the superficial observer the Empire, Republic and the Hitler state may appear as unconnected episodes, this is a profoundly false view. Education is everywhere and at all times the expression of society, even though at the same time it helps to mould it. The course of education can only be fundamentally and decisively altered, if the social foundations are changed. Though there were social and political adjustments, Germany underwent no revolution violent enough to destroy the conditions which by the second half of the nineteenth century provided a fertile soil for the growth in influential circles of aggressive nationalism, racial arrogance and an authoritarian attitude to life. These conditions created educational movements and institutions mirroring these characteristics, which after 1918 continued to find powerful expression in the forces of the counter-revolution. Consequently, as we follow the interplay of progress and reaction in modern Germany, it is not difficult to discern lines of development leading, not without deviation and challenge, from the educational situation after 1870 through the Republic to the Nazi state.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS

While the period between the middle of the century and the foundation of the Empire was comparatively barren as far as the theory and philosophy of education were concerned, the last three decades of the century produced a large number of works on the subject. The fact that the constitution of 1871 established universal male suffrage uniformly throughout Germany helped to make many conscious of the importance of education, especially in the case of those who were fearful of the possible consequences of an articulate proletariat. Education, they felt, could, if properly conceived, have helped to minimise the dangers which they sensed in the situation. There were also many who began to think more deeply about education because behind the economic expansion of the Empire they discerned a growing materialism. Amid the controversies regarding education from the latter part of the nineteenth century it is sometimes difficult to separate the different trends, largely because liberalism and nationalism, as we shall see, were in certain respects closely interwoven in the educational sphere. Protests, for example, against materialism and regimentation in education were not necessarily of exclusively liberal derivation and were frequently bound up with nationalist thought. They were often merely one aspect of the flight from reason, as in the minds of those whose main desire was to remove all obstacles to the evolution of German 'Volkstum'.

German education was certainly badly in need of reform, especially as far as secondary schools were concerned. In the grammar schools the tradition of 'general education' helped to foster superficiality and impede the development of the power of criticism. The poet Rudolf Binding (born in 1867) refers in his memoirs to "this tepid, thin and emaciated universality of my culture . . . which was all that I had gained from school". Moreover, the methods of teaching were rigid and oppressive, too often degenerating into a mechanical process of repetition and enforced memorising. In his memoirs, for instance, Harry Graf Kessler, discussing his schooldays at the Johanneum in Hamburg, one of the most distinguished schools, emphasises these
very features. The aim, he says, was not fundamentally to learn Latin or Greek but merely to acquire the habit of hard work for its own sake. “All that remained,” he writes, “of the ideal of the humane individual, bearing in his mind and heart consciousness of all mankind and its culture, such as had inspired the age of Goethe, all that remained was the enormous industry necessary to absorb the immense material involved”, and he goes on to say that this “had acquired an independent function and usurped, as it were with satanic majesty, the throne of the old ideal of humanism”. Before he attended this school in Hamburg, Kessler had been a pupil at St. George’s School in Ascot, where he was a contemporary of Winston Churchill. Repeatedly he contrasts the atmosphere and methods in the German school with his earlier experiences in England, stressing that here education was conceived first and foremost as a training in the art of living and was for this reason immeasurably more fruitful.

It was significant that protests against the German school system came from youth itself, as can be seen by considering the emergence of the Youth Movement.

At the end of the nineteenth century groups of so-called ‘Wandervögel’ came into existence, in which young people tried to create for themselves a more natural form of relationship than the formal discipline of the school. These groups wandered over the German countryside, singing folk-songs and often dressed in picturesque costume, and in all things abjuring the bondage of organisation and authority. In some Wandervogel circles nationalism and anti-semitism could be clearly discerned. For example, the latter was defended, even encouraged, in an article shortly before the Great War in the journal Wandervogel-Führerzeitung, to which other Wandervögel indignantly replied in Die Pachantei. Nevertheless, some of the best features of German youth were reflected in the movement as a whole. In 1913 representatives of these circles met on the Hoher Meissner, near Cassel, and there constituted the Free German Youth (Freudeutsche Jugend), declaring, in the words of a famous resolution, that it was the aim of German youth “to mould its own life, in accordance with its own nature, on its own responsibility and in inner integrity”. Events were soon to show that differences of attitude were represented. Though Gustav Wyncken and Knud Ahlborn both played a leading part at the Meissner meeting, Ahlborn soon came into conflict with Wyncken, whose supporters left the movement at the Marburg conference of 1914 but were readmitted three years later. The Youth Movement was conditioned by the social situation in Hohenzollern Germany, as can be seen from the following passage by Charlotte Luetkens, who was closely associated with these circles:

From whatever side one approaches German youth, we always see it obsessed with the feeling of being outcast, the feeling that it had no future. Whither were they to go, where were they to see the goal of education? The state had no use for the young citizen or none which could appear valuable to the purposeful urge of youth or to youthful spontaneity. If the young person longed for social integration, form and character, if he sought the dignity of man’s estate, if he sought a vessel into which to pour the knowledge obtained at school, he was confronted with the secondary schoolmaster, who flirted with high authority and often enough made rude mockery of the common people, who do not duel and do not know the etiquette of students’ carousals. For the youth of Germany there was no social life based on the spirit, not on money, nothing which might have admitted him to the company of those who were the pillars of the nation he would have liked to serve, if his father’s purse did not enable him to put on his visiting card the colour of the students’ corps and the words ‘Lieutenant of the Reserve’.

Two aspects mentioned in this passage figure in well-known works of German literature. In Hermann Popert’s novel Helmut Harringa (1910) we have an account of the Youth Movement from the point of view of its opposition to alcoholism and its evil consequences for the nation, and in Walter Flex’s short story The Wanderer between Two Worlds (1916) the theme is the war-experience of an idealistic young officer from the Wandervogel movement, though he is not depicted as questioning the legitimacy of war.

The attitude of the church and state towards the Free German Youth Movement was one of considerable distrust, sometimes of declared hostility. In 1914, for instance, conservatives and members of the Roman Catholic Centre Party launched a bitter attack in the Bavarian Diet. “The aims of this Free German ‘youth-culture’,” it was argued with reference to a term coined by Wyncken, “constitute a battle against the home, the school, all positive religion and patriotism . . . The inner connection of all these destructive tendencies is laid completely bare”. The policy of the state was rather to undermine the movement by widening its own programme of youth-welfare. In 1911 an important decree was issued in Prussia inaugurating a more active policy in this sphere, and in the same year the various
‘patriotic’ youth societies were provided with a central rallying-point in the Young Germany League, directed by Field Marshal v.d. Goltz. As its statutes said, its aim was “to help that branch of youth-welfare which strives through systematised physical training to strengthen the nationalistic spirit in Germany youth”. Through its periodical Young Germany Post and other means it tried to foster nationalist and militarist ideals especially among students and schoolboys and achieved a wide influence through its many affiliated societies. The fact that the Wandervogel organisation was included among these had merely a formal significance; affiliation was necessary in order to obtain certain concessions from the state, such as cheap railway fares.

In 1872 Friedrich Nietzsche delivered a course of lectures in Basel, published posthumously under the title On the Future of our Educational Institutions. Rejecting the idea that the aim of education is utilitarian and that knowledge is a substitute for culture, he maintained that true culture is possible only through the full development of personality. Commenting on the predominance of “cultural philistines”, he asserted that education should not impart a superficial culture to the masses but rather concentrate on the few capable of achieving work of permanent value. He examined contemporary German education in the light of these principles, concluding that the existing schools merely taught people how to earn their daily bread, and he even denied that there were any schools in Germany worthy of the name. This essay of Nietzsche was not by any means his only contribution to educational criticism in Germany, and it was a problem to which he returned on many occasions. However, it is the most coherent introduction to his educational thought and well illustrates one stage in his development towards Thus Spake Zarathustra.

Among Nietzsche’s contemporaries was Paul de Lagarde, a Berlin schoolmaster who became Professor of Oriental Studies at Göttingen. His political essays were published in 1878–81 under the title German Writings. He shared with Nietzsche the hatred of specious mass-culture, and he was equally outspoken in his attitude to the prevailing educational system. For him, as for Nietzsche, the proper task of education was to nourish vigorous individualism. Like Nietzsche, he claimed that the schools were pursuing a materialistic ideal, the classical secondary schools especially imposing on the nation “the tough crust of cultural barbarism, which of all barbarisms is the most repulsive”. Against the Prussian methods of education he delivered the most angry attacks, alleging that they stifled the development of the individual and smothered his creative impulses. This led him to condemn the tradition of ‘general education’ in particular and the Hegelian influence in general.

The third in the group of famous thinkers who in the years following the foundation of the Empire exercised a great influence through his views on German education was Julius Langbehn. His book Rembrandt as Educator appeared anonymously (“by a German”) in 1889, causing an immediate sensation. Approaching the problem by way of aesthetics, Langbehn asserted that individualism is “the root of all art”, and that it was a quality in which Germans could excel. He urged them accordingly to cultivate the individualism of the artist and, taking Rembrandt as their guide, to deepen their spiritual life by freeing themselves from foreign values. He saw the hope of the future in “the unspoilt, unsophisticated German youth, unperturbed by false education”, and called on every German to ensure the future through his own children, refusing to allow them to be sacrificed “to the moloch of a false culture”. The first task of the German, therefore, was to be “education for individualism and to individualism”. “The school,” he cried, “is the means, personality the goal”.

These invectives against intellectualism and their glorification of personality exercised a wide influence in Germany, and, since under the Empire education tended to be rigid and oppressive, such views were often considered as liberal in origin. Nietzsche, Lagarde and Langbehn, however, were all, in different ways, involved in the nationalist trends of late nineteenth-century Germany, and all three proclaimed an irrationalist philosophy. Irrationalism was the soil on which nationalism flourished. Many of the attacks on the allegedly materialist features of the Empire were, in fact, aspects of the affirmation of irrationalism. The idea of the nation as a quasi-mystic folk-community presupposed and fed upon an irrationalist conception of society. It was for this reason that many of those who figured prominently in nationalist circles stressed the irrational aspects of human nature and, as far as education was concerned, wished it to regard the awakening of the imagination and the emotions as one of its primary func-
nations. Nietzsche, Lagarde and Langbehn all shared this view, and in this respect their educational thought was profoundly significant of the time.

This connection between the anti-intellectualist and the nationalist movements can be illustrated by considering the attacks that were delivered against the grammar school (Gymnasium). Details of this development will be set forth in a later chapter, but we must here notice certain general factors. The onslaught was based on two main charges, that in these schools the pupil's mind was overburdened and that the teaching was remote from life. Neither accusation was lacking in substance and each won support among liberal thinkers, but it was from nationalist circles that most of the impetus was derived.

Among the most influential leaders of the attack was Friedrich Lange, who from 1882 edited the Tägliche Rundschau, a leading nationalist periodical, and in 1894 founded the Deutsche Zeitung, the policy of which was outspokenly expansionist. In the latter year he founded the "German League", of which he was chairman till 1909 and which under his guidance propagated a doctrine of racial purity. However, it is as the author of the book Pure Germanism (1898) that he is chiefly remembered. In this work he expounded his philosophy of education and society, proclaiming the virtues of patriotism, duty and manly pride. "Can classical antiquity," he asked there, "provide models for any one of these ideals, for which our own history cannot furnish examples of equal value?" The 'Gymnasium', he argued, inculcated merely an "aesthetic idealism", which diverted the energy of Germans from the task of national consolidation. "Now, sixteen years after the unification", he went on, "a powerful national pride is still lacking owing to excessive humanism, and as a result this spiritually strong and politically weak age has degenerated completely into cosmopolitanism". His aim was the "spiritual enthronement of the German people's soul", so that "even now a German culture may grow upon the idea of Germanhood".

Lange, realising that more than the printed word was needed to lead his campaign against classical education to a successful conclusion, founded the Committee for German School Reform, the first task of which was to organise a mass-protest to be submitted to the Prussian Minister of Education. It reached him in 1888 (with 22,409 signatures) but produced no results, partly because the Minister was at the time inundated with proposals for educational reorganisation; in the Prussian Diet in 1889 he stated that more than 300 had reached him between the years 1882-1886. Lange's next step was to submit a similar petition to Bismarck, but this was no more successful; the Chancellor, said Lange, was under the spell of humanist education. About the same time he founded a new organisation, the Society for German School Reform, concerned particularly with secondary education. This provoked an important development, when Hugo Goering, no less nationalist in his ideals than Lange but differing from him on certain technical points, founded in 1889 a rival organisation called the General German Society for School Reform, which published a journal called The New German School. Like Lange's society this body demanded a greater 'realism' in education. Teaching, it maintained, should mirror civilisation, homework was to be abolished, and religious and moral education was to be given prominence. The boarding school was strongly advocated, and the value of rural surroundings and of physical training was stressed. Behind these plausible proposals lurked a political and social ideal, the aim being "through the inculcation of joy in practical work to preserve youth from being contaminated by socialist ideas, to accustom it to military discipline and, to a greater extent than hitherto, to make the people capable of bearing arms". By the time, just after the turn of the century, that the academic privileges of the 'Gymnasium' were finally undermined, economic and other factors had made their contribution, but this must not divert attention from the contribution also of nationalist theory.

At this point it will be useful to consider the portrayal in German literature of the problems of youth. These were treated, directly or indirectly, in works of varying literary quality, including Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks (1901), in which the schools figure as the instruments of an oppressive state-ideology, Emil Strauss' Friend Hein (1902) and Friedrich Huch's Mao (1907), both describing in an oversensitive youth a spiritual crisis leading to suicide, and others in which the inward yearnings of youth are contrasted with the bitterness of reality. "I only wanted to realise in my own life," says the introductory motto to Hermann Hesse's novel Demian (1918), "that which was seeking to emerge from my inner self. Why was that so difficult?" Educational thinkers, increasingly conscious of the psychological aspects of childhood
and adolescence as a result of scientific research, could not remain uninfluenced by such works, while at the same time the problem of youth was forcibly brought to the attention of the public by an abnormal number of schoolboy suicides, notably by an incident in Berlin in 1908. Edward Stilgebauder, in the preface to his novel *Builders of Youth* (1908), mentions that this event "pushed all questions of our public training of youth into the foreground of daily conversation". In the same year Ludwig Gurlitt, a prominent school reformer, published a book entitled *Schoolboy Suicides*. It would, however, be wrong to assume that contemporary literary works, to which should be added Frank Wedekind's play *Spring's Awakening* (1893) and novels like Otto Bierbaum's *Stillpe* (1897), Georg Hirschfeld's *Love in the Sixth Form* (1903), and Robert Musil's *Perplexities of the Pupil Törel* (1911), all depicting sexual or psychological irregularities sometimes ending in self-destruction, reflected the actual situation without distortion. In a considerable measure some were a reflection of an adult spiritual crisis, of the gulf between a self-created or idealised reality and the experience of life itself.

In 1897 appeared Ernst Linde's important book *Education and Personality*, teaching that the goal of education is the development of individuality. "We have a veritable abundance of model lessons," he said, "but now give us some model personalities". Five years later there was published a German translation of a Swedish work that was destined to exercise a deep influence in Germany, *The Century of the Child* by Ellen Key, the Swedish feminist and friend of Rilke. Education, it is here argued, is the process by which the inner nature of the child is unfolded in accordance with the laws of its own nature. This doctrine, proclaimed in Ludwig Gurlitt's *Education and Diversity* (1906), was also the theme of Ernst Meumann's *Introduction to Experimental Pedagogy* (1908) with its conclusion that "all problems of education can only be decided by respecting the inner laws of childhood", and it was put forward in many other books of the time, including Hugo Gaudig's *Education for Independence* (1902) and the same author's *The School in the Service of the Growing Personality* (1917). The various lines of investigation sometimes involved the attempt

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1 The main works in this field included Wilhelm Preyer's *The Soul of the Child* (1882), Georg Kerschensteiner's *The Development of the Gift of Drawing in Children* (1889), William Stern's *Psychology of Early Childhood* (1914) and Karl Bühler's *The Spiritual Development of the Child* (1918).