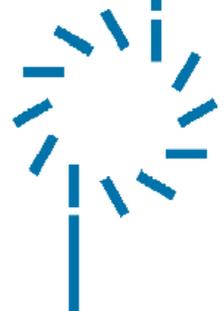
If the rulers wish to be certain of their dominion, then, and the peoples of their liberty, if Germany is to flourish again in honour and independence, and Europe in strength and equilibrium, the task of restoring Germany to its old borders with France must be resolved by force of arms and the French removed from the Rhine, where since Richelieu and Louis XIV they have pushed forward rather through deceit and trickery than through justice and bravery.

My third witness, Honour, takes the stand and admonishes as follows:

If I, who go by the name of Honour, am still who I formerly was, if you Germans still wish to look into my face with frank, open eyes, you must not sheath your swords until you have regained your old borders and your brothers who have been torn away from you. Now that you admit, indeed you feel, that you have risen up in the most just war that you have ever waged, against the cruellest treachery and oppression; now that you have taken high pride in leaving no choice between victory and restoration and defeat and downfall; now that you have taken God as a witness and confederate, do you still wish to remain hesitating at the half-way point? Do you now still wish to ask and have others ask whether enough labour and blood has

not been spent with the Rhine as border? No, never more! You must take your whole pride, you must express your whole pride, in regaining what is yours unconditionally. As a good and loyal people, you will also show a fitting sense of justice, so that if the fortunes of war bring you as far as the banks of the Loire and Rhône, you do not covet a single village from the French and from those who speak only French, unless villages and towns are enclosed by your borders, when you take them to yourselves and in the same case allow the same of yours. If you do not now profess the pride and courage to desire and complete the whole thing, when do you think you will have them in future? When do you think the time will come when all Germans are set an even greater common goal? Now or never, Honour must always say; her hour, indeed her minute, is always there; she cannot delay anything, she must not hope anything from opportunity and chance, her law always remains short and sweet: do what you must, triumph or die, and leave the decision to God.

Thus I, honour, speak to you, German brothers and fellow-countrymen, not without intention, and not without allusion. Your forefathers, those mighty and great-hearted men, once knew me, and me alone, and my sister, Justice, and lived by our teachings and laws; they knew a great deal about honour and loyalty, so much so that they were angry when someone merely reminded them of these, because they felt the reminder almost as castigation. You, indeed we all together, deserve the reminder; honour and loyalty, love of all for all, the German community and brotherhood of hearts had almost died out; each wanted to live for himself, each wanted to rule for himself. As a result, that which an ancient Roman said of the Greek peoples happened to us: as they all strove for dominion over Greece, they all lost dominion over



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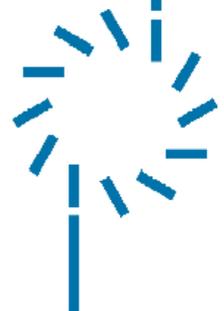
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their fatherland. Now God, who does not wish our name to fade away, has awoken us in a wondrous way, through terror and joy; now, in the feeling of communal vengeance against intolerable foreign arrogance and indescribable horror, we can revive what had almost died out; now we all, as many as speak in our German tongue, can tie such a bond of strength, justice and unity that future attempts by Gallic trickery to dissolve it will be in vain. Oh Germans, adopt the great Roman principle that you will never make an unhappy and shameful peace, that you will never give up your land and your people to the enemies, that you will emerge greater and more feared from every war. But be different from the Romans in that by this greatness you do not mean external greatness; they would never conclude a peace without gaining land. Put your greatness in justice and moderation. For even the Romans, great as they were, declined and fell, and finally became the laughing stock of the world, because they would not honour it. Declare the great principle and teach it to your children and your children's children as the most sacred commandment for your greatness and security: that you will never conquer foreign peoples, but neither will you ever suffer a single village to be torn away from your borders. He who covets too much that is foreign dies of arrogance; he who allows himself to be robbed of what is his dies of dishonour. Both deaths are certain and painful, but the first kind of downfall would seem to be more honourable.

I have spoken in allusions. German people, the most numerous and pugnacious and, if you will be unified, most powerful and most mighty people in Western Europe, open the annals of the last three centuries, ask how events developed, ask how the great revolutions went, inquire into the wars and peace treaties – and blush, and, if you can, be angry that for such a long time hardly any peace was concluded where you did not lose something of your honour and glory. Whoever acts humble

and subservient, whoever gives way and surrenders will eventually be oppressed and despised, and rightly so; however strong he be, he will end up considering himself as equal to the weakest, and be sneered at, and deserve to be sneered at. So far – oh our misfortune! – it has come, that the Germans, this great, warlike people, have almost been separated from the world, been cut off from the closest and easiest community with the peoples. The Dutch territory was once ours and ought always to have remained bonded with Germany; yet have we not for two centuries suffered them to impose tolls on our Rhine and tax it as they saw fit? The Danes are a small, weak people, that without the territories that they hold in fiefdom from our Empire would almost be few, they whom we rescued from ruin in 1658 and 1660 – yet have they not more than once presumed to rule our Elbe, to occupy and rob our imperial cities at will; indeed lately to give them over to strangers to desecrate and pillage them in the most ignoble way? Thanks to our indifference to the common fatherland, our patience that always cries out but never acts and punishes, we have come so far that none of our coasts heard us, that we dared not allow a ship from our rivers into the sea without first buying permission from the strangers. And from what strangers? From those who used to be our subjects and vassals and must become that again, at least if they will not be fair to those who are more powerful. We have deserved this, because we have endured it; we deserve it, because we endure it. He who is as a lump of wood will be hewn by every axe, but people shy away from the cuts of one who acts as an anvil. Long have we been patronised by the peoples, treated as immature, and that continues to this day; so that until now it has been difficult to say whether our stupidity was greater than our ignorance: for we were so degenerate that we no longer knew the few simple points upon which dominion rests in countries and



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peoples, that we no longer knew them in the case of our own fatherland. For that reason we easily relinquished great things and squabbled about small things as if they were great; until the great judge and arbitrator of all disputes stepped in and settled everything with the heavy-handed sword. If that has not made us wiser, if henceforth we will not set the fatherland and its honour and glory above everything, victories will only set us free for the moment and the old misfortune will soon be knocking at our gates.

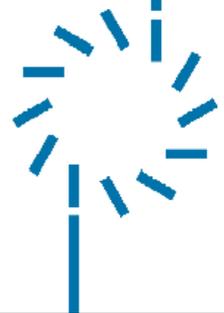
I hold my peace. He who feels honour and pride needs no more words; fools do not become wiser through words, and weak souls do not become stronger through exhortations. But you who are brave and upright, fight, labour and think, so that the fatherland's long malady and damage shall be remedied.

Now comes German Loyalty, holding her sister, Love, by the hand. She has turned grey through grief and dumb through silence: for she has spent long years in lonely sorrow, because the people had cast her out and, when she did appear in its assemblies, regarded her as no different from a vagrant and treated her as such. Her eyes are clouded with tears, her body is wasted away, her step is weak and staggering; she is no longer the old, cheerful, proud warrior who used to blow the trumpet, crying Here Germany! and Victory! She is no longer the sprightly, bold companion who led the dance at peace festivities and boasted that there is no happier, freer and more upright people under the sun than her Germans. She has gone the way of an old man who has lived past the span of ordinary human life; she has become like an old woman whose young generation has died out and who is not recognised by those alive now. She was solitary, and her abode was scarcely still to be found on earth. In the halls of the great and rich she found foreign trumpery and pomp, and heard the prattle of foreign foolishness and levity in foreign tones that she had found abhorrent from

time immemorial; she became such a stranger there that no-one recognised her, but pushed her down the stairs as a coarse, brazen tramp. She was chased from the schools and lecterns by chit-chat and nonsense and pomposity and stupidity, crying as she fled: Oh my Germans, who could not read any writing other than that of the starry firmament and what God has written in burning letters in hearts for all to read, who knew no oath other than the handshake, behold this! The courts of justice were hoodwinked by folly and excess of learning, and justice turned dark because it was surrounded with too many lights. Everywhere, at the fairs and in the homes, lying and deception, lust and avarice, laziness and weakness, her oldest eternal enemies, were placed beside her, indeed over her. Thus she was obliged to flee from people with her sorrow, back to her solitude, and would long ago have died of grief and returned to her heaven, had she not now and then encountered a cheerful innocence in the quiet woods that had smiled her back to life, had she not sometimes heard a pious song from the huts of the poor at dawn and dusk, and between times the cock crowing the clock's chimes. She still lived with the innocent and the poor, so she could not yet leave the earth. But she cannot speak for protracted grief and deep heartache: she merely waves, and I interpret her waving.

3.

She would say lamenting, indeed she would scold, between tears and anger: How can it be, you German rulers and peoples? Are you capable of that? Is that what you want? Are you willing to abandon your brothers so thoughtlessly and heartlessly, as the spoils of a foreign people and foreign language, customs and laws that they otherwise hated most? Are you willing to let these strong, brave, freedom-loving men become Frenchmen? Shall their children and



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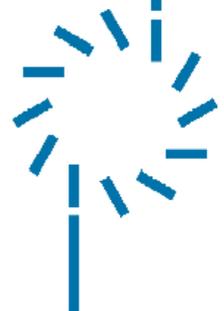


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grandchildren – for even the most sacred things are forgotten and fade away in the end – know no more of you, of the German name, of German freedom and honour? Shall their strong arms fight for those who were hated by their forebears? Shall their strong arms, ending up as French arms, their strong hearts, ending up as French hearts, fight against you for the French, and help to oppress and subjugate you? – for if the French have power, they will never give up attempting to subjugate you and they will eventually succeed by deeds – shall those who remained Germanic under Roman tyranny, because their hearts loathed anything foreign, in the end, almost 2,000 years after Julius Caesar, yet become a kind of Romanised people, shall they become French? Shall the descendants of the Treveri, Nervii, Aduatici, Eburones, Sicambri and Franks become servants of the strangers, know freedom only as a distant sound of antiquity in their ears, no longer in their hearts? – For no freedom may dwell where the French rule. – Are you willing to suffer this to happen? To this land? To this people? And to what men? And how closely related? Or do you not know them? Do you not know how much they are your brothers? Oh ask yourselves, you who live around Rostock and Stettin, around Danzig and Königsberg, around Hamburg and Hannover, ask yourselves, Pomeranians, Prussians, Margravians, Holsteinians, Brunswickers, even you far-off Siebenburgians, ask yourselves whether your forebears did not once migrate from here and from Westphalia and populate the barren former homelands of the Vandals and build towns and villages, and build freedom? Ask yourselves whether what you have of German virtues, and your love of liberty and willingness to die for it, whether that did not all come from here? And this land and this people, these your kindred, you are willing to let them fall into ruin so thoughtlessly? – And the descendants of the Batavi and Frisii, this noble, great people that for a century fought under the banner of freedom and the house of Nassau for the

independence of Europe, that has had heroes and law-makers and inventors and artists that peoples twenty times larger than they did not have, the Dutch too you are willing to leave in servitude, they too shall eventually come to love French trinkets and learn to forget the proud earnestness of their forefathers? Is that all their thanks for so often staining your Rhine and your Scheldt, indeed your Danube, with their blood for you, for reddening the waves of the Atlantic Ocean, indeed the waves of the Sicilian Sea for you? – And if that seems alien to you, look at the neighbours – but I say to you, the neighbours too have no right to be free if they themselves are not liberated – look at those who live between the Rhine and the Moselle and the Saar, who pasture their livestock on the banks of the Rur and the Meuse, and blush if you do not hope that they shall again become Germany's children, indeed if you do not pledge before God and the world to regain them. Cast your eyes upon these rivers and lands, oh turn your hearts towards them too! What do you see? What do you feel? You see the land that reminds you of the most glorious labours and struggles of your forefathers, you see the origins and beginnings of your people, the oldest and most sacred memories of the Empire of the Germans, the cradle of your culture, the cities where your emperors were elected, crowned and anointed, the tombs where your emperors, arch-chamberlains, your archbishops lie sleeping, the monuments to your fame and your greatness, wherever you look, wherever you step – and you can bear the thought that this oldest, this most venerable, this most German heritage is to become French? Truly, with that thought you also bear French slavery. Aachen, Strasbourg, Mainz, Cologne, Trier, Liège, Speyer, Worms, the German Königsstuhl at Rhens, the battlefields where so often you won victories for freedom against the French, the brave, lively and witty German race that inhabits these blessed



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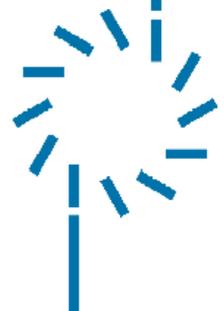
lands, this truest, oldest gem of your name – are you able to leave all this to the strangers? Those monuments to the eternal that your venerable, pious forefathers erected in Cologne and Antwerp, in Strasbourg and Amsterdam, the memory of your ancient heroic age, and so many other shrines of your nature and art - are you willing to abandon to those whose glances are never cast upwards and to whom these glories proclaim nothing eternal? – Oh no, no! You do not want that, you cannot want that. Truly the bones of your forefathers would turn in their graves and cry woe, woe! over you and over the fatherland that you are abandoning; the bones of all the slain would turn, who fell in former battles on these strands, in these fields, so that the Rhine and its beautiful lands should remain German and speak German; all the millions of Germans who have long gone to their forefathers would become spectres to you; all those who fell here by the French sword or died through French atrocities and maltreatment, when Louis XIV and Louvois sent out their arsonists and laid waste to the Rhinelands, turned towns and villages into heaps of rubble, dug up the graves of your most glorious emperors in Speyer and threw the ashes of the old Counts Palatine to the winds in Heidelberg, when the French savages of 1790 and 1800 stormed in here and brought deceit and betrayal, robbery and murder into German lands to the sweet and most flattering sounds of liberty, equality and bliss for the world – all those, all those spirits of the best Germans would become spectres and terrify and curse you, and suddenly take away from you all the fortune that God has so wonderfully given you.

Thus would German Loyalty speak, more or less, but in far stronger, sweeter and simpler ways and words; she would advocate German love and honour and present and future fortune or misfortune in such a way that you will never again leave your brothers, the children of your fatherland, in the

power of strangers, but will be forced to fight to the death for them, until you regain them for you and for freedom. She would teach and admonish you far more and far better, and hold up God and duty and the honour of your name and the example of your history to you in such a way that you would be forced to do what is right and necessary. But because I cannot say that and represent it with her simplicity and passion, in her name I would say another word to your reason, and try whether the head will understand what not everyone dare speak to the heart.

Politics has established only too well in the foregoing that if the French retain the River Rhine and the lands beyond, Germany cannot escape the danger, indeed the certainty, of subjugation. Napoleon may die, all his marshals and councillors may be dead and buried, a completely different dynasty may issue orders from the Tuileries Palace – if the Rhine remains French, Germany will lie permanently open to France, Germany will be dependent on France, the largest part of Germany will soon be subjugated to the French again; that which we have now lamented and cursed will soon be repeated in different forms; that which in these fifteen years³ we felt to be an abhorrence and a horror would become more tolerable to our children and grandchildren through custom and habit; the plague that could yet be rooted out now would have entered our blood ineradicably: we would be truly subjugated once our hearts and minds have been subjugated. Hitherto I have spoken mostly of the external dangers that the power and superiority of the French threaten us with. Those dangers are not the most formidable: they can be averted through fortune, through bravery,

³ In 1797 and 1798 the Rhine, with Mainz and Ehrenbreitstein, came entirely under the power of France. [Arndt's note]



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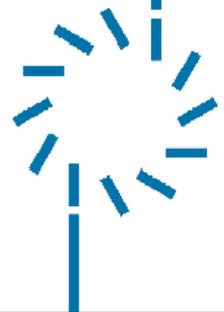


through a single great heroic spirit that is aroused in times of need. I should now like to speak of the silent perils that come as softly as water that has long flowed hidden under mountains and hollowed out their fastnesses until the proud summits have finally tumbled into the wet depths; of the perils that bring out that which can never be healed or averted through arms, that drive out fortune for ever, that undermine courage and eradicate all the seeds from which Germanic heroes, saviours of the future, can be born.

These silent perils are no other than the gradual extinction and eradication of German nature and individuality. In the past few centuries we have become ever more weakened, softened, degenerate from year to year; the history of our great, venerable forebears has ceased to be a vivid, inspiring memory for us; German land, German people, German freedom, German honour have been scarcely heard; the once so sacred illusions of the emperor and the empire and of their power, glory and majesty had blown away – everything was faded, forgotten, indeed almost dead. We were no longer comparable to those who came before us, we had become worse than our forefathers; but we were still Germans, we still had a great deal remaining from which once again fine, steadfast German men, a great and feared German people could emerge, if a life-giving breath of the spirit blew across the world and fanned the frozen, indolent masses. But if the French remain lords of the Rhine, if Strasbourg, Mainz, Cologne, Amsterdam and Aachen remain French cities, with French occupying forces, academies and theatres, I do not need to be a prophet to foretell what people the Germans on this bank will be after only a hundred, indeed fifty, years, even if the unthinkable should happen, that for such a long period the French do not attack them with their superior power, with unjust weapons and try to conquer them. I shall briefly speak of these silent perils, which will have the most

ruinous effects in the midst of peace, indeed in the most peaceful and benign conditions.

If the French rule the Rhine, they rule the core of our people, they attack us in our innermost, most personal life, they destroy us in the seeds of our being. Favourable circumstances, which, while not to be expected, are nevertheless conceivable, could perhaps enable Germany to hold power for a time in its east, even if the French retained the area stolen from us; but a German people will certainly not hold power there for long, it will not long even remain a German people, if the French still rule the Rhine. The Rhine and its surrounding lands and the neighbouring lands of Swabia, Franconia, Hessen, Westphalia and Brunswick are the core and the heart of the German people, from which its true lifeblood and its most lively spirits pour out into all its veins, indeed into the extremities of its body; there, if it is not merely a dream, lives true Germanness; from there it flows as the tender, secret life-ether of the whole, with all its invisible and scarcely perceptible spirits, as far as the Leitha and the Eider, indeed to the Memel and the Theiss, to the related brothers. Germany is elsewhere too, it is in Flensburg and Königsberg, Breslau and Stralsund; but it is not as German there as it is here in the south. This can be traced back historically, it can be read from our customs and ways and from our art and literature, insofar as the innermost life of a people and its most individual nature can be shown and read. Here, on both banks of the Rhine, in the lands just mentioned, the Germanic community has held together closely amidst all the storms of the centuries, in all the reversals of and changes in peoples. Indeed it has been brought closer together through those storms and changes: I would even say it has become tighter and more solid as a result of them. After the great wave of migrations that roared



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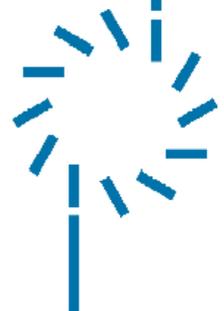
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towards the west and south in the fifth and sixth centuries AD, generally known as the Germanic migrations, the east and north of Germania was almost emptied of its inhabitants as they moved southwards, and foreign Slavic tribes marched in as far as the Inn, the Fichtelberg, the Elbe and the Saale into the empty, undefended lands, where they dwelt for several centuries. Finally, after long, dreadful wars, the Germans pushed some of them back further towards the east and conquered or eradicated others. Into these now empty lands of the Vandals and Slavs – once the homes of the Angles, Semnones, Varini, Langobardi, Rugians, Heruli, Goths, Quadi and Marcomanni – German colonies marched from the south, or German lords set themselves up over them, built castles, fortresses and towns and gradually tried to Germanise the foreign people. In most of these lands Germanness prevailed, through time and rule, and through the superiority of the culture, and swallowed up most of the Slavic elements; but there are still many non-Germanic traces left there, which can be detected from a host of signs and phenomena. This assertion is less likely to arouse suspicion in that it is put forward by someone who was born in a country that perhaps from the fifth and sixth centuries until the end of the twelfth was almost entirely Slavic. In the south of Germany, on the other hand, the Germanic element remained pure and unmixed within those borders, and one must make a pilgrimage there to see true Germanness, there must one seek the pure Germanic spirit, that joyful good nature and piety, that childlike unselfconsciousness and naturalness, that fiery pride in truth and freedom, that fine-hearted and straightforward outspokenness and coarseness, that indescribable individuality of life, language and customs, lastly even that type of body, that build of thighs and breasts, that fall of the hair, that glance of the eyes, in short that whole manner, visible but not describable, that characterises a particular people. In Silesia, Prussia, Courland and Mecklenburg you will find many people who speak German

but who you might think belong to a different people; here in the ancient land of Germania the German-speaking people will seem entirely German to you. Only those who to some extent have recognised and felt what is said here with their hearts will understand me. Anyone wishing to find the keys to the history of the German people and to unravel its formation and development must visit Swabia and Westphalia and the Rhinelands; there too, to this day, most of the customs, practices, life and constitution which can take us back to centuries long past have remained, until the recent ill-fated years that attempted to eradicate everything ancient; by this Ariadne's thread we can grope towards the light through the dark, confused labyrinth of German history. From there the tender, secret spirits of the German nature have poured out over the whole country, indemonstrably and inconspicuously; from this hidden lake of fire have flown the sparks that have kept alive whatever could be called German as far as the Baltic, Poland and Hungary.

I do not wish here to take up again the ludicrous argument of vanity – somewhat shameful, given the intentions of some of its advocates – concerning the merits of the north Germans or south Germans. Aristotle and Plato have said that the south has more fire and spirit, the north more steadfastness and body; that may be true or untrue – the south must always appear more lively, fiery and adaptable than the north. Nor do I wish here to count up what superb geniuses in art and science our south has given the German race – that would be superfluous – I would merely admit in general that the spirit is attached not so much to particular soil as to particular peoples. The Germanic spirit does not freeze, even in the coldest regions. To those who have fallen prey to the rage of south German patriotism I would merely say that Snorri Sturluson was an Icelander; that the great



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sculptor Thorwaldsen is an Iclander; that Tycho Brahe, Linnaeus, Sergel, Bellmann, Gustav Adolf, Torstenson and Charles XII were born in Sweden, Bacon, Shakespeare and Newton in England; that Prussia boasts Copernicus, Kant and Herder; that Leibniz was from Leipzig, Herschel from Hannover, Frederick II and Ziethen were Margravians, and Schwerin, Winterfeld and Scheele Pomeranians. But it is true that a certain liveliness, a certain refreshing vitality, a certain spiritual breath that I would call pure Germanic air, must come, and has always come, to the German north from its south-west. Just as the north has received it softly and invisibly, from the north another spiritual breath of life has undoubtedly in turn flowed to the south, and thus everything otherwise referred to as the German Empire and German people has been subject to reciprocal attraction, stimulation, flow and penetration, although this great interaction cannot always be shown in detail: for clearly it is not possible to show everything that is immediate life and action to the eyes. I do not denigrate the north Germans in comparison with the south Germans: both have their individuality; both have their virtues and shortcomings, and only through free exchange between Germans from the Neman to the Scheldt and from the Eider to the Adriatic could the whole exist in such a way as to appear to the other peoples as the particularly German nature and creation, worthy of respect. What the Prussians and Pomeranians have by way of open-heartedness, loyalty, bravery and hospitality, what creates and shapes the Silesians' adaptability and industry, the Margravians' persistence and uprightness – that has also gone in invisible currents of the spirit as far as the Neckar and the Moselle, there too that has helped to build and preserve the German fatherland; so that, thinking this, every German must believe that what each had that was admirable and excellent was passed on to all Germans and belonged to all.

Nevertheless I return to my previous assertion, which is confirmed by the whole long history of the fatherland, that the Rhinelands, Swabia and Westphalia are the core and marrow of the German people, that everything that is best and mostly truly German has emanated from there, and thence whatever in customs, constitution, science and art is to bear the true German stamp shall eternally flow back and flow out again from there. Germany is on the Neman, the Oder and the Drava too, but here the original Germany, once the focal point and strength of the Empire, is still the focal point of German life and German custom; here an inexhaustible store of German nature, language and history has been laid down, from which the most distant German brothers come to draw, yet which can never be emptied. If the unfortunate situation remains that the French retain the River Rhine, the seeds of Germanness will be poisoned and suffocated: Germany can still retain its name for centuries, but Germany will soon cease to exist. With possession of the Rhine and the Rhinelands beyond, the French have an ascendancy of power and arms that coerces the lands on this side too with an irresistible force of attraction. Political superiority and political attraction are never isolated; they affect life, customs, constitution and art, they necessarily affect everything. We know how Napoleon and the French have laboured with systematic cruelty and violence for the past ten years to eradicate German customs and language, indeed all love and memory of the old things beyond the Rhine. If the Rhine remains theirs, most of this will succeed in a few decades, and French customs and language will become ever more universal and predominant, not only on the Rhine but twenty, thirty, indeed fifty miles from this bank; everything German will first fade, then dissolve and finally vanish; the whole people as far as the Lech, the Fichtelberg and the Elbe, lacking stability and lively



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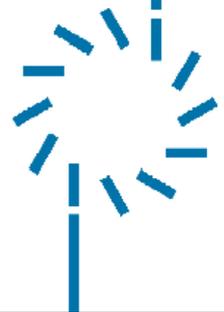


refreshment and inspiration from within, will eventually become a people of wretched, apish half-French. Then everything German will truly have died, disappeared irretrievably for all time, and the distant east and north of Germany, its roots and trunk injured and eaten away, will feel its ruin and finally fade into characterless, soulless nothingness and merge with foreignness.

This was my Germany; this is what I wanted to show, or at least hint at, so that it could be helped and preserved, because it can still be helped and preserved. This I have loved, and for this I have lived, this was the greatest and most sacred thing to me, this was my German people, and my German freedom and honour; for this I have spoken, not for the glory of arms and splendour of rulers and all the sounding pomp and glittering splendour of names that are nothing without joy and life. Rome was great, it was the immortal and divine Rome when it had its Furi, Decii and Fabricii, when its borders and its virtues were still enclosed between the Alps and the Mediterranean; Rome was puny, it was a worthless, shameful Rome, when it had conquered the world, when its emperor's eagles blazed on the Thames and the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tagus. This Germany is what we want to preserve, it is for this Germany that we fight and ask God and mankind not to allow it to perish – for this Germany, venerable for its customs, laws and virtues, famed for its arts, sciences and inventions, that animates and maintains the world through quiet industry and piety; not for empty names, hollow sounds and vain glory do we speak, entreat and fight. Here is Germany, here it is, this is what it is, and this is what it must remain for the upright Germans. Rechristen the country and people, call it Saxony or Prussia or Bavaria or Holland as far as I am concerned, call it Huronia and Chuvashia, indeed call it what you like – name and appearance are all the same to us, as long as deed and reality remain. But if

you let this our real Germany fade away – and it will fade away if you allow the foreigners to do what I will not allow them – all the lands as far as the Dnieper and Hellespont, indeed as far as the Urals and the Pillars of Hercules, may be called Germany, and speak German as far as I am concerned: we cannot rejoice in vanity, in the shimmering transitoriness of something that is dead, we set no store by length and breadth. What we have possessed for centuries, indeed millennia – godliness, justice, uprightness, bravery, freedom –, what we have created – laws, customs, science and art –, that is our fatherland, that is our Germany, that is what we call our fatherland, our German fatherland, and that is what we want to preserve; for that our youths now march joyfully into the battlefield, fight and die, as our forefathers, the Cheruskans and Marsi and Chatti, once fought and died.

But we deeply despise those stupid, base prattlers with no knowledge of history or respect for the divine will that is revealed in history, who would like to prove to us Germans that we must turn completely to dust and ashes in which other peoples shall sow their seeds, so that a better life shall blossom for them. What God wants in the violent and secret course of time is often hidden from us; what we ought to want is not hidden from us, it is not secret to us for a moment: we should defend to the death our love and our life, that which makes us human, that by which we merit the venerable name of a people. We should not listen to those empty, vain fools who would like to preach us into dust because their souls are nothing but rotten, decayed dust. That cosmopolitanism that is extolled to us is not of God but of tyrants and despots, who would like to turn all peoples and countries into a great heap of rubble, indeed a dung heap of servitude, and who are therefore pleased when the masses are told that it would be good for the whole if one or other



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people would good-naturedly allow themselves to be turned into dust. It is the sign of a wretched, loveless person that he always proclaims something far off and general but does nothing for something that is close at hand and individual; he who does not love his wife, his children and his neighbours more than strangers is rightly held to be a bad person; he who does not love, defend and hold fast to what is close to him has nothing close, has no neighbours, his mouth is full of fine sounds, and his lips speak pomp, but he is an enervated pleasure-seeker or a worn out fool. Our house, our children, our neighbours, our country, our people –we should love and defend these above everything; this is the best way to love and defend countries and peoples. But cursed be the humanity and cosmopolitanism that you boast of! That cosmopolitan Jewishness that you laud to us as the highest peak of human culture! Oh pardon my vehemence, you children of Abraham! Although scattered across the world, you are a venerable people, with your dogged love and defence of what is yours. If we Germans resembled you in those, our cosmopolitans would not distract us.

If through God's help the Rhine and the lands that have been torn away from us are regained and added to the German Empire, it is desirable that the mightiest German rulers, Austria and Prussia, rule over the Rhine, especially since the Alsace, the Netherlands and so many other areas are Habsburgian and Burgundian heritage. We also dare to hope that the Republic of the United Netherlands, that brave, just and upright people to whom Europe and Germany owe so much, will be placed in a closer, firmer bond with the body of the Germanic state and Great Britain, so that in future the foreigners will despair of the easiness of robbery. The times that we have hitherto had to call our era in fear and trembling have taught us, as the fortune and wisdom of the future, what is good and salutary for all, what makes everyone more unified and secure, what binds the still

purely Germanic tribes and peoples in more steadfast love and loyalty. But if we place weak rulers and areas on France's borders, intrigues and fear and violence will only too soon renew the misery lamented and cursed here. The Swiss too, almost all Germans, may have learned in the last twenty years that it is wiser to lean on German justice. They have experienced how they have been repaid for constantly abandoning themselves and their neighbours to France for the past three centuries.

I would put forward a further proposal, which could be called a political dream, that, if made reality, would however create better things than dreams generally create.

Once upon a time we had an order of German knights that gained international fame through great deeds and creations over a period of two centuries, which has hitherto not found a worthy historian. A venerable remnant of that order remained in the German fatherland until the recent all-destroying times. Of course that age of Christianity and chivalry that saw the creation of the Templars, the order of St John of Jerusalem and the German House of Saint Mary will never come again in the form in which it existed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, for time and rivers do not flow backwards. But ideas remain eternally, even if manners and times change. We could again found a German order with the same ideas of German piety, glory and chivalry from which that former order developed in the Promised Land, but adapted to our time and its needs. How would it be if part of the lands around the Rhine, the Moselle and the Saar were to be offered by the high rulers for this purpose? The aim of this order would be to revive and preserve the immortal ideas of German glory, honour and defence. So that this great idea could never ossify and decay, a noble, broad-based educational institution would be attached to it, to



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which lordly and knightly families could send their sons to learn what is just, brave, free, noble and German, and to disseminate what they have learnt there in their future spheres of influence throughout the lands of the German people.

This German order would consist of sons of lordly and noble German families.

Its aim would be to preserve and implant the virtues for which German knights and men were once so lauded: piety, bravery, justice, freedom and uprightness.

As we are Christians and a people blessed and made blissful by the doctrine of the holy Cross, the order would be enclosed in fine, Christian ordinations and vows befitting our people and our times.

The order and its land would be directly answerable to the then Emperor and Lord of the German people.

The order itself would be ruled by its grand master.

He would be elected freely by the body of knights from among their number.

The grand masters would be alternately Catholic and Protestant.

Every knight of the order granted the use of a benefice or fief would be required to live at that place.

The remaining knights could live scattered throughout the Empire or hold all sorts of offices and posts in other states of the fatherland.

As the number of benefices and fiefs would be limited, throughout the German Empire assessments would be made, based on the size of the population, of how many knights each German state could put forward in the event of a vacancy, so

that knights in all the German lands could alternately occupy those posts, so that something that is designed to create unity and love does not create disunity and envy. For we wish to ensure that the sons of our nobles and lords learn to acknowledge, venerate and love a single common German fatherland and a common German honour through our new German order.

Since no order has ever existed without a great education, however, and since this great education – a truly knightly education of the best men for the fatherland – is needed now more than ever before, as religion has become too delicate and ethereal to be grasped and held with earthly ties, as our forebears grasped and held it, I therefore base the steadfastness and glory of this order entirely on a strict, manly education.

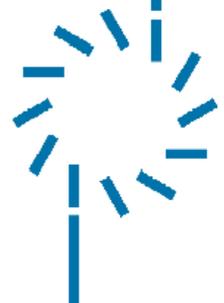
In one of the finer cities of the order region a large school of knighthood will be founded, where lordly and noble children will be educated from the age of fourteen to eighteen to be German men.

Provosts or wardens of this high, venerable institution will be ten or twelve of the most worthy knights, fully qualified through a noble life rich in deeds.

The teachers will be selected from among the most learned, most respectable and most German people of the fatherland.

The following will be taught at the institution:

1. History, with its vivid deeds and examples in their greatness and dignity, so that what is branded as eternal and everlasting under the names of freedom, honour, fatherland, justice, chastity, bravery and devotion is indelibly etched into the young minds.



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2. The history of the German fatherland, what is truly German in mentality and deeds, what ought to be common to all Germans; also what the German people has been, and what it ought to be: the masters, visionaries, inventors and heroes of the fatherland will be put forward as an example of and stimulus to virtue, what they were, and what made them so great; above all, love and loyalty will be shown to each pupil as inviolable, and the past will be used always to point to the present and the future, so that honour is distinguished from disgrace and fortune from misfortune early on.
3. The German language, for in his language man possesses his deepest love and purest strength. Indeed, the German language would merit several years of serious study by those who have otherwise often struggled for five or indeed ten years to learn to spell and parrot French passably.
4. The mathematical sciences necessary to a man and a warrior.
5. Physical and weapons exercises of all kinds.
6. The fine arts, for those who have talent and inclination for them.
7. Discipline for the body and religion for the heart through strict obedience, Christian worship and kindness and love from the wardens.

I could mention many other things that would be German and commendable and befitting for such an institution. But I do not wish to go into detail here, I merely wanted to point to a fine aim of German education and mentality.

The teachers at this institution will be amply remunerated from the order's estates; the youths will be educated here at their families' expense.

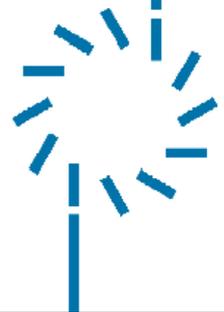
A few imperial fortifications will be handed over to the order – its Malta, as it were, or Germany's Malta against France – so that Germany's danger and honour are always in full view of all, and so that everyone is reminded daily of the virtue which alone enables the fatherland to exist in freedom and wholeness.

Knights will exercise command of these fortifications.

Youths discharged from the school of knighthood will serve as squires here for two or three years. These will be as it were their second higher years of apprenticeship in male virtues, in which all the military and physical exercises and the discipline of obedience will be continued in the strictest, most conscientious way. After two or three years as members of the order they may then be discharged, each to his own land, so as to strive for deeds through which they can gain full knighthood.

I have said what I have to say about our Rhine. May these light, winged words not all fly away with the wind! The subject is undoubtedly our immediate weal and woe, and I wish I had treated it in such a way that its importance is abundantly clear to everyone and touches their hearts. I could say I have saved my soul; but there is no peace in having spoken. If the French retain the Rhine I have lost my German fatherland; then I must take to the skies like the storks of Aquileia, when Attila besieged it and stormed its walls, and fly into another Germanic country, because my Germany and my love are gone; for my children shall not become half-French.

The annals of history lie open to us. Twenty years have clearly demonstrated to us what happened over millennia, what could happen again in millennia; what Lycurgus and Moses and Solon and Numa wanted and



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founded, what the sibyls and augurs foretold, what Thucydides, Sallust, Tacitus and Machiavelli engraved in the iron tablets of time with the flashes of their great souls, that has become ours, and if nothing wise and just happens, if we are driven irretrievably into destruction, we cannot complain that we have been surprised unknowingly and unwarned. What sounded to us like the bloody fables of Busiris, Phalaris and Thyestes, the outrages and atrocities reported to us of the Tiberians, Neronians and Ezzelini, indeed what more recently has been recounted of human flesh-eating Caribs and cannibals, of the savage heads and Caciques of the River Amazon and the Nootka Sound, whose thrones were decorated with strings of human skulls, and whose pillows were raised on stacks of human skulls so that their dreams should not be too sweet – this which our hearts still doubted and for which we lacked any measure of understanding and explanation; our hearts have learned to believe these unbelievable and monstrous things, our eyes have learned to see them and bear them. Hundreds of thousands of men have been strangled before us, as flies are killed, human blood has been shed before us like water, human bodies and human bones have been piled up in mountains before us, human happiness has been destroyed with the cruellest deceit and violence in the most outrageous way – the atrocities of antiquity, which we considered to be fairy tales, and the brutality of savages, which we thought impossible, have been confirmed by nineteenth-century Europeans who put themselves forward to rejuvenate and bless the world. It almost reached the point where in the end there were only two kinds of human, the eaters and the eaten. Our times and our honour will remain eternally branded in history if we do not draw wisdom from misfortune and justice from cruelty, if we do not elevate the fine virtues of loyalty, gentleness, piety and bravery to such high glory that their divine light hides the ruins and disgraces of the last fifteen years. That is our calling, that is the first job of

the day, to learn to practise justice and humanity, and set bravery of souls and seriousness of morals, for which our forefathers were lauded, to the fore as our ancient German heritage. Then we shall not perish, and God will hover over our flags and crown them with victory, and God, whom we have too long forgotten, will live in our cottages and palaces and instil what is just, commendable, wise and noble in the hearts of those who hold in their hands the fate of peoples and future destiny.



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