

XII. Middle Europe

The Spiritual Tasks of the Peoples

The three most important spiritual streams flowing down from antiquity into the epoch of the consciousness-soul are brought gradually into a close and comprehensive connection to the geo-demographic structure of Europe. Catholicism erects its fortress in the Romanic world; the ‘peoples of the Lodge’ arise in the Anglo-Saxon world. Middle Europe, the German-speaking people, become guardians of the essential kernel of esoteric Christianity. Out of this third group is born the guardian of the Grail – Parsival – and the poet who sang of the holy brotherhood – Wolfram von Eschenbach¹ – originate here. At the beginning of the epoch of the consciousness-soul Christian Rosenkretz chose Middle Europe as the place to lay the foundation of the new Christian mysteries. Out of the impulse of esoteric Christianity, Goetheanism and an outstanding school of philosophy arise in the external culture of the German-speaking peoples, and finally, Anthroposophy appears.

The spiritual countenance of Middle Europe is impressive by its greatness. When the European section of humanity was sufficiently mature to receive and absorb the substances of cosmic intelligence on earth, it was above all Thomas Aquinas and the German scholastic Albertus Magnus who took it into their soul. Parallel to this there ripened Christianity as an inner path of the soul. Its most important representatives were the German mystics Meister Eckhart, Johannes Tauler. Then arose the mighty culture of music from Bach to Wagner, the aesthetics of Schiller, the poetic science of Goethe, and much more.

In trying to enumerate the spiritual fruits of Middle Europe we are in danger of losing ourselves in enthusiasm because we have an entire universe before us, the grandiose revelation of the highest spheres of the spirit, access to which was mediated by human creativity based on the individual ‘I’-consciousness. But the highest amazement in face of these treasures changes to an amazement of the

¹ One can observe even in the French esoteric tradition the overriding role of the old-Germanic, but not the Latin element. The attempt by Thomas Malory, author of tales of the knights, to put the English knight Galahad in Parsival’s place is an expression of the spiritual rivalry to Middle Europe already appearing at that time.

opposite kind when we hear the statement, uttered with great inner satisfaction by representatives of German-speaking nations, that German history has finally been set aright and now looks more like a great ‘catalogue of crimes’.

This judgment sets a seal on the complete and irrevocable **spiritual capitulation** of Germany, and indeed of the entire German-speaking world. But in this case we should be consistent and remove from all concert programmes not only Wagner but other *Teutons* such as Beethoven; even Bach, Schumann and Weber. In the history of philosophy we should do without Hegel and Fichte, already disqualified not only as *teutonic* but also as *nationalists*, indeed almost as forerunners of national socialism etc. But what is there left? Or: what does the spiritual life of humanity stand to lose? **An essential ‘simplification’, a ‘lowering’ of the human spirit will come about! That is why the relation to Middle Europe has become the yardstick by which hostility towards individual consciousness, towards the phenomenon of the ‘I’ itself, can be measured today.** This hostility has attained such huge proportions in our time, and influences so many events, that it is impossible to give an exhaustive analysis of it in 20 to 30 pages. But neither is it absolutely necessary – or essential – to deal with its outer aspect, its outer effects. **If the will is there**, we can grasp the essence of this problem, by penetrating, with the help of spiritual science, to the archetypal phenomena of its hostility.

Rudolf Steiner does not make negative or belittling judgments when he speaks of historical symptomatology. He merely describes, characterizes, the occult-political phenomena and – most importantly – teaches us the method whereby knowledge of them can be acquired. The phenomena also invariably contain something that is justified, something that is determined by the karma of the world and by the task of the development of the free spirit. It is important for the student of spiritual science always to remain a realist and call white – white, and black – black. If we observe in this way, criticism has a constructive character. If Rudolf Steiner says of God the Son: *Christ neither hates nor does he unjustly love* (June 10, 1915, GA 157), then neither should we hold our alternating between hatred and unjustified love as a virtue.

In order to understand the entire tragedy (but not the ‘catalogue of crimes’) of Middle Europe, we must first come to clarity regarding the development of the highest soul-member – the consciousness-soul – and, connected with this, the revelation of the self-cognizing, autonomous ‘I’.

In the spiritual history of humanity we can compare the single peoples to human individualities who are united with one another in some form of community. And just as, when human individuals come into mutual relations with one another, **spiritual equality** does not exist, so is this also true of nations. It is simply an ideological fiction when someone speaks of the spiritual equality of all men and all nations. Such a view is put forward in order to mask the activity that would destroy the principle of equality in the sphere to which it rightfully belongs – the sphere of **rights**. And when this is followed by discussion of economic and political freedom, no-one can understand the meaning of events any longer, not even those who have made spiritual science the basis of their lives. Anthroposophists sometime embrace prejudices of our times even more intensively than those people who live without spiritual knowledge. This applies incontestably to the question of German history and the mission of the peoples of Middle Europe.

Recently an article with the mocking title: *Again the History of a Chosen People*² appeared in the central weekly journal of the Anthroposophical Society, *Das Goetheanum*. It speaks of the Germans, and we find the following, for us in all respects impossible, statement: *For a human being partaking in the developmental stage of the 'I' at the present time, it is shameful, a prison, to be a member of a 'chosen people', namely the German or Austrian people.*

Let us imagine for a moment that all those who share this opinion (maybe two out of three Members in the Society) were to take this statement literally. What would they have to do? – They would have to leave the 'prison' at once, cast off the shame: change their nationality, learn a different language and dedicate the rest of their life to the organization of a new crusade of nations to eliminate this criminal people. But if they do not emigrate, they enter, with their family, the ranks of the 'Red Army Fraction' etc. In Russia, for example, when Bolshevism was rejected (we had enough sense to not equate it with the Russian people), this is exactly what happened. In the first months of war the German army was welcomed with bread and salt, on the assumption that the invasion from outside was better than the one from within; in the 'Sixties and 'Eighties people tried to use any opportunity to emigrate. – But since the exponents of the above-mentioned opinion do nothing like this, but continue, on the contrary, to live a carefree life in 'prison', concealing their 'shame' in all tranquillity, earning

² *Das Goetheanum*, No. 46, 1992, p. 487-489.

wages that three-quarters of humanity dare not even dream of, and thriving well on organically-grown produce etc., what else is there to be said about them? Basically the same as what is now said everywhere in Russia today about the Bolshevik propagandists who, **before** the revolution, declared Russia a "**peoples' prison**" in which any decent human being should be ashamed to live. When they finally came to power – they turned the entire country into a single, gigantic concentration-camp.

It is not by chance that we had to go into this episode at such length. For we wish now to deal with a theme that can only be discussed with a very limited circle of people. The majority either responds with frivolous nonsense or is busy thinking up various methods of psychological indoctrination that will rob people of every trace of healthy common-sense when they touch upon this 'accursed' topic. In the final analysis we are dealing here **with the phenomenon of mass psychosis, which renders impossible any participation in the present stage of 'I'-development**. But no-one has the right to put **this** participation at risk, so I have no choice but – calmly and factually – to illuminate this puzzling phenomenon.

First of all we must clarify what is meant by the term 'chosen'. When we speak of the development of the consciousness-soul we know that the highest spiritual leadership of men **has chosen** the Anglo-Saxon nations for this task. The Slavic nations **have been chosen** to prepare the future epoch of the Spirit-Self. The '**chosenness**' of the Germans is connected to the development of the 'I'. And anyone who uses his healthy common-sense can now say: God grant that this people can bring its folk-mission, the task for which it has been chosen, to a successful conclusion!

In ancient times the Israelite people was chosen to prepare the soil for God to become Man. The ancient Greeks were the **chosen** people for the rational soul; later it was the Romans. The latter brought much evil into the world – obviously not the people themselves, but their mad Caesars, the decadent Roman aristocracy; but let us recall what is most important – that the Romans brought the concept of civil rights, which today has become the cultural heritage of all peoples.

In every culture there are peoples who have to fulfil the essential tasks, and those who are entrusted with secondary ones. **But every single people, indeed every**

single small splinter of a people ... has its special task (June 16, 1910, GA 121).

As with individual human beings, so it is the case with nations and even races, that they cannot always be on the same level with respect to the fulfilment of developmental tasks, because some have fulfilled them in the past; others are maturing now. Others, finally, are still preparing themselves to make an important contribution to spiritual progress in the development of humanity in the future. *The race can ... remain behind, a community of peoples can remain behind, but the souls* (of individuals) *move* (on the path of reincarnation) *beyond the single races* (June 21, 1908, GA 104). Within the limits of single incarnations a man has the right to say to himself: ***Through my karma I am united with this nationality because it is part of (my) karma*** (Jan. 7, 1917, GA 174). Now we can easily understand how absurd, indeed how nonsensical the above-mentioned article from *Das Goetheanum* is. But this is only a small tip of the iceberg which we are now about to examine.

The question of karma needs to be considered in detail. We must know and distinguish exactly what kind of archangel or spiritual being guides this or that people, what tasks are fulfilled in the universal-human sphere by higher hierarchical beings, and how far they can keep in step with their own development. Nor should we neglect the enormous difference between man and the beings of the hierarchies, the folk-spirits and folk-souls, from whom each human being, through mediation of the angels, learns to know the content of his individual obligations towards his own nation and its spiritual leaders (cf. June 9, 1910, GA 121).

Man, rooted in his folk for only one incarnation, bears within himself at the same time *infinitely more and also infinitely less ... than what is in the folk-soul* (Dec. 17, 1916, GA 173). From which it follows that we have to overcome the principle of the national, but especially that of blood-relationship (nations exist in which the racial principle is even stronger than the national). But only through **growing beyond it**, through seeing **the interests of humanity as the interests of one's own nation** and ultimately as one's own personal interest also. In short, we must develop into internationalists according to, not the Marxist, but the spiritual-scientific method. Rudolf Steiner gives the following characterization: ***Anglo-America has the talent for cosmogony; Europe the***

talent for freedom; Asia the talent for altruism, for religion, for a socio-economic order.

These three attitudes of mind must blend together for all of humanity. We must become world-citizens and act from the standpoint of world-citizens (Oct. 10, 1919, GA 191). This is no simple task, but one that has the character of a true path of initiation. It is a task of which our armchair internationalists have absolutely no conception. It would be good if they would at least understand that the tasks of world development have never been fulfilled with the help of slanderous speeches and the promotion of ideological neurasthenia.

The Germans

In order to fulfil the task of his karma that is rooted in the national element, it is necessary for the human being to combine self-knowledge with understanding of the different peoples. Through self-knowledge objectified in history a man can ascend to the consciousness-soul. This is why the forces standing in opposition to the development of the consciousness-soul epoch try to falsify the history of nations in every conceivable manner. In this way the emergence of the personality can be distorted with great effectiveness. A special but populous class is created – we would call it the ‘junk-intelligentsia’ – that is influenced by the suggestive working of the mass-media and historical lies. This social class, to which the majority of young people already belong, represents a huge threat to the spiritual development of the whole of humanity. It is divided into two groups and works in its destructive way from both sides. One side says: Blood and soil above all else! And there is always someone who adds: Yes, indeed that is the case, but not every nation has the right to say it. On the other side everything national is trampled underfoot. We can hear from a ‘junk-intellectual’ of this kind for instance: ‘I am German myself, but I hate this loudish nation!’³

Also in Russia today every healthy word about national culture is condemned as an expression of ‘Russian Nazism’. Thus, normal people are forced into silence and neo-Bolsheviks appear as the only representatives of national interests, to the obvious satisfaction of the people of the Left, who call themselves democrats because today all of them have become ‘dialecticians’.

³ This is a concrete statement of an ‘anthroposophist’.

Consequently, the question is not about ‘chosen’ or ‘not chosen’ in an abstract sense; we must rather ask what ‘being chosen’ implies. With regard to the Germans (with whom this chapter is concerned) Rudolf Steiner, who has given much attention to this question, should be permitted to speak.⁴ He said with emphasis: *The Germans are the avant-garde of the sixth sub-race* (i.e. the future Slavic-Germanic cultural epoch) *and will become increasingly aware of this mission*. Is this not ‘chosenness’? ‘But’ – it will be said – ‘read on and compare this to what the Germans did in the 20th century’. But Rudolf Steiner goes on: *They should do this in all humility. They should steep themselves in the writings of their own idealists ... Read your great idealists: J. G. Fichte etc.* (GA 264, p. 85).

It must be admitted that the Germans do not read their idealists. In the course of ‘re-education’ in the post-war years the thought was implanted into them that one ought to be ashamed of these idealists since they were misused by National Socialists for their ideology. This initial postulate must be placed at the very beginning, even **before** clarification of the various questions of guilt. It is nothing but an ideological trick if we make an incidental remark such as: ‘Yes, yes, there were quite a lot of things in their historical past, **but** ...’ and accusations follow, all of them leading to the already mentioned ideas of ‘shame’ and ‘prison’.

The nature of the German people itself is declared criminal and thus we cannot speak of the fruits of the spirit of this people. – This is the prevailing ideological attitude in the world towards the Germans. Of all else – of ‘guilt’ – we speak only when mentioning the facts that confirm this main conclusion. But this conclusion is entirely false. It is insisted upon because there is a wish at all costs to prevent the coming of the next cultural epoch. And all who support this ideology are opposed, for better or worse, to the development of humanity. There are many people today who are prepared to barter their spiritual birthrights for a dish of lentils. These are the fruits of relativism and agnosticism – the latest conclusions arrived at by science and ethics. But the conclusions of spiritual science are quite different. And it is of these we wish to speak here.

⁴ As already indicated, I formulate here a spiritual-scientific credo, containing no more than the quintessence of the problems that have been mentioned. But each one of these problems can, if necessary, be presented with the required thoroughness and concreteness.

Mobility, says Rudolf Steiner, is characteristic of the German nature. It can be explained out of the peculiar connection of the Germans to their folk-spirit. But this is also the reason why other nations find them so difficult to understand. With deeper understanding, however, the other nations will grasp that what they hate is the good qualities of the German people; it is difficult to understand them only because they are not quite usual and the unusual evokes antipathy.

Rudolf Steiner shares the opinion of Ernest Renan, which the latter expressed to D. F. Strauss in 1870: *Germany has ... a historical role of the utmost importance*. But Rudolf Steiner knew the times in which he lived and felt obliged to add the following: *One might say: when someone in Germany says this, then it also proves that German chauvinism exists: Why otherwise should a German speak appreciatively and with praise about the German nature?! – If this were the case, then these lectures would not be held* (Mar. 16, 1915, GA 157). In other words, Rudolf Steiner had the courage to call white – white, and black – black, and as little as this was forgiven him in the past, it is not forgiven him today.

It is necessary to specify what Rudolf Steiner concretely meant when he spoke of the German nature (Wesen). Let us therefore go back to the beginnings. As we have already mentioned, a peculiar mixture had arisen in Middle Europe as a result of the great migration of peoples from the region of Siberia to the West. *It has – says Rudolf Steiner – long been usual for the representative people of this primal ‘pot-pourri’ to call itself the ‘deutsche’ nation. The peoples of the West have already taken revenge on this nation so to speak, by refusing to call it by the expression which it uses for itself and which denotes a deep instinct. They are called Teutons, Allemands, Germans, all kinds of names, but when speaking in a language of the West, one does not want to say ‘Deutsch’, while it is precisely this name that is deeply united with the nature of this people* (Jan. 22, 1917, GA 174). The reason for this reaction, as for much else too, lies in the fact that streams of people moved radially from Central Europe in the various directions, and there were several quite natural reasons and psychological attributes of the nascent peoples which caused them to adopt a stance of opposition towards the centre.

As the peoples settled, the Middle European impulse showed itself in the fact that two spheres of interest began to form. One was represented by the people who were utterly indifferent to the doings of this or that circle of knights; they wanted to work their plot of land, trade in their immediate environment and

develop the crafts. The other sphere of interest was based on a professional attitude to war. The interests of farmers and craftsmen came increasingly into conflict with those of the knighthood. As a consequence of this the free cities were created and their inhabitants *developed a strong feeling of freedom and a sense for the immediate value of the person* (Dec. 20, 1904, GA 51). In rural areas, however, savagery and the rule of might prevailed (cf. Dec. 20 and 28, 1904, GA 51), (strongly reminiscent of Russia's past). *In the battles for freedom and independence waged by the cities against the princes and knights, nothing other is expressed than the struggle of the free personality* (Oct. 18, 1904, GA 51). This was the German Middle Ages.

A wide gulf separated the medieval German burghers from the aristocracy. If the former were descendants of those Atlanteans who had migrated with Manu to the East and carried the impulse of future Christian renewal with them, the latter were those *who had retained something of the old inner wildness and primitivity of soul of the Nibelungen people*, the backward people of the epoch of old Atlantis (Nibelheim).

People who today live out within themselves the Nibelungen-character in a decadent form carry above all *what was the content, the human content of the house of Habsburg ... No-one really understands the tragic happenings of our time* (in the 20th century), *who is not able to take account of a deeper factor at work in history – namely, that through the course of centuries the more advanced section of the Middle European population has been ruled and administered by the part that in its decadent form has retained the soul-character of the old, wild Nibelungen people ... These are two entirely different spiritual potencies. They lived side-by-side in past centuries like two different races, maybe even more strongly differentiated than two different races. We must have the courage to face the fact of such a deep undercurrent of history* (Apr. 12, 1919, GA 190).

We need to summon still more courage and free ourselves from all prejudice in order to understand that in the place of the old hereditary aristocracy a new one – **the aristocracy of the Lodges** – enters the world today. Under the veil of the process of democratization since the 16th century – says Rudolf Steiner –, there has grown increasingly the striving of a few to acquire rulership over entire peoples. To this end, the materialistic world-picture, as created by science, has been made into the social world-view (the step from Haeckel to Marx). Euro-

pean and American culture as a whole does not wish to know about the earth's connection to the spiritual forces of the Cosmos. This knowledge is to be kept for oneself within certain castes, among the members of the high degrees of occult secret societies, thereby making such circles comparable to the old Egyptian priestly caste. *And such circles can then hope to rule the populace that barbarically degenerates under materialism* (May 9, 1920, GA 201).

These are extraordinarily far-reaching aims. Rudolf Steiner indicates that already in our age the conditions are being created for the division of humanity into two races: the evil and the good race. All those who cannot overcome materialism, the magic of materialism, will in time belong to the evil race. Today the ancient struggle is being repeated – though on a far more dangerous level – of the atavistic elements from the distant past, with that section of humanity which has to fulfil the new tasks of development. Aristocrats of a different kind now take the place of the aristocrats of the Nibelungen – the guardians of the suggestive rituals and cults of the third and fourth cultural epoch. For this aristocracy it is important to subjugate three nations in particular: the English, the German and the Russian.

The Anglo-Saxons did not take the heritage of the Nibelungen with them when they left Middle Europe, hence it was possible for them to develop the instinct to unfold the consciousness-soul and at the same time a propensity for political activity, which became in the course of time a kind of pitfall for them, leading them to fall 'to the bottom' of materialism, as we have already described. What is being done to the Russians – is there for all to see.

The impression grows, that only the German-speaking peoples are still somehow able to prevent the downfall of civilization. But they are torn apart by mighty conflicting forces. Rudolf Steiner remarks that the characteristic traits of European life appear with grandiose clarity in the following contrast: on the one hand, the flower of spiritual life in the 18th century – Klopstock, Lessing, Herder, Schiller, Goethe –, and, on the other, the whole decadence of the Nibelungen heritage in the figure of Frederick the Great.

The Distortion of History

From 1200, on into the 20th century, says Rudolf Steiner, all that resulted from the natural development of Middle Europe stood over against a Luciferism, which was the wild, retarded element of the Nibelungen. This should be viewed in connection with the ahrimanic element of modern industrialism, with technology and capitalism ... [and with the way] the co-operation of industrialism with the old territorial supremacy, the nobility, arose in the last decade of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century ... This is what brought Middle Europe to its downfall: the marriage of industrialism with territorial princely authority, the political administrators of Middle Europe. This marriage is an insuperable obstacle for the Germans on the way to the fulfilment of their mission (Apr. 12, 1919, GA 190).

The occult forces of the West immediately made use of the spiritual weakening of Middle Europe and began to work on its destruction. They worked **simultaneously from the outside and from within**. What was on the inside? Habsburg – says Rudolf Steiner – was of the oldest Middle Ages and unfortunately thoroughly united with the oldest Middle Ages with respect to **Romanism**, to that **Catholicism** which had come to life – or had at least been brought to something similar to life – through the counter-Reformation. And over against this declining empire of the Habsburgs there stood something ultra-modern ... the Prussian-Hohenzollern imperial house which **represented Americanism within the German world**, Wilsonianism before Wilson. ... We need to study these things if we want to understand what has taken place and what will still take place (Nov. 15, 1918, GA 185a). – Let us hold this ‘will take place’ firmly in our memory.

Such is our world, but no-one wishes any longer to study these things, not even the Members of the anthroposophical movement. It has become risky! One can be punished and hindered in one’s career. It is easier to accept the ready-made clichés and nod politely. ‘Maybe the time of flowering will last long enough for us.’ Therefore: ‘Down with all trouble-makers!’

The problem does not arise from a shortage of historical facts, or because someone is expressing a wrong opinion (false judgments are refuted through scientific analysis), but because of the **furious rejection of any attempt to uncover the true meaning of German history** (and of any other too, but German history occupies a special place). One had even tried to overthrow Rudolf

Steiner. As soon as he started to speak of historic symptomatology he was attacked from the Left and the Right. But the task of research he gave to us has become even more relevant at the end of the century. We who wish to continue the cause of Rudolf Steiner will therefore fulfil this task wherever in the world we may happen to live.

German history has been distorted to a degree probably comparable only to that of the Soviets. But Germans are not permitted to correct the official version, the dogma of history. Once we had the opportunity to hear a Berlin anthroposophist say: ‘We Germans are treated like a bundle of reeds – they pick it up and break it; then they pick up a second one and break it too. And then a third is taken, but it will not break. Aha, they say, those are Nazis!’

The situation is still worsened by the fact that sometimes those in particular who want to rehabilitate National Socialism see through these truths. It is then easy for the Left once again to confirm its directive forbidding any deviation from the official version of history, and to prosecute those who do not hold to it. It is astonishing that literally the same thing is practised in the Soviet Union. Even the age of Perestroika has changed little in this regard; only the methods of distortion have been altered. The situation appears to be quite hopeless. The Anthroposophists would seem to be the only ones able to reconstruct the true history of their nations, only **within their own circles**. But it appears as if here too it is no more than a possibility. Are we going to make use of it?

Rudolf Steiner has shown in a multitude of examples how not only the history but the entire spiritual life of the Germans is misrepresented. *Let us go back to Fichte who is also denounced in the West today. Let us look at his ‘Speech to the German Nation’. What is the aim that Fichte has in mind? The self-education of the German people! He wants ... the Germans to be gripped, he wants them to make themselves better ... In the same way that the most grotesque thing is made out of the harmless national anthem ‘Deutschland, Deutschland über alles’ – which means nothing else, one need only read the following lines, than to love one’s native land (let us call to mind what is made out of it today), similarly one can misunderstand Fichte if one wishes to do so, for he begins his ‘Speech to the German Nation’ with the following words: ‘I speak only for Germans and only of Germans’. But why does he say this? Because Germany has broken up into many small, individual states and he [did not want to] speak to Prussians, Swabians, Saxons and, who knows, Olden-*

burgers ... but to Germans (Jan. 8, 1917, GA 174). Let us add here that Rudolf Steiner considered patriotism, the love for one's homeland, a healthy feeling that has nothing to do with nationalism, and that he explained, on the basis of the doctrine of the archangels who guide the nations, why this is so.

The Family of European Nations

Rudolf Steiner gave us a wealth of knowledge that is of inestimable value for the historian as well as the ethnographer concerning the being of the German nation as such and its relation to other European nations. He says for example: *The Italian folk-spirit looks back to his experiences as Egyptian-Chaldean folk-spirit; with his soul-being he dives down into the Egypto-Chaldean folk-spirit, just as we submerge in our body upon awakening, when we receive our self-consciousness. In the French folk-soul the being of ancient Greece lives itself out, coloured by Romanism.* Thus Voltaire is the dry intellect permeated by feeling (Gemüt), while Molière incorporates feeling (Gemüt) carried by the intellect.

The souls of the other nations – we read in the same lecture – *have first to grow beyond the beings of the folk-souls if they wish to raise themselves to a dialogue with the spiritual world. But the folk-soul being contains the tones of the spirit, proclaims the spirit as it speaks with the individual soul of the Middle European population.* Goethe's *Faust* is especially characteristic of the spirit of the German people.

Shakespeare's Hamlet best portrays the British folk-soul. *The entire activity of the British folk-soul is such that it makes the human being into an observer, because it fosters in him the faculty of observation, particularly in the forming of the consciousness-soul.* In order to understand this, it is enough to compare the philosophy of J. S. Mill with that of Fichte. *The British folk-soul ... shows ... its mission to observe what is outer and stop before the abyss of the super-sensible.*

The influence of Italian culture, perceptible up to the work of Dürer, and Goethe's longing to travel to Italy, all this reveals the interaction of the 'I' with the sentient soul on the one hand, and the interaction between the German and the Italian folk-spirit on the other. The interplay of the 'I' with the rational soul of the French is revealed in Leibniz (Nov. 27, 1914, GA 64).

We can consider another aspect and compare the physical bodies of the Germans with the ether-bodies of the English. We then see that in them **one and the same impulse** is alive, and, *viewed spiritually, there is no greater love between incarnated souls than that between the souls of Middle-Europe and those of the British Isles; the strongest love from the spiritual standpoint is present, and this is expressed outwardly in what we see unfolding before us now. This is how involved such things are* (Nov. 15, 1914, GA 158).

Indeed, they are terribly involved and only spiritual science can point out a way to disentangle them. All we need to do is put things back into their places and let them speak for themselves. This Goethean principle of knowledge is not foreign to other fields of research.

It is not to be the task of this book to give an exhaustive answer to the question why the German-speaking peoples have an especially important role in today's cultural epoch. But we will try to come decidedly closer to it. Let us bear in mind the key-statements of Rudolf Steiner which imply that the other nations must do everything in their power to help the Germans to fulfil their mission, to guard the cultural impulse of Middle Europe from occult-political manipulations, because the latter will, if they succeed, result in the suspension of evolution, in the 'debasement' of the human spirit to the level of group-consciousness. In contrast to this, Goetheanism offers the **only means** whereby the entire culture of humanity can be renewed, the human spirit **elevated** to the experience of true freedom, or in other words: the doors opened to a Christianizing of civilization as a whole.

Only a person of ill-will would call what is said above Germanophilia and it would only occur to a fool to feel 'ashamed' to be German. It is an elementary truth: **any** nation is good and evil at the same time. It all depends upon how the persuaders, who remain behind the scenes, treat that nation. Have we not had enough tragic experiences in our century, to finally understand this obvious truth? It is time to think differently and of something different – the missions of the peoples. Nationalism will then be overcome and it will be recognized that through the destruction of Middle European culture – whether by war or Americanization – the most important element is lost, that can be gained in the development of the human 'I'. A dawning of the Slavic-Germanic cultural epoch is at the same time **absolutely excluded**, because without the fructifying influence of Goetheanism the Russian culture cannot mature sufficiently to

undertake the entirely new task with which the following cultural epoch is to be inaugurated. If the Germans are robbed of their future, it is also taken from the Slavs and thus from civilization as a whole. Any discussion with those who do not understand this is pointless, because they will continue in future to saw at the branch on which they are sitting.

Not we but the divine hierarchies have ordained that each individual nation, at its appointed hour, should create something that is of the highest value for humanity. We need only understand this lofty divine plan and strive, in whatever circumstances, to act in harmony with it. It would be strange to hope that the peoples who accomplish the tasks of the world should be left undisturbed by the forces of **world-evil**. Quite the opposite is the case: the life of these peoples can become a veritable hell. Should it really happen that we too, the anthroposophists, place ourselves on the side of the infernal forces and help them to bring about our own downfall?

The Spiritual Paralysis of Germany, and its Causes

The forces of evil approach the human being in a cunningly refined way, so that he finally loses any understanding of who is actually serving whom. This should be clarified with the help of an example. Many anthroposophists accept what Rudolf Steiner says about the spirit of the German people. Others, but only a few, agree with the arguments brought forward by Rudolf Steiner showing that Germany was not guilty of unleashing the First World War. But – they continue – this was true in the past. The Second World War was started by the Germans, and they did everything of which they are accused by the English-Soviet-American coalition. It has become an axiom for all anthroposophists, and before this background there now appear ‘laymen by God’s grace’ who explain to us that the spirit of the German nations has apparently withdrawn from the Germans, and that this nation no longer has a mission! The conclusion is obvious: branches are chopped off and thrown into the fire. Rudolf Steiner warned that the situation might come where the Germans are driven out of their native land and scattered over the entire earth. If we understand the dark spirit that rules in our time, we can say that the realization of this plan is already conceivable. It is enough to activate the radical Right-wing parties in Germany a little and unleash a corresponding campaign in the world-press – and under

general expressions of approval the Morgenthau-Plan will be realized, or the Germans will be scattered over the other lands and continents.⁵

Though we are overstating the matter somewhat, everything indicates that, in principle, this is the direction development is taking. This is also the reason why the whole world has been convinced of the existence of age-old German militarism. No other nation than the Germans, with the possible exception of the Jewish people, is judged in so undifferentiated a way. The Second World War is taken as the starting-point, and everything else is judged on this basis, right back to the Middle Ages. The war itself is interpreted as the quintessence of what the German nature has brought forth over many centuries. Even some anthroposophists spread this ideology, for example the already mentioned R. Lissau in England and C. Lindenberg in Germany. They proceed from the following consideration: **if we accept as correct everything that Rudolf Steiner said about the First World War, this casts a certain ‘shadow’ on the concept of help by the Allied forces with regard to the Second one. But if one compels people to accept this concept without reservation, then a shadow is cast on Rudolf Steiner’s whole teaching of historical symptomatology.**

Compulsion is applied by the ‘black magic’ of the world-press. We need only reach out and take what is already there and introduce it into anthroposophical circles. Jurisprudence takes over where the press is insufficient. All means are justified to reach the one goal – to ‘re-educate’ the Germans so that **they themselves loosen their connection to the folk-spirit. Only then can a nation be driven from its soil**; otherwise we run the risk of receiving a strong counter-blow from the spirit. People active in an occult way in politics know this and act accordingly, while taking historical experience into account. Why, for example, was it possible for the Romans to drive the Jews out of Palestine? Only

⁵ There is a statement by Goethe to Wilhelm Riemer, the teacher of his son August, containing the following: *Who knows – destiny will beat them (the Germans) because they betrayed themselves and did not want to be what they are. It will scatter them over the earth like the Jews. – And rightly so! For the best of them live in exile and only in exile, in dispersion, will they develop the wealth of good that lies within them, for the benefit of the nation, and be the salt of the earth!* And Trithemius of Sponeheim writes in *De septem mundum regnatibus Archangelis: The descendants of Lo-hengrin ... will be numbed and destroyed ... The Germans, scattered throughout the world like gypsies, will have to muster all their strength to retain culture for the earth as pupils of Michael ...* (translation from the Latin by Karl Luttenberg, 1943; Publisher’s Note).

because they had fulfilled their spiritual-historic mission and the spirit of form, Jahve, the spirit of the Jewish nation up to this point, withdrew, and no other hierarchical being took His place.

Representatives of the secret societies which are active behind the scenes of world politics admit openly: *Not in the year 1945 but forty years later we defeated the Germans through re-educating them.* It is useful to take a closer look at the fruits of this re-education. The nation – and this time really the entire nation, not just its regents and ‘Nibelungen’ – has acknowledged that from now on it is and forever will be guilty of the crimes of the National Socialists. This means that whole generations will enter the world with an inborn feeling of guilt and the natural wish to get down on their knees and cover their head with ashes. These guilt-feelings are shared also by people whose grandparents, let us say, went missing in concentration-camps or remained forever in the snow-covered wastes of Russia where they had been sent as cannon-fodder against their will and without being asked what they themselves wanted.

But we, the people of the closing 20th century, should ask: Is it possible for individuals – who, furthermore, are quarrelling amongst themselves – however many of them there may be, to do anything whatever against the will of the gigantic apparatus of oppression that is prepared to sacrifice the population of a whole country in order to remain in power? When the war in the Persian Gulf began, it was supported by the entire population of the USA – apparently of their own free will. While the world-press was silent (formerly only the socialistic press had been able – when necessary – to be so unanimously silent), several hundred-thousand peaceful civilians had been killed in a short space of time. And the American people – the ‘avant-garde’ of humanism – believes to this day that it was necessary **for the sake of the happiness of the peoples of Iraq and Kuwait**, and it is not alone in this belief. And when in Cambodia approximately every third or fourth inhabitant was killed, the American people said nothing.

For many hours we could cite examples of this kind and one picture would come out ever more clearly: people do not want to think, they do not want to be consistent, they do not want to think things through to the end. They do not want to understand that, with this kind of conduct, they place themselves entirely in the service of evil.

In an interview recently granted to the German magazine *Info3* by the perspicacious historian Renate Riemeck, an anthroposophist and woman of great life-experience, she said: *But I never liked being a German.* Why not? – she was asked. *Because there was a Hitler,* she replied. We freeze in astonishment when reading these words. For if they are not just empty phrases they must contain a certain logic, and, if we apply this, then every Russian would have to say that he never liked being a Russian because there have been at least three people who were in no way outmatched by Hitler – Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. The Italian would have to be ashamed to be Italian because Mussolini existed; the Spaniard should be ashamed because of General Franco. If we follow the indications of the world-press, the Chilean had to blush with shame at his nationality until recently, because of Pinochet. But now it appears – so the liberal newspapers in Russia report – that Pinochet saved Chile from Bolshevik ruin, that he was not a dictator and Fascist but that the ‘humanist’ Allende was a dubious personality. Thus the Chileans, who were previously ashamed, should now be ashamed of their previous shame. And what do we make of Stalin, who after all belonged to the ‘avant-garde’ in the struggle against the *Nazi scourge*? What are the Americans and the English to do when they get to know who *has brought them under subjection* and acts in their name? On the other hand, what does it mean if we ‘like’ to be Russian, Chilean, American, Italian, English? Does it mean that we are all unscrupulous people, the pawns of dictators and men of violence?

R. Riemeck offers a noteworthy example of the fruits of the re-education of the Germans. But she is an experienced historian; what can we say of German youth, since practically no history is any longer taught in schools in Germany today? It is a peculiar education whose sole purpose is to deform the personality. And that is inhumane in the highest degree. For if it is a sin to kill a human being, then it is a mortal sin to destroy a soul. And further: how could it happen that we – who condemn evil – have not noticed how we have become a tool of evil ourselves?

Living in the West we never cease to wonder at how thoroughly and inhumanly the European has already been re-educated in the spirit of the new ideology. Let us look for instance at the phenomenon of language. There are many indeed who feel themselves compelled to speak the language of the nation they hate. What can one do, especially in the case where the entire spiritual treasure (we mean spiritual science) is given in this language and it is therefore necessary

not only for those born in Middle Europe to master it? We can observe people using language in the same way as characters in George Orwell's novel *1984*, who live together as man and wife and have been educated by the Party. I quote the passage where he describes the relationship between Winston and his wife: *as soon as he touched her she seemed to shrink back and freeze. When she was embraced it was like embracing a wooden doll. And strangely enough, he even had the feeling as if she would simultaneously push him away with all her might when he pressed her to himself. She lay there with closed eyes, neither resisting nor experiencing but only consenting. It was outwardly hindering and even terrible after a while.* And in another place: *The sexual drive was dangerous to the party and it had learned to put it into its service. One had proceeded in a similar way with the sense of family. Even though the family could not be abolished entirely ... The children on the other hand were systematically set against their parents ... Family life had in truth become an extension of the thought-police.*

Quite often some curious representatives of the 'I'-culture experience themselves precisely in the role of Winston's wife when they speak in the language of Goethe, Schiller and Steiner. But this is no mystery. They are all simple-minded victims of the (new) world ideology that realizes that the family, as opposed to language, cannot yet be abolished. And some particularly clever people in our midst have already begun the restoration of the tower of Babel and with it the equalizing of all languages into a language that has probably been worked out for us by intelligent, thinking people, i.e. computers, after which the universal sympathy for language will spiritualize all people.

In the interview mentioned above, R. Riemeck admits that her own parents voted for the National Socialist Party in 1932. They realized soon after that it was a mistake, and yet they must have had **reasons** of some sort to favour this party. She speaks of her father characterizing the Nazis in exactly the same way as the communists did, though he himself was not a communist. Why then are these facts not enough for R. Riemeck the historian to examine more closely the past of her own nation instead of promoting the eternal rituals of atonement?

It is easy to see how unacceptable my words are, in view of the mood prevailing at present not only in Germany but in the entire Western world. And if the author were not an anthroposophist and did not know a few facts about what is necessary

for the development of the human race, what is helpful to it and what is harmful, indeed what can be a mortal danger to us all, he would probably have said: 'What do I care about the Germans, who came to us twice with war and who – so it says in our history-books – even in earlier times continuously threatened the Russians? We read recently in a newspaper article that they were more dangerous than the Mongol-Tartar yoke. The devil take them all! If they are ashamed to be Germans, they should commit mass 'Harakiri' as a nation, to relieve their conscience and free the other, virtuous, nations from the threat of eternal militarism!'

If I were to say this, I would not only relieve myself of a burden of problems but also make an outstanding career as an academic. But I say to myself the following instead: Thank God that I did not live my life with such thoughts; what a tragedy it would have been. – It seems to me that there is no special merit in seeing, as I do, a profound meaning in the words of Rudolf Steiner who said, allying himself with the German mystic Ennemoser: *I [beg] you, [not] to lie on a bed of sloth as you quote the prophetic words of Ennemoser: **Germany will fulfil her mission or sink most shamefully into ruin, taking with her the whole of European culture***. ... *Germany [will] fulfil her mission ... when people are found who have the strength to bring the German spirit to life within themselves, not chauvinistically, not nationalistically, but as a part of the world-spirit, in the sense of which we have to work between East and West* (June 22, 1919, GA 192).

'But there is the crux' – the objection comes – 'not chauvinistically! The Germans behaved chauvinistically.' – But we can also put the question in another way: could it be that the Germans were exposed to such a temptation because it acts counter to their mission? If we only want to condemn, this question seems beside the point. It is easy for the voice of reason not to be heard when the din of the frenzied mass is raging. But if we have not yet lost our reason we should ask ourselves: Who in Germany today would dare to speak **of the German Spirit**?

Insinuations, defamation ... – the armoury of effective means for the battle against the spirit is well stocked. This can hardly surprise us at a time of which Rudolf Steiner said to Count Ludwig Polzer-Hoditz shortly before his death (Mar. 30, 1925): *The battle against the spirit has always been, and will in future remain, in the background of all outer events.* And from the other side of

the ocean, from the opposite pole, echo the worlds of F. D. Roosevelt: *Nothing happens by chance in politics! And when an event takes place, we can be certain it was planned.* It only remains to add that all events in our time are politicized through and through.

But the battle with the rightful Spirit of the epoch is not a harmless occupation. The tragic consequences will overtake all those who have the dubious courage or the imprudence to become protagonists in this struggle. The greater the victory over the time-spirit, the more horrible the consequences will be. Several times in the 20th century Middle Europe was defeated and condemned from outside as well as from within. It was not only robbed of its state sovereignty, but its spirit and its will to self-consciousness were broken, and with them the will for cultural work. (It has already happened that in a German theatre, on the stage as part of the spectacle – connected with the content of the play – an actress was actually injured.) Do the peoples, parties, Lodges and Orders of the victorious nations now have reason to triumph endlessly? In this connection Rudolf Steiner asks (after the Second World War the question sounds even stronger): *since the German nation will be excluded from the experience of those things through which the outer world will be governed in the future, what is actually happening? The sense of responsibility ... falls away. Not that of the individual, the national sense of responsibility falls away from those who are downtrodden, for this is what they are. Nor can they raise themselves again. Anything that is said in this direction is short-sightedness. Responsibility falls away. All the greater is the responsibility on the other side. That is where the actual responsibility will lie. Outer domination will be easily won. It is won by dint of forces that are not of one's own making ... For the question is already written in the book of karma of humanity: will a sufficiently large number of human beings be found, who feel the responsibility ...* which is bound up with the role of Anglo-American domination? (Dec. 14, 1919, GA 194).⁶ But to us, who live at the end of the century, it remains only to state: we see no trace of such people there.

In short, from whatever side and whatever perspective we consider the role and mission of Middle Europe, two contrasting opinions stand in opposition to each other. On the one hand, that which was founded and developed by Rudolf

⁶ In this lecture Rudolf Steiner was speaking in particular to a number of friends from England.

Steiner, and on the other, practically everything that was formulated by the press of the Entente and then confirmed once more by the English-Soviet-American coalition. The views of the ultra-Right in the last resort also further the second opinion, but according to the principle of the 'two daggers'.

The spiritual-scientific mode of observation allows us in our interpretation of historical facts to recognize their double – i.e. sensible-supersensible – nature, and to think it through with the help of strict scientific-historical method. But we will not be able to explain the meaning of events to people who cannot relate to Goetheanism or to the reference to supersensible reality. No-one can be compelled. Nor should anyone compel us to subject ourselves to the means of mass-hypnosis.

Rudolf Steiner's teaching of meta-history, of historical symptomatology, of the causes of the crisis of present civilization, the decline of the occult Orders and brotherhoods, the crisis of the epoch of materialism – this is the comprehensive spiritual-scientific foundation which gives us the possibility and the right to judge the social-political life of the present day. In the political life that is sustained by occult powers behind the scenes, it does not happen that an open or veiled dictatorship, once in power, would allow any single individual to determine his direction in accordance with his own whim. At the same time the manipulation of world history is by no means an elementary process. It is not unusual for one form of evil to be supplanted by another. It is therefore naïve to want to see good in one of the mutually opposing sides. Good comes into the world against the will of both.

The history of Germany in the 20th century (already prepared in the 19th) is a unified whole. **In it there works as an essential motif the relentless striving of occult Orders and brotherhoods to deprive Middle Europe of the possibility of fulfilling its spiritual and cultural mission – to bear into the world the continuously-evolving phenomenon of 'I'-consciousness, of the self-cognitive 'I'. If Middle Europe suffers defeat in this battle, civilization will lose its meaning and this will bring endless grief to all nations of the earth, that no-one will be able to avoid.** Humanity is a unity and just as an individual, however highly developed he may be, with the loss of his 'I' also loses his reason, so does humanity, in view of the plight of Middle Europe, stand in danger of losing **the centre of its self-consciousness.** Knowledge of this fact does not

make the cultural mission of other nations appear less significant, for **the phenomenon of self-consciousness can only develop in the threefold soul, when its members are in harmony with each other.** Mankind is a unity.