

INTRODUCTION

DURING THE long armistice between the two great wars of the twentieth century, the profoundly disturbed nations of the western world heard a great deal about certain tendencies, doctrines and institutions which were described as manifestations of "corporatism." Fascist Italy was the first nation to remodel its constitution with the avowed aim of becoming a "corporative state," and in the course of time a number of other states, including Portugal, Austria, Spain and Brazil, abandoned formal allegiance to liberal-democratic political institutions and announced similar intentions.¹ Following the collapse of republican France in 1940, the introduction of an "*ordre corporatif*" became one of the declared purposes of Marshal Pétain's "national regeneration movement."² In Germany the National Socialist German Workers' Party came to power in 1933, having pledged itself to establish "corporative" institutions, inasmuch as Point 25

¹ Mussolini's "corporative state" attracted the most attention and served as a model for subsequent experiments, particularly in Latin countries, and the literature on Italian corporatism has become fairly extensive. A number of the most informative recent works on Italian corporatism, and on derivative or parallel developments elsewhere, are indicated in a separate section of the Bibliography, pp. 223-26 below.

² For a good brief description and appraisal of the salient features of the projected organization, see S. B. Clough, "The House that Pétain Built" in the *Political Science Quarterly*, LIX (1944) 30-39.

of its "unalterable" program of February 25, 1920, had demanded "the creation of corporative and professional chambers."³ For some time after 1933, moreover, the Third Reich officially advertised itself as a "corporative state [*Ständestaat*]" in the making.

All these "corporative states," so far as they actually corresponded to any functioning institutions, figured mainly as administrative appendages through which authoritarian regimes endeavored to assert complete state control over the economic and social affairs of their subjects. Thus in Hitler's Germany, in Fascist Italy and in the Latin countries where the Italian scheme was adopted as a model each of the nation's principal industries and occupational groups was constituted, by governmental fiat, as a "corporation," as an "estate [*Stand*]" or as a "front." Each of these bodies was represented to be a guild-like⁴ entity, possessing "autonomous" jurisdiction over its own particular industrial sphere. In practice, however, these "corporations" either remained vague

³ The German text of this program is most conveniently available in Konrad Heiden's *Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 1932) 21-24. The passage cited demands "*die Bildung von Stände- und Berufskammern zur Durchführung der vom Reich erlassenen Rahmengesetze in den einzelnen Bundesstaaten.*" This passage has been frequently mistranslated in English versions, *Stände* usually being rendered as "class," with the result that the sense of the German text is obscured. *Stand* has the general meaning of "status," "position," "rank" or "station," but in historical usage it commonly refers to one of the "estates" of the old regime, and in theoretical discussions it may also mean "corporation" or "guild." *Ständestaat* is the usual German rendering of the Italian *stato corporativo* or the French *état corporatif*. On the theoretical concept of a *Stand*, and the distinction between it and the Marxian concept of a "class," see Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen, 1922) 631-41; F. Tönnies, "Stände und Klassen," in *Handwörterbuch der Soziologie* (Stuttgart, 1931) 617-38; Werner Sombart, *Deutscher Sozialismus* (Charlottenburg, 1934) 219-21; W. A. Jöhr, *Die ständische Ordnung* (Leipzig, 1937) 177-81.

⁴ The adjective "corporative" in fact appears to have entered English as a loan word from the Romance languages, where *corporation* (French) and *corporazione* (Italian), for example, are the usual terms for "guild."

projects to be realized in some distant future or became passive instruments for carrying out the policies dictated from above by an absolute central authority. It is generally recognized, moreover, that the totalitarian states made use of their "corporative" organizations primarily to repress conflicts between labor and management.

In countries where liberal-democratic political institutions continued to function, these authoritarian versions of "corporatism" were generally repudiated with some vehemence. At the same time, however, there appeared signs of a growing awareness that in modern industrial society certain fundamental tendencies which might be described as "corporative" had for some time been at work. Economists and historians found one such tendency to be the decline of atomistic competition in economic life, a sphere in which the "free play of individual forces" was increasingly being superseded by the operation of collective agreements concluded among solidly organized "communities of interest."⁵ Jurists and political scientists observed a parallel decline of atomistic individualism in politics, noting that private bodies claiming to represent the group interests of labor, of employers, of farmers, of consumers, of particular branches of industry and of other economic and social groups tended to become more inclusive and more highly integrated with a view to increasing their direct influence upon governmental policies. In some democratic countries, notably in pre-Nazi Germany, in France and in Czechoslovakia, groups of this kind were given a degree of official recognition when they were allowed representation

⁵ Two treatments that describe some of the results of these tendencies, while testifying to the attention which they have recently attracted, are J. Malherbe, *Le corporatisme d'association en Suisse; essai de synthèse* (Lausanne, 1940) and a study by the International Labor Organization, *Methods of Collaboration between the Public Authorities, Workers' Organizations and Employers' Organizations* (Geneva, 1940).

in National Economic Councils created to serve as advisory "parliaments of industry."⁶

Both in industry and in politics the operation of these "corporative" tendencies was intensified by the economic crisis of the 1930's. The liberal state was suddenly called upon to assume responsibility for an unprecedented variety of economic and social functions, ranging from price fixing and market regulation to the adjudication of industrial disputes. Traditional administrative techniques often seemed inadequate to cope with the vast number of detailed executive and supervisory functions which governments were now expected to discharge, and the governments not infrequently sought in desperation to devolve some of their new burdens upon private bodies in various fields while retaining, at least in theory, the general functions of policy determination and oversight.

Americans are probably most familiar with the experiments which were made in this latter direction during 1933 and 1934 under the National Industrial Recovery Administration (NIRA), but in some of the European democracies, too, there occurred many significant and widely noticed developments of a similar character. For example, two of the most distinguished liberal economists of France, writing in 1939, were moved to characterize these developments as a "piecemeal emergence of corporatism [*corporatisation*]," noting among other manifestations of a general tendency that:

Free contract has receded in the face of legal regulation. Markets . . . have been "made sane" by the public authorities who, partly by legislation and partly by giving legal force to private

⁶ For a useful summary and analysis of developments along these lines both in democratic and in non-democratic countries, see K. Loewenstein, "Occupational Representation and the Idea of an Economic Parliament," in *Social Science*, XII (1937) 420-31, 529.

professional agreements, have substituted statutory imperatives for the spontaneous adaptation of supply to demand.⁷

Citations of a similar tenor could of course be multiplied almost *ad infinitum* out of the writings of contemporary social scientists, for the observation that "group solidarity" is tending to overshadow "rugged individualism," that western society and economy are tending to be less "competitive" and more "controlled," less "free" and more "bound" has become a central preoccupation of twentieth-century social thought. To the extent, moreover, that the institutional products of these tendencies present significant analogies to the guilds and corporations of an earlier "bound" society, it is not surprising that these latter-day phenomena should be widely described as "corporative."

Although most of the "corporative states" established in recent years have now been swept away, together with the authoritarian regimes that sponsored them, it does not follow that "corporatism," either as a doctrine or as an objective tendency, has ceased to be a significant feature of the twentieth-century environment. Italian Fascism and German Nazism lie in ruins, but many of the economic and cultural forces that brought them into existence have not ceased to operate. The rise of National Socialism, in particular, was made easier by the support of individuals and groups in sympathy with a "corporative ideal" which they expected the Nazis to realize. In a more general fashion, moreover, the diffusion of anti-liberal and anti-Marxist ideas in Germany prior to 1933, to which corporatists made a definite contribution, tended to weaken the forces opposed to the National Socialists and to undermine the Weimar Republic. In some respects, of course,

⁷ C. Rist and G. Pirou, editors, *De la France d'avant-guerre à la France d'aujourd'hui*, being the entire January-February issue of the *Revue d'économie politique*, LIII (1939) ix, vii. See also H. Laufenberger, *L'intervention de l'état en matière économique* (Paris, 1939).

these results were fortuitous in that some corporatists were far from being fundamentally hostile to the democratic state or from being in sympathy with the entire Nazi ideology. Furthermore, the exploitation of corporatist doctrines in National Socialist propaganda was by no means a decisive element in the movement's ultimate triumph, and the Nazi regime, once established, proved to have little in common with the prescription of any previous corporatist school.⁸

It is therefore not surprising that the Third Reich should have proved a bitter disappointment to many Germans who had expected that it would realize their dearest hopes by establishing a true *Ständestaat*. For this reason it is highly unlikely that the passing of the Nazi dictatorship will also mark the final eradication of those hopes. Indeed, there are perhaps equally good grounds for anticipating that the latter may even persist among some groups in an intensified form. For, unless Germany's social structure should be completely revolutionized in the near future, important sections of the community may well continue to see in some kind of non-Marxian, non-liberal social ideal the promise of class harmony, national solidarity and economic stability.⁹ In that event, Ger-

⁸ Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (New York, 1944) 228-34; Taylor Cole, "Corporative Organization of the Third Reich," in *The Review of Politics*, II (1940) 461-2; K. Loewenstein, *loc. cit.*, and *Hitler's Germany* (New York, 1939) 143 ff.

⁹ Corporative enthusiasts among German Catholics, in particular, may well derive considerable encouragement from declarations of papal approval of "corporative associations" as a means of carrying out "just social reforms." A dispatch to the *New York Times*, July 21, 1946, p. 1, reported that Pope Pius XII, in a letter to Professor Charles Flory, president of the *Semaines Sociales de France*, had called for the institution of such bodies "in every branch of the national economy," in preference to nationalization. The Pope had concluded by affirming that, "under present circumstances," there was no doubt that "a corporative form of social life, and especially of economic life, in practice favors Christian doctrine concerning the individual, community, labor and private property."

man corporatism will continue to be something which the world can ill afford to leave out of account.

Aside from their somewhat equivocal bearing upon the recent past, moreover, and aside from their possible bearing upon the future, German corporatist doctrines are deserving of special historical study if only by reason of the fact that nowhere has theorizing of this kind been more abundant, more varied or more continuous than in Germany. Speculation along similar lines has developed sporadically in other parts of Europe—under Catholic or syndicalist auspices in France, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Austria, and in British Guild Socialism, for example—but nowhere else has there been a “corporatist tradition” of comparable dimensions, diversity or duration.

This circumstance is perhaps to be explained in part by the late appearance of industrialism and of liberal-democratic political institutions in central Europe. The old craft guilds, which the French revolutionaries had suppressed in 1791, maintained a remarkably vigorous existence in most parts of Germany down through the middle of the nineteenth century, and unabridged freedom of occupation was not established in all parts of Germany until 1869. The early development of corporatism in Germany was further shaped by the fact that the German nationalist movement, taking its rise during the Wars of Liberation waged under the leadership of monarchical Prussia against the heir of the French Revolution, Napoleon, conceived and retained a strong antipathy to the egalitarian and individualist principles which he had sought to impose east of the Rhine. In striving to vindicate Germany's cultural individuality against these “foreign” ideas many subsequent nationalists were disposed to exalt the estates and corporations of the Germanic past and to find in the nation's “old corporative order” a model for projected new

forms of social organization more to their liking than those deriving from revolutionary doctrine and practice.

The "corporatist tradition" that developed in Germany under these nationalist auspices and in the context of these peculiar national circumstances has only recently begun to attract attention in the English-speaking countries, although a considerable body of historical literature dealing with the subject has grown up in Germany over the past twenty-five years. American and British students have, however, shown comparatively little interest in exploring this tradition, possibly because the history of their own countries so largely lacks any parallel stream of ideas. Not until after the First World War, moreover, were there strong reasons for supposing that the scattered and heterogeneous elements of the German corporatist tradition were anything more than aberrant notions, extraneous to the main currents of thought and barren of important actual or potential influence upon practical affairs.

During the decade prior to 1933, however, the German reading public was offered a profuse assortment of printed material, mostly though not exclusively of a scholarly cast, the burden of which was to extol the virtues of a *Ständestaat* as contrasted with the shortcomings of the existing state and economy. Among the authors of these works there was little detailed agreement as to the precise shape of the new organization which they wished to see established, though they were unanimous in declaring that the early inauguration of a *ständische Ordnung* represented Germany's only genuine hope of escaping the disastrous consequences which would flow from an otherwise inevitable victory of Marxian principles of social organization. Several distinct groups were active in promoting various versions of this general conception,

among which three were numerous and influential enough to merit specific mention.

Probably the least influential of these groups was the "occupational estates" school,¹⁰ embracing a number of writers associated with the monthly periodical *Die Tat*, or with the *Politische Kolleg* directed by Heinrich Herrfahrdt. The general aim of this group was to bring about a "community of labor" in which social peace could be realized. To this end employers, supervisors and workers were to be organized in a hierarchy of "factory communities," each group being given equal representation in joint bodies at each level. All enterprises engaged in the same kind of production were to be organized by districts and then united in national groupings. A "functional parliament" would then co-ordinate these *Berufsstände* and act as a buffer to prevent political encroachment upon economic affairs as well as undue interference by economic groups in the affairs of the state. Some of these theories were not objectionable to the Nazis, who gave the concept of an *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, for instance, a central place in their labor legislation after 1934.

Many members of the twentieth-century Catholic corporatist school,¹¹ appealing for papal authority to the corporatist ideal expressed (but not elaborated) in the two "social encyclicals" of Leo XIII and Pius XI—*Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931)—advocated a hierarchical

¹⁰ Cole, *loc. cit.*, 442-3; see also M. Günther, *Das deutsche Berufsständeproblem seit 1919 und die Vorschläge zu seiner Lösung* (Dresden, 1935); and the entire July issue of *Die Tat*, XVII (1925), esp. 494 ff.

¹¹ A list of the leading members of this school would include the names of Gustav Gundlach, Heinrich Pesch, Goetz Briefs, J. Pieper, W. Schwer, Theodor Brauer, and Joseph van der Velden. The Jesuits, Pesch and Gundlach, were among the most influential of these writers, the latter having been chosen to contribute the article, "Stand: Ständewesen," to the *Staatslexikon der Görres-Gesellschaft* (5th edition, Freiburg, 1932) V, 47-50.

scheme of occupational estates drawn together in economic councils which would provide a framework for industrial self-government and supplement the supreme political parliament in economic and social affairs. Writers of this school were convinced that social harmony could be achieved only within such an organization of estates because the very notion of a "class" in the Marxian sense implied a materialistic, anti-social disregard of "the common good." Within the broad limits defined by "private ownership of property" and "the necessary measure of state control," a wide sphere of autonomy, with substantial attributions of legal authority and of social functions, was to be allowed to these estates. For the most part, however, Catholic corporatists were "reformists" in that they were willing to make use of existing occupational and economic groups, which they proposed to transform gradually into "estates" by infusing them with a new ethos, and in general they defended the supremacy of the political parliament within a democratic state.¹² Shortly before their dissolution in 1933 the National Christian (Catholic) trade unions were advocating a *berufsständische* organization embodying the essentials of this program.¹³

A third group of anti-liberal and anti-Marxian proponents of the *ständische Idee* was the "universalist" or "neo-romantic" school led by the Viennese professor of political economy, Othmar Spann.¹⁴ According to this group, which made much of the political writings of Adam Müller and his contemporaries, the whole complex of human activities should be comprehended in a series of "partial totalities" or "estates," arranged in an ascending order of rank and crowned by a

¹² Cole, *loc. cit.*, 444-5.

¹³ Günther, *op. cit.*, 90.

¹⁴ The bible of Spann's followers was *Der wahre Staat* (3rd ed. Jena, 1931). His *History of Economics*, trans. by E. and C. Paul (New York, 1930), 282-3 contains a list of the leading members of the school.

state which would itself be both the most general estate of all and the "leader and judge of all the other estates." Economic life, a subordinate estate, would be further divided into partial estates, each corresponding to a single occupation. These theories found favor with many National Socialist leaders and were given a wide circulation in Germany during the early years of the regime. In 1933 one of Spann's disciples, Walter Heinrich, headed a short-lived *Institut für Ständewesen* established in Düsseldorf to train future leaders, and Bureaus for Corporative Organization were created within the NSDAP and Labor Front in 1933 under the leadership of Max Frauendorfer, then a warm partisan of many of Spann's ideas.¹⁵

Heated controversies regarding the proper kind of "corporative reconstruction" (if any) to be attempted under Nazi auspices were carried on during 1933 and 1934. Although corporatist proposals were strongly supported in Labor Front circles there was much diversity of opinion among high Nazi officials, and the Führer himself seems to have held aloof from the disputes. Industrial and financial circles were inclined to identify corporatist ideas with the "radical wing" of the party; Spann's theories came under attack from Catholic and academic quarters, and were pronounced heretical on certain points of racial dogma by Rosenberg and other official party philosophers. Bureaucrats were generally suspicious of proposals to establish "autonomous" estates which might jeopardize central state control of economic affairs.¹⁶ Though Dr. Ley, as leader of the Labor Front, had previously been among the most enthusiastic supporters of "corporative reconstruction," he finally capitulated to these and other pressures at the end of 1934, declaring that:

¹⁵ Cole, *loc. cit.*, 447.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 448-50.

I feel called upon to take issue with the idea of organization by estates as it is found in Professor Othmar Spann's teachings, in the Italian corporative system, in the Austrian estates system, and in the demand for "organic construction" found in the twenty-fifth point of the National Socialist Party program and as it has at least in part been realized by the Labor Front.¹⁷

Although the exploitation of certain aspects of the German corporatist tradition in Nazi propaganda during the movement's rise to power and during the initial years of the Hitler regime has served to call attention to the problem of corporatism in German intellectual history, the Third Reich itself scarcely amounted to more than a minor and somewhat ambiguous incident in the evolution of that doctrine. The theories to which Nazi spokesmen paid tribute in the period before 1933 were neither the most representative nor the most influential expressions of the previous corporatist tradition, and after 1935 even these doctrines were officially repudiated. The actual political and economic organization of the Third Reich did not even roughly correspond to the specifications laid down by any of the main schools of modern corporatist theory. Certain so-called *Stände* were created by official fiat, but these figured merely as subsidiary organs of control in a centralized, authoritarian scheme which relied more heavily upon other agencies. There would seem, therefore, to be little justification for making the so-called Nazi *Ständestaat* the sole—or even the principal—focus of a discussion intended to help clarify the permanent significance of corporatist currents in recent German political philosophy.

This German "corporatist tradition" is not easy to characterize within a brief compass. There has never been a definite standard of orthodoxy. At most there has been a somewhat nebulous generic ideal—that of an "organically constituted"

¹⁷ *New York Times* (January 2, 1935) 5.

Ständestaat. Ranged above this common denominator, however, there is to be found a vast multitude of otherwise heterogeneous theories, each dealing from its own particular standpoint with a different set of data and problems. Before attempting to describe the great variety of specific theories, therefore, a brief examination of some of the philosophic roots of German corporatism may not be out of place.

The *ständische Idee* in German political and social theory has always been closely bound up with an "organic" conception of state and society (derived from Greek political thought by way of medieval scholasticism) which elaborates upon the more or less explicit assumption that valid comparisons can be made between a living body and a politically organized community. This generic conception has furnished virtually all German corporatists with a varied array of arguments in support of their central theses. For example, they have held that in the social body as in a living organism the demands of the whole must always take precedence over those of single members or parts, inasmuch as the existence of each part necessarily presupposes the existence of the whole, while the converse is not invariably true. (The loss of a finger need not be fatal, but when the whole body dies the finger also perishes.) Just as all the parts of the body are not equally indispensable to the whole, so men are unequal in capacity and hence unequal in social (if not in divine) worth. From this premise it is deduced that there must be an unequal apportionment of social functions, rewards, rights, duties, privileges and responsibilities among individuals. Just as the brain or will presides over the conscious activities of a human being, so the state must have a single head, and a hierarchical organization of authority must correspond to the subordination of lower bodily functions to the higher. At the same time, however, the unconscious character of certain physical functions,

such as breathing or the beating of the heart, and the automatic reflexes of the human nervous system, lend support to a pluralistic interpretation of sovereignty and serve to establish the need for political federalism and decentralization. The human community is held to be essentially like a living organism, also, in that its existence must be dominated by one central purpose—that of preserving inner coherence and harmony—for in the social body as in any living body the persistence of unresolved internal conflicts must ultimately have fatal consequences. Sudden or violent interruptions of an existing continuity of development are, moreover, as little to be desired in a social body as in a natural one; hence social change can only be a peaceful and gradual process, and must not disturb the relation of the various parts to one another or to the whole.¹⁸

This organic analogy can, of course, be made to support a wide variety of conclusions regarding the form of the state and the relation of the individual to the community. While it furnishes a number of very convenient philosophic cornerstones for the theory of corporatism, it can also be used to sustain the most extreme individualism—it was so used, for instance, by Herbert Spencer. Even as employed by corporatist writers to attack individualism, the organic analogy has taken different forms depending upon what conclusions the various theorists have been most anxious to prove. In general, the writers of the early nineteenth century were inclined to stress the desirability of a strong, unified (though not highly cen-

¹⁸ F. W. Coker, *Organismic Theories of the State* (New York, 1910), presents a discussion of some of the major nineteenth-century manifestations of this conception, which exercised a particularly strong hegemony over political thinking in Germany, and found numerous adherents elsewhere. Coker aptly observes (191-2) that "The desire to combat . . . theories which regarded the State as the creation or tool of man was the dominant aim of the earlier writers of the century and was an underlying mood of perhaps all. . . ."

tralized or completely secular) national state, probably because Germany was not at that time afflicted with a conspicuous excess of unitary political organization. Hence the primary attributes of an organism were commonly represented to be its unity, its singleness of purpose and its internal subordination, harmony and coherence. Later theorists, who were much less metaphysical and much more conversant with the vocabulary of the rapidly growing sciences of biology and psychology, tended to place more stress upon other "organic" attributes—chiefly upon the specialization of members according to function, and upon the "automatic" or "autonomous" action of various organs. This shift of emphasis ran roughly parallel with the revival of interest in pluralism and federalism, both of which were critical of the developments that occurred—most strikingly in the latter half of the century—in the direction of monistic state sovereignty, secularism and centralization.

Developing as they did, however, under the continuous influence of one form or another of the "organic" conception, German corporatist doctrines have typically expressed antipathy to the individualism of the Enlightenment, to the egalitarianism of the French Revolution and to the Marxian theory of class conflict. Furthermore, Manchester liberalism, Jacobin democracy and revolutionary socialism have as a rule been subsumed under a single rubric and then rejected as products of the same spirit of "mechanical" or "atomistic" individualism.¹⁹ Most German corporatists have held this spirit to be the antithesis of a truly "social" outlook, and in place of individual rights, interests and values they have stressed

¹⁹ In order to appreciate why Marxian socialism was attacked by corporatists during the nineteenth century mainly by reason of its "overemphasis" upon the individual, rather than by reason of its "subjection" of the individual to society, it is essential to remember that Marx and Engels laid much stress upon their thesis that the final resolution of class conflicts in a classless, socialist

the binding ties of the community. They have insisted, further, that the social needs and obligations of men are not exhausted by participation in a territorial state, and that many subsidiary manifestations of the associative impulse also require institutional embodiment. Hence according to the generic corporatist conception the nation is an "organic" union of many lesser communities or "estates" rather than a simple aggregation of interchangeable human "atoms."

It is perhaps readily understandable, in view of their common affiliation with this "organic" system of social values, that particular designs for realizing a corporative society have uniformly refused to countenance sudden, violent or revolutionary methods of bringing about changes in the distribution of power, wealth and income. On the other hand, economic affairs have been unanimously acknowledged to be a social concern, and hence subject to some political regulation. A few theorists have advocated thoroughgoing governmental intervention in economic processes, but the great majority have laid stress upon the desirability of "economic federalism" and "self-government in industry," repudiating *étatisme* and bureaucratic, central control as inimical both to efficiency and to freedom.

In the specific programs of German corporatist reformers during the past hundred years the most characteristic demand has been for the statutory establishment of a universal scheme of vocational or professional organizations in which each constituent "corporation" would be endowed with a more or less extensive body of legal rights and duties. These duties society would ultimately make possible a "withering away of the state" and the establishment of absolute individual freedom (anarchy). The contemporary socialist movement was, moreover, exceedingly vociferous in denouncing the "bourgeois state" for its oppressive treatment of the workers both as a class and as individuals, and in demanding the extension of individual liberties and of individual welfare.

would include the representation of group interests *vis à vis* other groups, and the maintenance of harmony among its own component elements. Every vocational group would be organized, and every occupationally active person would be a member of the appropriate professional organization. Considerable disagreement has existed as to whether membership should be voluntary or required by law, but those who have held to the voluntary principle have generally counted upon the efficacy of a preliminary moral revival to strengthen communal impulses and so to bring about the necessary universality without external constraint.

The most common unit of organization proposed has been the trade (*Fach*) or profession (*Beruf*). Employers and workers have generally been considered as representing separate subdivisions of the same vocational category. Provision has commonly been made for conciliation of divergent interests within each group, and in particular for arbitration of the conflicting demands of management and labor. Many schemes have favored compulsory arbitration of wage disputes, some have advocated legal prohibition of strikes and lockouts, and all have had the aim of moderating industrial strife with a view to its ultimate elimination. Some sort of council would embrace all persons associated with a single enterprise or establishment, and a pyramidal structure would then be evolved out of combinations of these bodies at regional and national levels. A corporative chamber or national economic council, variously projected as subsidiary to, as co-equal with, or as superseding the territorial parliament, has usually been placed at the apex of this pyramid as the supreme organ of "functional" representation.

In the course of its development this corporatist tradition, like its hostile counterparts, the liberal and socialist traditions, has been intimately bound up with virtually the whole

complex of modern political, economic, social and cultural problems. In formulating their own attitudes toward these problems German corporatist writers have found occasion to discuss almost every aspect of latter-day civilization, from ultimate moral values to minute practical details of political and economic organization. The appearance of corporatism in Germany as a distinct genus of political and economic speculation must be dated at least as early as 1800, and many elements of the corporatist *Weltanschauung* derive from sources as remote in time as the social teachings of Thomas Aquinas or Plato's *Republic*. The doctrine's recent evolution has been shaped in some fashion by virtually every important development in the nation's history since 1789; and its growth has been fostered by a vast assortment of individual contributions, each reflecting the peculiar antecedents and circumstances of the contributor.

Corporatism made its appearance in Germany as an expression of conservative and nationalist antipathy to the philosophy and practice of the French Revolution, its first manifestations having been largely the products of a desire to defend Germany's traditional social institutions—the estates and corporations of the *ancien régime*. Adam Müller and other Romantic political theorists took sharp issue with the Revolutionary gospel of individual liberty and rejected the Jacobin ideal of equality, holding that social stratification in an “organic” hierarchy of estates was an ineluctable necessity arising out of the essential dissimilarity of men.²⁰ Nationalist philosophers like Fichte and Hegel shared many of the Romantics' prejudices against “atomistic” individualism, and

²⁰ Chapter II elaborates somewhat upon this point and upon the following brief characterizations, which are included here merely in order to suggest the diversity, as to origins and general purport, of the principal early nineteenth-century contributions to the theory of corporatism.

sought to reconcile individual freedom and growth with social harmony and stability in an "organic" state resting upon differentiation of functions and privileges.

Another important increment to the German corporatist tradition was furnished by certain pre-Marxian critics of industrialism and of laissez-faire economics who deplored the tendencies toward social polarization which they believed were inherent in private, competitive capitalism. Catholic social reformers like Baader hoped that a new scheme of estates, purged of anachronistic features but embodying the "eternally valid principle of association," would make it possible to counter the progressive alienation of the propertyless wage worker from the remainder of the social body. The "feudal socialist" Karl Marlo reflected the misgivings of craftsmen and small property owners with respect to their economic prospects in an era of developing capitalism, propounding a scheme of "economic federalism" designed to preserve many features of guild organization and crowned by a "social parliament" of occupational estates.

As the century grew older political and economic liberalism came to express the desires of the educated and propertied middle classes for a larger influence upon national affairs and for an end to traditional restrictions upon the free play of individual forces in economic life. Among those who resisted this program organic "estates" doctrines, drawn largely from Müller and other Romantics, became articles of common faith. F. J. Stahl, a champion of Junker predominance and of dynastic cameralism, upheld the ideal of an absolute, paternalistic monarchy drawing strength and vigor from consultation and collaboration with "the most valuable elements of the community" represented in the traditional *Landesstände* (nobility, clergy and yeomanry) of Prussia. When liberal agitators sought, with some success, to rally the politically submerged

masses to their cause, conservatives began to talk of the desirability of incorporating a "fourth estate of the dispossessed" in the monarchical scheme as an alternative to "head-counting" and parliamentarism.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century a number of new factors entered the political and social context within which corporatist doctrines were to develop with renewed vigor. The most weighty of these factors included the emergence of political parties, the adoption of parliamentary institutions, the unification of Germany, the coming of industrialism, the rise of Marxian socialism and the sharpening of economic and social antagonisms. Each of these developments was to have a distinct bearing upon the form and content of corporatist theories elaborated after 1848 and especially after 1870.

If the preceding era had been dominated by constitutional politics, the new age was to witness the growing ascendancy of a "social problem" that elicited universal interest and became a focal point for theoretical discussions as well as for practical politics. The corporatist doctrines evolved during this new age of "social politics" exhibited many new preoccupations which distinguish them sharply from earlier expressions of the same generic conception. The most strongly marked of these distinctive features was an increasing propensity on the part of corporatist writers to regard materialism and Marxian socialism as the most serious contemporary challenges to "organic" ideals of social harmony, economic stability and national solidarity. Political liberalism and laissez-faire economics continued to draw criticism, but mainly by reason of their alleged tendency to play into the hand of revolutionary socialism.

Thus, under the impact of the industrial revolution which was going forward with such vigor during the final third of

the nineteenth century, German corporatist theories came to reflect many of the actual and ideal conflicts which still remain unresolved in modern society. In view of their immediate relevance to the twentieth-century scene, therefore, some of the principal manifestations of corporatism in Germany since 1870 deserve special investigation.

It would, however, be an ambitious undertaking to attempt within a restricted compass more than a cursory survey of the voluminous recent literature of corporatism in Germany, and a more intensive historical treatment of the whole range of individual contributions from 1870 to the present would doubtless require a considerably larger format than this book provides. The aim of the present investigation therefore is to focus attention upon a few important segments of the whole problem rather than to strive after encyclopedic scope. Three distinct types of recently developed corporatist theory have accordingly been singled out for comparative study in relation to the social politics of the half-century between the establishment of the Hohenzollern empire and the adoption of the Weimar constitution.

Each of these types of corporatist doctrine figured as an integral element in one of the three most consequential anti-Marxian, anti-liberal programs of social reform advanced during the period 1870-1919. The first two of these movements—Social Catholicism and Monarchical Socialism—had their inception near the beginning of the period under review, elaborating and propagating their distinctive corporatist ideas most energetically during the two decades prior to 1890; while the third program—German Collective Economy—enjoyed only a brief span of active life during the years of war and revolution at the end of the period. Only one of these programs, Social Catholicism, sought and gained a popular following of any size or permanence. Monarchical Socialism

was more a tendency than a homogeneous movement, having been variously manifested in the ideas of academic economists like Albert Schäffle and Adolph Wagner, in the (evangelical) Christian-Social agitation of Adolf Stoecker and in the social politics of Bismarck. German Collective Economy represented scarcely more than a temporary union under one aegis of several loosely connected tendencies, and its program was not identified with any clear-cut, independent political movement or parliamentary grouping.

Each of these programs was either conservative or only moderately reformist, conceiving of state and society in "organic" terms, and rejecting "mechanistic," "materialistic" and "revolutionary" theories of social organization and change. All aimed at non-violent, gradual alteration of the social order so as to bring about stable, harmonious collaboration among all existing elements of the community. All sought to promote a new economic and political outlook that would stress communal rather than individual or class values and interests as the essential prerequisite of a program of corporative reconstruction designed to give fuller scope to "wholesome associative impulses" within a series of "functional" occupational groups. Finally, all shared the general aim of establishing some sort of corporative legislative chamber, though agreement was lacking as to the proper constitutional attributes of such a body.

In the discussion that follows an attempt is made to elucidate these three major theories of corporatism in relation to the social politics of the period, and in relation to the secular tendencies in German social thought that have already been identified as the corporatist tradition. Because the roots of this tradition are so deeply embedded in the nation's past, an adequate appraisal of its more recent manifestations requires that some account be taken of at least the signal events in its

evolution before the industrial era. Furthermore, the conscious dependence of Social Catholicism, of Monarchical Socialism and of German Collective Economy upon previous exponents of the generic corporatist ideal was strong and explicit. In order, therefore, to indicate some of the principal antecedents of these doctrines, the next chapter undertakes a cursory survey of the chief relevant contributions to the generic corporatist theory between 1789 and 1870.