NATIONAL SOCIALISM BEFORE NAZISM: FROM FRIEDRICH NAUMANN TO THE 'IDEAS OF 1914'

Asaf Kedar[1,2]

Abstract: This article demonstrates the existence of a national socialism in Germany long before the founding of the Nazi movement, and not just in the dark recesses of racial antisemitism but at the very heart of German bourgeois society. The article focuses on two major cases of pre-Nazi national socialism: left-leaning bourgeois reformist Friedrich Naumann; and the ideology supporting Germany's war effort from 1914 to 1918, a phenomenon also known as the 'ideas of 1914'. National socialism in both these cases rested at its core on a national existentialism: a conviction that Germany is facing a struggle for its very existence as a nation, and that all domestic socio-economic forces must be systematically regimented and mobilized in the service of the nation's purportedly 'existential' struggles. National socialism emerges from this article, not only as a distinctive ideological phenomenon irreducible to Nazism, but also as a historically pivotal ideology that encapsulates and might help to explain the tragic historical trajectory of Germany as a whole at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Keywords: national socialism, Naumann, Friedrich, Ideas of 1914, national existentionalism, productivism, war economy, social democracy, Carl, Thimme, Legien.

Introduction

Although 'national socialism' is usually associated in both popular and scholarly imagination with Nazism or the radical right, it had in fact been circulating in Germany long before the founding of Hitler's movement, and not just in the dark recesses of racial antisemitism but at the very heart of German bourgeois society. This extended temporal and social scope of German national socialism has hitherto largely gone unnoticed. Pre-1918 manifestations of national socialism as a distinctive ideological formation have long been

[1] Kibbutzim College of Education, Derech Namir 149, Tel Aviv 62507, Israel. Email: asaf.kedar@gmail.com

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objects of research as far as France, Italy and Austria are concerned,[3] but no work of this kind has been done with respect to Germany. Moreover, whatever research on national socialism (in Germany or elsewhere) does exist is mostly relegated to the radical right or to the movement of ideas between radical left and radical right, with no exploration of mainstream variants of national socialism.[4]

Yet, if one figure is to be singled out as the main exponent of national socialism in pre-Nazi Germany, it is not some racial antisemite but rather Friedrich Naumann (1860–1919), a bourgeois reformist, one of the most prominent public figures of the *Kaiserreich*, and a founding father of the Weimar Republic. In 1895 Naumann converted from Christian to national socialism, and a year later he founded the short-lived but historically significant National-Social Association. This movement ceased to exist in 1903, but national socialism itself continued to circulate in the Wilhelmine bourgeoisie

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[3] E. Weber, 'Nationalism, Socialism, and National-Socialism in France', *French Historical Studies*, 2 (1962); A.G. Whiteside, 'Nationaler Sozialismus in Österreich vor 1918', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 9 (1961); A.G. Whiteside, *Austrian National Socialism before 1918* (The Hague, 1962); E. Santarelli, 'Le Socialisme national en Italie: Précédents et Origines', *Mouvement Social*, 50 (1965); Z. Sternhell, 'National Socialism and Antisemitism: The Case of Maurice Barrès', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 8 (1973); Z. Sternhell, 'Fascist Ideology', in *Fascism: A Reader's Guide — Analyses, Interpretations, Bibliography*, ed. W.Z. Laqueur (Berkeley, 1976); Z. Sternhell, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution* (Princeton, 1994); G.L. Mosse, 'The French Right and the Working Classes: Les Jaunes', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 7 (1972); G.L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York, 1980).

[4] A variation on this theme is a simplistic teleological reading of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century treatises — Fichte's *Closed Commerical State* (1800) being a popular choice — as immediate precursors of twentieth-century, radical-right national socialism. See e.g. the intellectual-historical trajectory laid out by K. von Klemperer in his *Germany's New Conservatism: Its History and Dilemma in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, 1968).

The two main explorations of national socialism beyond the radical right are focused exclusively on labour movements: Z. Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State*, trans. D. Maisel (Princeton, 1998), which examines the Zionist Labour movement in pre-state Palestine and is thus largely removed from the European context; and S. Vogt, *Nationaler Sozialismus und Soziale Demokratie: Die sozialdemokratische Junge Rechte 1918–1945* (Bonn, 2006), which is limited to the post-1918 era. Another noteworthy work is C.H. Werth, *Sozialismus und Nation: Die deutsche Ideologiediskussion zwischen 1918 und 1945* (Opladen, 1996). Beyond its post-1918 temporal delimitation, this book also suffers from a rather descriptive exposition of social and political ideas with little theoretical depth and only a minimal degree of historical contextualization. Werth presents each thinker or movement in isolation, thereby failing to map out their interconnectedness as parts of a broad historical phenomenon. For a more complete survey of the existing literature on national socialism in Germany and beyond, see Chapter 1 of my doctoral dissertation: A. Kedar, 'National Socialism Before Nazism', pp. 2 ff.

and, about a decade after the collapse of Naumann's movement, literally exploded into the foreground of history with the outbreak of the Great War. During the War, a national socialism very similar to the one preached by Naumann at the turn of the century constituted a central pillar in the ideological support bestowed by bourgeois intellectuals and right-wing Social Democrats upon Germany's war effort and its regimented war economy, an ideational phenomenon also known as the 'spirit of 1914' or the 'ideas of 1914'.[5]

Before moving into a close examination of this article's case studies, it might be helpful to lay out a brief characterization of national socialism as a generic backdrop for the more detailed discussion to follow. What is the peculiar amalgam of ideas that makes it possible to demarcate national socialism as a distinctive political ideology? The various strands of national socialism both right and left, their differences notwithstanding, rejected the Marxist class-conflict view of society on the one hand and the individualistic worldview of liberalism on the other. National society was conceived of instead as a single body greater than the sum of its individuals or classes; a collective body dependent for its existence upon the uninterrupted cooperation of all its constituent elements: entrepreneurs and workers, artisans and peasants. The constitutive inequalities and exploitative mechanisms characterizing the capitalist sphere of production were either left unquestioned or at best reduced to the status of a problem for the stability of the national order.

The programmes of social reform advanced by the various strands of national socialism aimed at arresting the dangers and harnessing the potentialities of industrial capitalism from a nationalist standpoint. Limited redistributive policies were advocated in a quest, not to eliminate the exploitation of workers but to co-opt them as 'productive' elements of national society and to wean them away from revolutionary ideas without having to address the roots of socio-economic inequality. These and other reform proposals were often also presented as putting the capitalist pursuit of individual self-interest in check,

[5] Steffen Bruendel draws a distinction between the 'spirit of 1914' and the 'ideas of 1914' as follows: 'Whereas the "spirit of 1914" was the retrospective description of a new community-oriented attitude, the "ideas" embodied the translation of this spirit into a political program of reform.' See S. Bruendel, 'Die Geburt der "Volksgemeinschaft" aus dem "Geist von 1914": Entstehung und Wandel eines "sozialistischen" Gesellschaftsentwurfs', *Zeitgeschichte-online*, Thema: Fronterlebnis und Nachkriegsordnung. Wirkung und Wahrnehmung des Ersten Weltkriegs (2004), http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/site/40208198/default.aspx (accessed 30 October 2010). See also S. Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat: Die 'Ideen von 1914' und die Neuordnung Deutschlands im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 2003), esp. pp. 110–32; W.J. Mommsen, *Der Erste Weltkrieg: Anfang vom Ende des bürgerlichen Zeitalters* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004); W.J. Mommsen, 'German Artists, Writers and Intellectuals and the Meaning of War, 1914–1918', in *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe During the First World War*, ed. J. Horne (Cambridge, 1997); J. Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge and New York, 2000); and Klemperer, *Germany's New Conservatism*, pp. 47–69.

but were usually directed at landowners and/or financial capital rather than industrial entrepreneurs who, like the workers, were considered 'productive' members of the nation. Trade unions or other labour associations were to be allowed but to be constituted as organs of the national body, not as autonomous expressions of class identity. Capital would be allowed to retain its leadership of the productive sphere, albeit subject to limited regulation intended primarily to ensure that the national economy continued to furnish the nation-state with the material and human resources that it needed for consolidating its domestic authority and extending the reach of its international power. In sum, national socialism did not merely superimpose national boundaries on a conception of social justice that could be articulated in non-national terms. Instead, it involved a wholesale reconceptualization of social life and social reform, and a marginalization of the concern for social justice and emancipation in favour of a preoccupation with national order, homogeneity and power.[6]

Within these general parameters, Naumann's turn-of-the-century national socialism and its wartime counterpart — the two case studies of this article — shared a number of specific, interlocked features that render their morphology virtually identical. In both cases, national socialism rested at its core on what I propose to call *national existentialism*: that is, a conviction that Germany is facing a struggle for its very existence as a nation, and that all domestic socio-economic forces must be harnessed, regimented and mobilized in the service of the nation's purportedly 'existential' belligerent endeavours in the international sphere. Furthermore, in both cases this national existentialism was intensified by a *biologistic* imagination that construed the nation as a really living body, creating a reified image of national life that rendered the notion and alarming prospect of national death all the more tangible, poignant and urgent. Finally, in both cases domestic society was to be organized systematically along the aforementioned *productivist* lines that would ensure the continuity of production needed for the nation's 'existential' struggles. This national productivism involved, in both cases, an elision of the structural exploitation characterizing the capitalist sphere of production, and a rejection of internationalist, class-based struggle for social justice.

This article undertakes an analysis of existential national socialism in these two Wilhelmine-era iterations and is divided accordingly into two sections forming together a historiographical diptych. The first section examines Friedrich Naumann's national socialism as articulated in his writings from the years 1895–1903. The second section then moves to the wartime period, focusing on a major wartime collection of essays representing the 'ideas of

6 For a more extended discussion of national socialism in its general characteristics, see Kedar, 'National Socialism Before Nazism', ch. 1.

1914', titled *Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland* ('The Workers in the New Germany').[7]

From a sociological standpoint, the striking similarity between Friedrich Naumann's national socialism and its wartime counterpart is hardly surprising, for Naumann occupied a pivotal position in wide-ranging social, political and discursive networks of the Wilhelmine bourgeoisie. He drew into his orbit, moreover, many of the stellar intellectuals of the time, including Max Weber, Werner Sombart and Friedrich Meinecke. He was also the founding editor of the periodical *Die Hilfe* ('Assistance'), which historian Wolfgang Mommsen has dubbed 'the social conscience of the German Protestant educated stratum' in the *Kaiserreich*.[8]

While this sociological backdrop certainly bolsters the overall plausibility of my historical account, the article itself is not concerned with establishing some kind of empirical causality — intellectual, sociological or any other — between my two case studies. I undertake, rather, a strictly ideational analysis aimed at unearthing a distinctive genre of political thought in pre-Nazi Germany, mapping out its main characteristics, and reflecting on its historical significance.[9] This analysis yields three historiographical insights. First, it shifts our perception of the content and historical significance of Friedrich Naumann's

[7] *Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland*, ed. F. Thimme and C. Legien (Leipzig, 1915). On the importance of this book in Germany's wartime public discourse, see U. Ratz, ' "Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland": Eine bürgerlich-sozialdemokratische Arbeitsgemeinschaft aus dem Jahre 1915', *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, 13 (1971), p. 1.

[8] W.J. Mommsen, 'Wandlungen der liberalen Idee im Zeitalter des Imperialismus', in *Liberalismus und imperialistischer Staat: Der Imperialismus als Problem liberaler Parteien in Deutschland 1890–1914*, ed. K. Holl and G. List (Göttingen, 1975), p. 117. On Naumann's intellectual-historical significance, see H.S. Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890–1930* (New York, 1958), p. 48. On Naumann as a central node in the social networks of the Wilhelmine bourgeoisie, see K. Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890–1914* (Cambridge, MA, 2000); and U. Krey, 'Der Naumann-Kreis: Charisma und politische Emanzipation', in *Friedrich Naumann in seiner Zeit*, ed. R. v. Bruch (Berlin, 2000).

[9] Two terminological notes are in order here. First, I use the term 'ideational' to cover the entire spectrum of belief-structures and their articulations, from diffuse public discourse through more systematically structured political ideologies to refined philosophical argumentation. National socialism manifested itself at various times in all of these forms, as did the 'ideas of 1914'. Second, I use the term 'genre' rather than 'tradition' which denotes some sense of historical lineage. While the representatives of a given intellectual tradition may also typically be said to share a common genre of thought, it is not necessarily the case that the representatives of a given genre of thought are also connected historically — however contingent that connection may be — to form a tradition. In the present article, I am content with demonstrating the existence of a distinctive genre of national socialist thought, rather than trying to make the stronger claim that my case studies also form a tradition.

thought. Hitherto Naumann has usually been cast in the scholarly literature as a (left-)liberal and/or a social Protestant, whereas his national socialism has been utterly elided.[10] By contrast, this article shows that Naumann's national socialism can no longer be downplayed (let alone ignored) in comparison to his earlier Christian socialism and his later left-liberalism. Indeed, there is reason to believe that it was Naumann's national socialism — rather than his left-liberalism or his social Protestantism — which constituted the central ideological pillar of his public life and historical legacy.[11] Second, the article draws attention to existential national socialism as a historically pivotal ideational phenomenon whose import for understanding the dawn of the twentieth century — given its central role in the ideational dynamics underpinning the First World War — is only equalled by the virtual neglect of this phenomenon in the existing literature. Finally, my study suggests that national socialism needs to be understood as a distinctive ideological formation with an inner logic and a historical significance that cannot be reduced to Nazism and should not be construed teleologically as merely a prefiguration thereof.

Friedrich Naumann's National Socialism

From 1895 — the year preceding the founding of the National-Social Association — to the latter's collapse in 1903, Naumann expounded his idea of a national socialism across dozens of articles, books, lectures and political manifestoes. The following account of Naumann's national socialism is based on a close reading of this vast body of work. I begin with Naumann's national-existential theorization of collective existence and world history. I then show how this national existentialism forms the basis for Naumann's theorization of domestic society as a bundle of human energies that need to be mobilized in the service of the nation's 'existential' endeavours in the international sphere. Finally, I present Naumann's productivist conception of class relations, with its emphasis on the need for cross-class cooperation and its concomitant elision of the class-based exploitation characterizing industrial capitalism.[12]

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[10] The most recent and most authoritative scholarly survey of Naumann's historical significance is a good specimen of this elision: *Friedrich Naumann in seiner Zeit*, ed. R. v. Bruch, (Berlin, 2000). For a comprehensive survey of the secondary literature on Naumann and its elision of the latter's national socialism, see Kedar, 'Max Weber, Friedrich Naumann', pp. 130 f. and 153 f.

[11] Cf. Kedar, 'Max Weber, Friedrich Naumann', p. 131, where I cite Friedrich Meinecke and Gustav Stresemann in support of this claim.

[12] I will not, however, trace here the *origins* of Naumann's national socialism, including in particular his indebtedness to Max Weber and to the German Historical School of political economy. This has been done in a previous article: see Kedar, 'Max Weber, Friedrich Naumann'.

National-Existential Framing of Collective Life

Naumann's national socialism is grounded in a biologized, social-Darwinist conception — or 'naturalist' conception, as he calls it — of human collective existence and of world history. Darwin's thought, he explains, has opened up the possibility of understanding humanity 'no longer as a pulverized amassment of individuals', but rather in terms of genera, species and races; and it is the nation to which this social-Darwinist analytic applies first and foremost. What the 'biological conception sees with its first glimpse of human history' is 'rising and declining nations', which dynamic in turn constitutes 'the first fundamental difference within humankind'.[13]

The idiom of 'rising' and 'declining' nations is Naumann's version of the Darwinist principle of 'natural selection'.[14] This principle in its original Darwinian formulation consists in a bifurcation between those weeded out of existence and those who, on the contrary, not only survive but continue to prosper. But in contrast to some social Darwinists who have cast 'natural selection' into a linear conception of social progress, Naumann's Darwinian view of history is emphatically non-linear. The 'rising' nations can only be certain of their felicitous survival until the next cycle of conflictual evolution; and, conversely, nations that had at some point in history seemed terminally doomed to extinction can rise (and have risen) up again from the ashes under new circumstances.[15] In other words, no nation can allow itself to rest on its laurels. 'Survival of the fittest' is not a final outcome but an endless process.

Against this theoretical backdrop, power politics becomes for Naumann a condition for the very possibility of national life and prosperity in the context of the international 'struggle for existence'.[16] Nations that shy away from power politics in the international sphere are doomed to become subordinate satellites of stronger nations.[17] That is why Naumann, probably under the influence not only of Weber but also of Treitschke,[18] considers state sovereignty and military power to be essential marks and guarantors of a living

[13] F. Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik* (Berlin-Schöneberg, 1902), p. 12.

[14] Naumann explicitly links the 'rising and declining' metaphor to the idea of 'natural selection' in explaining the emergence of aristocracies (i.e. elites): see F. Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, in *Werke*, Vol. 2, ed. T. Scheider (Cologne and Opladen, 1964 [1900]), p. 140.

[15] Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, pp. 12 f. For the intellectual-historical background of Darwinism and social Darwinism, see J.A. Rogers, 'Darwinism and Social Darwinism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 33 (1972), esp. pp. 271, 275.

[16] F. Naumann, 'Nationale Sozialpolitik [1898]', in *Werke*, Vol. 5, ed. T. Scheider (Cologne and Opladen, 1964), p. 234.

[17] F. Naumann, *Weltpolitik und Sozialreform: Öffentlicher Vortrag* (Schöneberg-Berlin, 1899), p. 6.

[18] Cf. H. v. Treitschke, *Politics* (New York, 1963), esp. pp. 14–18. For Naumann's favourable references to Treitschke, see e.g. F. Naumann, 'Wochenschau', *Die Hilfe: Gotteshilfe, Selbsthilfe, Staatshilfe, Bruderhilfe* (henceforth *Hilfe*), 6 August 1899;

nation.[19] The engagement in world-power politics is existentially prior to all other aspects of national life: '*Bildung*, culture, morality are never, never of any avail in world history if they are not protected and carried by power! . . . He who wishes to live must struggle'.[20] Hence Germany must prepare itself for war by maintaining a strong state, embarking energetically upon naval and other armament, and modernizing its army, both technologically and organizationally.[21]

In order to ensure its survival, however, a nation needs to establish not just a defensive or reactive presence on the world stage, but rather an aggressive and expansive one. At one point, Naumann in fact defines 'the national' itself as 'the drive of the German nation to extend its influence on the globe'.[22] Expansionism eventually congeals, in Naumann's view, into a hierarchical international order governed by raw power as its self-legitimating organizing principle and dominated by empires composed of a 'national core' and a periphery of 'de-nationalized' subordinated peoples (i.e. nations stripped of their political independence).[23] This international order is also a violent one, characterized by a permanent horizon of (purportedly existential) war.[24] As Peter Walkenhorst has pointed out, there is little in this bleak vision to differentiate Naumann from the right-wing Pan-Germans, his contemporaries.[25] Naumann contributed in this way to a frightening elevation of the German

Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, pp. 254 f; and F. Naumann, 'Bismarck-Probleme', *Die Zeit: Nationalsoziale Wochenschrift* (henceforth *Zeit (Wochenschrift)*), 15 January 1903.

19 F. Naumann, 'National und International', *Hilfe*, 22 October 1899; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, pp. 248–50. Accordingly, Naumann ascribes Germany's existence as a unified nation to Prussia's military might. See *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Nationalsozialen Vereins (dritter Vertretertag) zu Darmstadt vom 25.–28. September 1898* (Berlin, 1898), p. 66; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, pp. 250 f.

20 Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, p. 309.

21 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Nationalsozialen Vereins (VII. Vertretertag) zu Hannover vom 2. bis 5. Oktober 1902* (Berlin-Schöneberg, 1902), pp. 34 f; F. Naumann, 'Deutschlands Seemacht', *National-Soziale Volks-Zeitung*, 2 January 1897; F. Naumann, 'National-sozialer Katechismus [1897]', in *Werke*, Vol. 5, ed. Scheider, p. 201; F. Naumann, 'Wochenschau', *Hilfe*, 14 August 1898; F. Naumann, 'Sozialdemokratie und Heer', *Hilfe*, 26 April 1903; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, sec. III.6, pp. 317 ff.

22 F. Naumann, 'National-sozialer Katechismus', p. 201.

23 Naumann, 'National und International'.

24 Naumann, 'National-sozialer Katechismus', p. 201; Naumann, 'Nationale Sozialpolitik', p. 237; F. Naumann, 'Wochenschau', *Hilfe*, 10 April 1898; Naumann, 'Wochenschau [14 August 1898]'.

25 P. Walkenhorst, *Nation — Volk — Rasse: Radikaler Nationalismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1890–1914* (Göttingen, 2007), pp. 177 f. For Naumann's involvement with another right-wing, nationalist movement, the Navy League, see G. Eley, *Reshaping the*

geopolitical imagination at the turn of the twentieth century from a continental to a global scale, while preserving its violent and imperialistic choreography.

National-Existential Theorization of the Social

Naumann's national-existential reading of world history leads him to scour the social in search of forces and domains capable of sustaining the life of the nation in the context of its purportedly 'existential' predicament. His biologistic reading of world history, in turn, leads him to cast those social forces and domains, too, in biological terms.[26] Naumann's biologization of the social centres conceptually on the category of *population*.

What is the crucial factor that, in Naumann's view, distinguishes 'rising' nations from 'declining' ones? It is above all the respective state of their populations, or more specifically: the traits embodied in the 'quantity and quality' of the 'human material' in both its physical and mental aspects.[27] Population is a repository of 'human energies', and world history itself is nothing but 'a history of migrating focal points' of these energies, from 'the Assyrians and the Babylonians' in ancient times to 'the nations situated around the northern half of the Atlantic Ocean' in the modern era.[28] Population affords 'that creative energy that enables a nation to become something at all, the energy that . . . injects an abundance of strong, whole, healthy men into the nation'.[29] Countries that lack what Germany is lucky enough to possess, namely 'the mass of children', display 'weariness and lassitude' in all aspects of their existence, including 'technical incompetence' and the development of 'political languidness'.[30] This lack of energy eventually translates itself into national 'decline' and, ultimately, death.

The category of population thus serves in Naumann's thought as a conceptual receptacle capturing the biological, energetic, vitalistic dimension of society. When Naumann looks at the social, he sees it before and above all

German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck (Ann Arbor, 1980), pp. 85–98.

26 This concatenation of expansionist foreign policy and biologization of the social was also a central characteristic of Nazi ideology, although the latter's racial content and exterminatory thrust demarcates it sharply from Naumann's version. See D. Diner, *Beyond the Conceivable: Essays on Germany, Nazism, and the Holocaust* (Berkeley, 2000), ch. 3. Nevertheless, the basic morphological similarity should not be simply dismissed. It does not necessarily indicate a direct causal relationship, but it does call our attention to links — however partial and oblique — between Nazi ideology and broader currents of thought circulating in German society in the early twentieth century. I return to this point in the Conclusion.

27 Naumann, *Neudeutsche Wirtschaftspolitik*, pp. 11 f.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

else as population, as congealed energy; and he wants to harness this energy in the service of the nation's violent and expansionist endeavours in the outer world. In one of his articles Naumann exclaims: 'What an abundance of national energy [*vaterländischer Kraft*] lies bound and oppressed in the German working class!'[31] Elsewhere he explains that the German army needs the 'birthrate and bodily strength' of the farmers as well as the workers in order to prevent the German nation from becoming a 'Russian Gouvernement'.[32] Most blatantly, Naumann raises a passionate demand for 'men, men, so that we can wage war! The masses are decisive in modern war'.[33] In short, domestic society, framed biologistically as population, figures in Naumann's thinking as raw material for international violence rather than as an arena of emancipatory change.

Naumann's energetic approach to population inserts the latter into a matrix of domination that eludes the seminal theoretical framework developed by Foucault in his historical exposition of the concept of population and of the mechanisms of power that have accompanied it. Foucault considers population and asserts its historical significance from the standpoint of its relationship to the emergence of a 'technique of security', with population 'as both the object and subject of these mechanisms of security'.[34] While the notion of 'security' may well be fecund in trying to make sense of liberal and/or post-1945 concepts of population (which is what Foucault's analysis is mostly focused on),[35] it is not the most productive theoretical angle for understanding prevailing concepts of population in the 1870–1945 period — and this is precisely where Friedrich Naumann is located. In Naumann's thinking, population is not caught up in mechanisms of security, but rather in projects of *mobilization*. Naumann sees in the population an energetic mass, a potentiality that needs to be unleashed and put into motion, albeit in a carefully orchestrated way such that it serves the national-existential, power-political ends assigned to it. Population for Naumann is not, as in Foucault's historical analysis, in need of regulation designed to protect individuals and society

[31] F. Naumann, 'Vaterland und Freiheit', *Hilfe*, 6 December 1896, p. 3.

[32] F. Naumann, 'Wochenschau', *Hilfe*, 1 May 1898.

[33] Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, p. 301.

[34] M. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78*, trans. G. Burchell (Basingstoke and New York, 2007), p. 11; cf. M. Foucault, *'Society Must Be Defended': Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76*, trans. D. Macey (New York, 2003), pp. 246, 249.

[35] In Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, the concepts of population and security coalesce in the theoretical context of liberal political economy. In M. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*, trans. G. Burchell (Houndmills, 2008), we find the same liberal context with a greater historical focus on the post-1945 period. More precisely, Foucault is interested in theoretical developments within economic liberalism that began in the 1920s and 1930s and reached their height after 1945 (see e.g. *ibid.*, pp. 68 f.).

from danger, to 'defend' society,[36] but in need of being assembled with the aim of producing national power; and in need, also, of ongoing maintenance through social policy and reform to ensure the undisrupted working of the power-machine. In this sense, Naumann foresaw and at the same time contributed ideationally to the rise of one of the defining features underlying the European catastrophe of the first half of the twentieth century: namely, what the Weimar-era conservative-revolutionary thinker Ernst Jünger has called 'total mobilization'.[37] Consider the following passage from Jünger's essay by the same name, which is worth quoting at length because of its striking similarity to the overall thrust of Naumann's thinking as well as to some of his specific utterances cited earlier:

> We can now pursue the process by which the growing conversion of life into energy, the increasingly fleeting content of all binding ties in deference to mobility, gives an ever-more radical character to the act of mobilization . . . [B]ecause of the huge increase in expenses, it is impossible to cover the costs of waging war on the basis of a fixed war budget; instead, a stretching of all possible credit . . . is necessary to keep the machinery in motion. In the same way, the image of war as armed combat merges into the more extended image of a gigantic labor process. In addition to the armies that meet on the battlefields, originate the modern armies of commerce and transport, foodstuffs, the manufacture of armaments — the army of labor in general . . . [T]here is no longer any movement without at least indirect use for the battlefield. In this unlimited marshaling of potential energies . . . we perhaps find the most striking sign of the dawn of the age of labor . . . In order to deploy energies of such proportion, fitting one's sword-arm no longer suffices; for this is a mobilization [*Rüstung*] that requires extension to the deepest marrow, life's finest nerve. Its realization is the task of total mobilization: an act which . . . conveys the extensively branched and densely veined power supply of modern life towards the great current of martial energy.[38]

National-Existential Productivism

Thus far we have seen that Naumann regards the social primarily as a bundle of energies that serves (or should serve) as a motor of national power. I use the motor image advisedly, for Naumann's concept of population as energetic

[36] Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, pp. 65 f.; and Foucault, '*Society Must Be Defended*', esp. ch. 11, where the case of Nazism and its radical biopolitics are also discussed, but still with a focus on discipline and regulation (which he presents in this chapter as mechanisms of security) rather than on mobilization. Even when Foucault speaks here of the centrality of war for the Nazi regime (Foucault, '*Society Must be Defended*', pp. 259 f.), the part played by the population in the project of war is presented as a passive one of exposure (to death) rather than an active one of mobilization.

[37] E. Jünger, 'Total Mobilization [1930]', in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. R. Wolin (Cambridge, MA, 1993).

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 126 f.

mass is perfectly congruent with Anson Rabinbach's insight concerning the metaphor of the motor as a productivist image that has historically been deployed to 'refer . . . to the industrial model of a calculable and natural channeling of energy'.[39] In Naumann's case, too, the energetic conception of population comes hand-in-hand with a (nationally inflected) productivist imagination. Naumann's productivism constitutes, along with his national existentialism, a core feature of his national socialism.

In his *National-Social Catechism* of 1897, Naumann argues as follows:

> 135. What kind of state should Germany become?
> A labor-state [*Arbeitsstaat*].
>
> 136. What does that mean?
> The national income should belong first and foremost to labor.
>
> 137. To whom does it belong now?
> Almost half of it belongs to interest and rent.[40]

Two pivotal national-productivist features appear in this short passage. First, labour is elevated here to the status of the defining attribute of the future German state. Elsewhere Naumann bolsters this position by extolling labour as the foundation of all life and culture.[41] Secondly, labour is contrasted, not with capital (as in the prevailing socialist discourse in Germany at the time), but with 'interest and rent'. Let us follow Naumann as he continues to develop his productivism in the *Catechism*:

> 156. Who belongs to the working masses?
> Anyone whose income is based more on work than on interest and rent.
>
> 157. So do you also reckon merchants, entrepreneurs, clerks, artisans, farmers among the working people?
> Fully, and we want to represent their interests insofar as they are interests of labor vis-à-vis property.[42]

Not only 'interest' and 'rent', but also 'property' is construed in this passage as income not derived from labour. At the same time, the concept of labour is expanded to include the bourgeoisie and the farmers, such that the scope of the 'property' against which 'labor' needs to struggle is greatly circumscribed. Clearly, this conceptual framework is not amenable to addressing the class-based exploitation endemic to the capitalist productive sphere.

No wonder, then, that Naumann's national productivism involves a rejection of class conflict and an advocacy of cross-class cooperation between industrial workers and entrepreneurs. Such cooperation is justified, not only

[39] A. Rabinbach, 'The End of the Utopias of Labor: Metaphors of the Machine in the Post-Fordist Era', *Thesis Eleven*, 53 (1998), p. 39.

[40] Naumann, 'National-sozialer Katechismus', p. 216.

[41] F. Naumann, 'Arbeit', *Hilfe*, 5 October 1902.

[42] Naumann, 'National-sozialer Katechismus', p. 219.

on the prosaic political-economic grounds that both classes 'live and thrive on the same soil . . . [i.e.] the ascent of German trade and traffic [*Handel und Wandel*]'.[43] Their cooperation is for Naumann also a national-existential imperative. Germany's struggle for existence among other nations trumps, in Naumann's view, the class conflict: if and when England's economic might becomes overwhelming, he warns, then 'entrepreneur and worker, then the whole nation [*Volk*] will know that [the struggle for the world market] is a matter of our economic existence'.[44] Naumann, in fact, explicitly purges class conflict from his very conception of socialism,[45] thereby allowing the exploitative mechanisms of industrial capitalism to maintain their course undisturbed.

But how is the political cooperation of workers and bourgeoisie, of the masses and the 'aristocracy' of German industry,[46] to be brought about? In Naumann's view, one of the most important preconditions for achieving this state of affairs is a greater degree of inclusion, both political and economic, of the workers in the national order. Now this inclusionary drive, let us not be mistaken, is a double-edged sword. On the one hand it promises the workers a greater role in steering the national ship as well as a higher material standard of living. Yet at the same time it also involves domesticating the workers, excluding them from the domain of internationalist politics, and neutering their revolutionary energies.

In order to achieve political inclusion, Naumann demands an array of reforms designed to deepen the workers' political and civil liberties. Naumann mentions on various occasions the need for greater freedom of association, freedom of speech, formal recognition of cooperatives and 'vocational organizations', expansion of the Prussian suffrage, correcting distortions in existing suffrage mechanisms that disadvantage urban and industrial areas, and more decentralized mechanisms of administration and representation.[47] At the economic level, the workers should be in a position to enjoy the benefits of international trade and the concomitant increase in national income.[48]

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43 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Nationalsozialen Vereins (vierter Vertretertag) zu Göttingen vom 1.–4. Oktober 1899* (Berlin-Schöneberg, 1899), pp. 38 f.

44 Naumann, 'Nationale Sozialpolitik', p. 237.

45 F. Naumann, 'Gegen Göhre [1899]', in *Werke*, Vol. 5, ed. Scheider, p. 260.

46 The distinction between industrial 'aristocracy' and industrial masses appears in Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, pp. 272 f.

47 F. Naumann, 'Was wollen wir?', *Die Zeit: Organ für nationalen Sozialismus auf christlicher Grundlage* [henceforth *Zeit*], 20 September 1896; F. Naumann, 'Das allgemeine Reichstagswahlrecht', *Zeit*, 26 September 1896; F. Naumann, 'Das deutsche Reichstagswahlrecht', *Zeit*, 2 October 1896; F. Naumann, 'Der nationalliberale Parteitag', *Zeit*, 7 October 1896; F. Naumann, 'Arbeitergenossenschaften', *Zeit*, 5 May 1897; Naumann, *Weltpolitik und Sozialreform*, pp. 12 f.; Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, pp. 84–111.

48 Naumann, 'Wochenschau', *Hilfe*, 4 September 1898.

The workers, serving as the 'soldiers' of Germany's industrial world-struggle, are entitled to an 'unconditionally secure guarantee that the profits made by the nation as a whole would benefit [them] as well'.[49] Naumann also advocates the democratization of economic life by way of organization of the workers in trade unions and in producers' and consumers' cooperatives in all economic areas. Trade unions would imbue business enterprises with a democratic spirit by claiming for the workers a share in the management of production and by 'concluding peace' between employers and employees.[50]

Yet the political and economic inclusion of the workers is for the most part legitimated on national-existential grounds. National power needs to have the 'will' of the 'working masses' behind it if it is to endure.[51] To be sure, political and economic inclusion is sometimes justified by Naumann as a blessing for the workers themselves, as a precondition for social reform and for diminishing the degree of their exploitation.[52] Even this care for the workers, however, seems to be embedded in a consideration of the workers' position as 'soldiers' in Germany's industrial as well as military army.[53] Social reform, in other words, is to Naumann merely one aspect of national mobilization. As he explains elsewhere, the workers are needed to bear the weapons defending the fatherland, but it is impossible to oppress the workers and then ask them to march into the battlefield. 'Whoever wants to have a nation in arms needs a nation of patriots . . . The fatherland must be made lovable to the worker, in order that he think, create, and fight for this fatherland'.[54]

A logical corollary of this call for a nationalist inclusion of the workers is Naumann's insistence that they exclude themselves from internationalist revolutionary politics, thereby discrediting the emancipatory thrust of the workers' struggle (for the transnational dispersion of capitalism itself requires a correspondingly transnational form of resistance), seeking instead to funnel the workers' political energies into nationalist projects. The Social Democratic Party, rather than functioning as an agent of proletarian struggle, should put itself at the service of Germany's nation-building by providing the mass base for a 'German industrial Left' comprising both the bourgeoisie and the

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49 Naumann, *Weltpolitik und Sozialreform*, p. 11.

50 Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, pp. 111–37. See also F. Naumann, 'Unternehmerpolitik', *Hilfe*, 25 May 1902.

51 F. Naumann, 'Neujahr', *Zeit*, 1 January 1897. See also F. Naumann, 'Die Flottenablehnung', *Zeit*, 23 March 1897.

52 *Protokoll über die Vertreter-Versammlung aller National-Sozialen in Erfurt vom 23. bis 25. November 1896* (Berlin, 1896), p. 42; Naumann, 'National-sozialer Katechismus', p. 204.

53 Naumann, *Weltpolitik und Sozialreform*, pp. 12 f. See also F. Naumann, 'Wochenschau', *Hilfe*, 24 September 1899.

54 Naumann, 'Nationale Sozialpolitik', p. 241. See also Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, pp. 304 f.

proletariat.[55] It must embrace 'a practical socialism . . . that wishes to work and succeed within this [existing] society, on the basis of German nationality, within the state that we have'.[56] In short, if the workers are acknowledged by Naumann as a legitimate, even pivotal collective actor, this recognition only comes at the cost of national imbrication, of a field of socio-political vision restricted to the Rhine and the Elbe.[57]

To deflate the Social Democrats' hope of an international socialist revolution still further, Naumann asserts the irreversibility of industrial capitalism and the mammoth scale of the nation-state, the two adding up to a mighty power constellation that is bound to easily thwart any attempt at overturning the existing order. 'Our political economy', Naumann observes, 'is becoming ever more great-industrial [*großindustrieller*], ever more great-capitalist [*großkapitalistischer*]', and there is no way of knowing if and when this historical stage will ever be superseded.[58] The state, too, has 'in the past 50 years become in every respect more securely consolidated than it had ever been. It is in possession of means and weapons, against which the unarmed proletarians . . . can do nothing'.[59] To drive home the invincibility of the titanic political-economic machine that is the German capitalist nation-state, Naumann likens it to a *Großbetrieb* or large enterprise. Whereas a 'small enterprise', he writes, may have no other choice but to 'weather the storm' of a revolution, a 'large enterprise cannot tolerate any disruption . . . The modern state has now become a part of the big business enterprise off of which we all live', and the 'agglomeration of all forces interested in quiet progression vis-à-vis any revolutionary attempt would be enormous'.[60]

To sum up, Naumann's national socialism at the turn of the twentieth century consisted in a set of interconnected principles that together gave it the character of a comprehensive and internally consistent ideology, with its own philosophy of history, political theory, conception of social solidarity, political-economic agenda and foreign policy. The outcome was a nationalist form of socialism geared primarily, not towards social justice or emancipation, but rather towards artificially harmonizing German society and harnessing its

[55] Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, p. 344; F. Naumann, 'Was wird aus der Sozialdemokratie?', *Zeit (Wochenschrift)*, 25 September 1902, p. 806. On the revolutionism of the Social Democrats as an obstacle to the rise of a nationalized left, see also F. Naumann, 'Liberalismus und Sozialdemokratie', *Zeit (Wochenschrift)*, 24 October 1901, p. 109; and F. Naumann, 'Das Wahlergebnis', *Zeit (Wochenschrift)*, 2 July 1903.

[56] F. Naumann, *Bebel und Bernstein: Vortrag* (Schöneberg-Berlin, 1899), p. 6.

[57] This geographical metaphor (which at the same time is more than a metaphor) appears in F. Naumann, 'Sozialistische Ideale und soziale Wirklichkeiten', *Zeit (Wochenschrift)*, 27 December 1901.

[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 389 f.

[59] Naumann, *Demokratie und Kaisertum*, p. 22.

[60] F. Naumann, 'Revolutionärer Sozialismus', *Zeit (Wochenschrift)*, 2 April 1903, p. 13.

productive energies in the service of the nation-state's aggressive power politics.[61] No wonder that the First World War, with its unprecedented scale of international violence, proved to be an ideal breeding ground for this belligerent ideology.

National Socialism and the 'Ideas of 1914'

The Great War was greeted with widespread rapture by German society — especially by 'the bourgeois strata and the intellectuals, but on a smaller scale also [by] the broad masses including the great majority of the workers'[62] — as a historic moment of national unity and renewal. This phenomenon, often referred to as 'the spirit of 1914' or 'the ideas of 1914', was crucial for enabling the ruinous protraction of the war, despite the fact that the actual degree of cross-class national solidarity in wartime Germany was quite thin.[63] What I would like to put into relief in the present article is the existential national socialism permeating much of the ideological climate sustaining the

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[61] One might object that national socialism does not deserve the title of 'socialist' that it has arrogated to itself. Such an objection presupposes an essentialist understanding of socialism that places benign egalitarian or emancipatory ideas at the core of socialist thought, as in the work of — to mention two cases largely representative of the literature — M. Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford, 1996), p. 430 ('all socialisms assert the equality of human beings'); and M. Newman, *Socialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2005), p. 2 (where, immediately after abjuring an 'essentialist approach' to the concept of socialism, the author nevertheless proceeds to enumerate three 'minimal' features of socialism, one of which is a 'commitment to the creation of an egalitarian society'). My approach, by contrast, regards socialism as an 'essentially contested concept', to use the term coined by W.B. Gallie, 'Essentially Contested Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 56 (1955), pp. 18 f.; that is, a concept that has accrued multiple and often contradictory and mutually antagonistic meanings in the course of its history. From this perspective, national socialism should not be seen as some kind of 'aberration' from an imagined 'ideal' or 'core' concept of socialism, but rather as an episode in a non-essentialized history of socialism. Accepting national socialism as part of the *history* of socialism does not necessarily entail, of course, its *normative* espousal. It is merely a matter of acknowledging the ineluctable multiplicity of perspectives making up 'socialism' as an intellectual-historical field. Those of us — myself included — who wish to advance forms of socialism deemed to be more emancipatory only stand to gain from a more nuanced historical perspective and from greater clarity about the contestations at play in the historically contingent conceptual field of socialism.

[62] Mommsen, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, p. 39. Among the enthusiasts we also find, of course, Friedrich Naumann. See his articles 'Der Krieg', *Hilfe*, 6 August 1914; 'Deutsche Organisation!', *Hilfe*, 24 September 1914; 'Volksheer', *Hilfe*, 8 October 1914; and 'Blutopfer fürs Vaterland', *Hilfe*, 15 October 1914.

[63] On the class dynamics of wartime Germany, see G.D. Feldman, 'The Political and Social Foundations of Germany's Economic Mobilization, 1914–1916', *Armed Forces and Society*, 3 (1976).

war and its regimented economy, as exemplified by the edited volume *The Workers in the New Germany*.

This volume, discussing the future status of the workers in Germany in the wake of the new sociopolitical realities established by the war, was co-edited by a socialist trade-union leader (Carl Legien) and a bourgeois publicist (Friedrich Thimme). It encompasses twenty essays, half of which — as the editors make it a point to note in their preface — are written by Social Democrats, and the other half by bourgeois authors, including some of Germany's most illustrious intellectuals: bourgeois-reformist historian Friedrich Meinecke, who after 1945 still looked upon 1914 as Germany's greatest moment of national socialism *à la* Naumann;[64] left-liberal constitutional scholar Gerhard Anschütz, who later became a key interpreter of the Weimar constitution;[65] political economist Edgar Jaffé, co-editor (with Max Weber and Werner Sombart) of the celebrated periodical *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*; sociologist and political economist Ferdinand Tönnies who numbered among what Ursula Krey has called the 'Naumann circle';[66] liberal theologian Ernst Troeltsch, a 'friend and colleague'[67] of Max Weber whose collaboration Naumann sought out after the outbreak of the war;[68] and neo-Kantian philosopher Paul Natorp. On the Social-Democratic side, authors included leading figures in the right wing of the movement — most of them associated specifically with the movement's trade-union branch — such as Gustav Noske, Philipp Scheidemann, Paul Lensch, August Winnig and Robert Schmidt.[69]

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64 F. Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe: Reflections and Recollections*, trans. Sydney B. Fay (Boston, 1963), pp. 18 f: 'Naumann's national socialism . . . was a wonderful attempt to bring together in an exceedingly rich synthesis both the most spiritual and the most practical and realistic elements in the German people . . . [B]efore the First World War the Naumann movement, even after it had failed as an independent political party, helped to create bridges and possibilities of understanding between the bourgeoisie and the working classes . . . In the exaltation and feeling of brotherhood during the August days of 1914 there lay something of the ethos and pathos of Naumann's dream.'

65 In 1914, just before the outbreak of the war, Anschütz was slated to be one of the contributors to Naumann's abortive *Staatslexikon*. The project was abandoned as soon as 'the state', as Naumann put it in August 1914, started to 'struggle for its life'. T. Heuss, *Friedrich Naumann: Der Mann, Das Werk, Die Zeit* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 2nd revised edn., 1949), p. 295.

66 Krey, 'Der Naumann-Kreis', p. 136.

67 R. Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (Berkeley, 1977), p. 31.

68 Heuss, *Friedrich Naumann*, p. 329.

69 Cf. Ratz, 'Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland', pp. 4 f. The national socialism embraced by the right wing of the Social-Democratic movement during the war had independent roots within German Social Democracy: see Vogt, *Nationaler Sozialismus*, ch. 1. Among the prewar national socialists within the movement was Max Maurenbrecher, an erstwhile key member of Naumann's National-Social Association who joined the Social Democrats in 1903 to continue the project of nationalizing the workers

There are some thematic differences, of course, between the bourgeois and the Social-Democratic contributors to this volume: the former tend to emphasize the necessity of preserving national unity for the sake of national power and in anticipation of future wars; the latter point up the workers' political and organizational maturity, counter the imputation of anti-nationalism to their movement, and stress the need to guarantee greater political freedom for the workers to reflect their wartime induction into national life. Beyond these differences, however, a number of shared convictions run as a red thread throughout the book. Most fundamentally, the book is permeated by a conviction that at stake in the war is 'our national existence' itself, as Anschütz puts it,[70] driven by the enemy's desire 'to exterminate Germany' (Meinecke).[71]

For all of the authors, furthermore, this national-existential predicament is moving Germany's political economy and social relations in a direction that corresponds exactly to Naumann's national socialism. First, the contributors express their enthusiasm about the cross-class national unity and solidarity forged in the existential cauldron of the war: the 'joyful determination of the entire nation to bring forth for the fatherland any sacrifice in goods and blood . . . the admirable concentration of all our economic and spiritual forces on the goal of national defense . . . the unity between employers and employees'.[72] Second, many of the contributors point out that Germany's existential predicament has accelerated the workers' economic and political integration into national life and consolidated their national consciousness, and agree that this momentum must be maintained and continued after the war. The following words by August Winnig might as well have been written by Friedrich Naumann at the turn of the century, and so are worth quoting at length:

> The mass of the people knows and feels that the fate of the nation and of its organizational embodiment, the state, is also its own fate. It no longer gazes at the state as at an elemental force hovering over the water, but recognizes

from within their own movement. Cf. D. Fricke, 'Nationalsoziale Versuche zur Forderung der Krise der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie: Zum Briefwechsel zwischen Max Maurenbrecher und Friedrich Naumann 1910–1913', *Beitrage zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung [East Germany]*, 25 (1983).

70 G. Anschütz, 'Gedanken über künftige Staatsreformen', in *Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland*, ed. F. Thimme and C. Legien (Leipzig, 1915) (henceforth *AinD*), p. 42. For reiterations of the same existential claim in other essays comprising the book, see G. Noske, 'Der Krieg und die Sozialdemokratie', *AinD*, pp. 13, 17; P. Lensch, 'Die Neugestaltung der Wirtschaftsordnung', *AinD*, p. 141; F. Tönnies, 'Die Sozialpolitik nach dem Kriege', *AinD*, pp. 147 f.; P. Natorp, 'Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes nach dem Kriege', *AinD*, p. 194.

71 F. Meinecke, 'Sozialdemokratie und Machtpolitik', *AinD*, p. 28.

72 F. Thimme, 'Gemeinsame Arbeit, der Weg zum inneren Frieden', *AinD*, p. 222; cf. P. Scheidemann, 'Zur Neuorientierung der inneren Politik', *AinD*, p. 59; E. Francke, 'Die Mitwirkung der Arbeiter an den öffentlichen Aufgaben in Deutschland', *AinD*, p. 81; E. Jaffé, 'Die Vertretung der Arbeiterinteressen im neuen Deutschland', *AinD*, p. 98.

> the state's dependence on the freely acting forces of the national whole . . . It feels itself economically, politically, and culturally belonging and bound to this community embodied by the state. Its economic well-being depends on the condition of the national political economy, which needs freedom of movement in order to develop. Its trade-union organizations can only influence wages and labor favorably if trade and traffic [*Handel und Wandel*] thrive. So the mass of the workers has an interest in the fate of the national political economy and thus in the political standing of the collectivity [*Staatsgemeinschaft*], and therefore feels itself connected in solidarity with the nation in its entirety in its defense against the dangers that threaten it from without.[73]

The workers, Winnig seems to intimate here, have even before the war already been what Naumann had always wanted them to be: namely, integrated into the nation, both objectively and subjectively.[74] The existential setting of the war did not engender this integration, but it did make it so visible as to render it incontrovertible.[75] The nationalization of the workers, in the view of Winnig and other contributors just as in Naumann's view, must be acknowledged and advanced still further by way of expanding their political liberties and assigning them a larger share of the national income.[76]

At the same time, just as in Naumann's national socialism, the integration of the workers can only come at the price of their abandonment of class conflict. As Troeltsch puts it, 'Social Democracy must learn that any theory of permanent class antagonism falters in the face of the living conditions of the state, the psychological foundations of the other strata of the nation, military camarederie and the need, even of [Social Democracy's] own people, to partake in the collective great deeds, hopes, and memories of the nation'.[77] Other authors articulate the same idea by calling for a transformation of Social

73 A. Winnig, 'Der Krieg und die Arbeiter-Internationale', *AinD*, p. 37; cf. H. Oncken, 'Die Deutschen auf dem Wege zur einigen und freien Nation', *AinD*, pp. 7 f., 10 f.; Noske, 'Der Krieg', p. 14; H. Heinemann, 'Vom Arbeiterrecht nach dem Kriege', *AinD*, p. 119.

74 On the nationalization of the workers' subjectivity, see also Tönnies, 'Die Sozialpolitik', p. 158.

75 Other Social-Democratic contributors to this book also adduce the wartime national-existential solidarity as evidence for countering the imputation of anti-nationalism to the workers: Noske, 'Der Krieg', p. 14; Scheidemann, 'Zur Neuorientierung', p. 65; C. Legien, 'Die Gewerkschaften', *AinD*, pp. 91, 94; Heinemann, 'Vom Arbeiterrecht', p. 119. On the bourgeois side, the same argument is voiced by Thimme, 'Gemeinsame Arbeit', p. 225.

76 Winnig, 'Der Krieg', p. 40; Anschütz, 'Gedanken', pp. 47, 57; Legien, 'Die Mitwirkung der Arbeiter', p. 97; Jaffé, 'Die Vertretung der Arbeiterinteressen', pp. 99, 101 f., 110; Lensch, 'Die Neugestaltung', p. 146; Thimme, 'Gemeinsame Arbeit', pp. 224–7.

77 E. Troeltsch, 'Die Kirchen- und Religionspolitik im Verhältnis zur Sozialdemokratie', *AinD*, p. 168.

Democracy from a 'negative' to a 'positive' movement in its relation to the nation-state. A long passage in the chapter by Thimme recapitulating the volume offers a faithful representation of this view, and reads like Friedrich Naumann redux:

> Social Democracy can in the future no longer persist in its principled negation of the state; rather, it must position itself vis-à-vis the state on the grounds of a positive political bearing. Everything, it seems to us, pushes towards such a positive bearing. Above all the sentiment of the many hundreds of thousands of workers in the battlefield. They have entered over there into the most unmediated and positive relation to the state . . . their will is directed entirely to the realistic, to the real, to a positive collaboration with their comrades and superiors, regardless of class . . . In the workers at home, too, especially in the trade unions which are engaged in such positive work there is . . . a real hunger for positive work, for extensive cooperation in the construction of the new Germany, a hunger which has been strengthened by the concerted collaboration during the war . . . As matters stand, however, [the workers] have time and again been pushed back into a negative . . . critique of all that exists and becomes. Nevertheless, today the circumstances have radically changed. Today bourgeois Germany in its entirety desires . . . the extensive collaboration of Social Democracy . . . [The bourgeoisie is saying:] 'The more positive Social Democracy becomes, the stronger the attention it will find for the rights that it wishes . . . And it is totally certain that, on a positively acting working class, political rights can be bestowed that cannot be bestowed on a negatively acting working class'. Nay, not 'can be bestowed', but '*must* and *will* be bestowed!'[78]

Just as in Naumann's approach, then, national inclusion of the workers is conditional upon their political docility — even after they had proven their wartime 'existential' solidarity with the nation.

Beyond the issues related to the present and future status of the working class and its relation to the nation-state, the authors also touch more broadly on the political-economic shift brought about by the existential experience of the war. On this question, too, the volume under discussion comes very close to the political economy envisioned by Naumann's national socialism, with its national productivism, its faith in large-scale, state-led organization, and its aim of harnessing all socioeconomic forces in the service of the nation's aggressive foreign policy. In Edgar Jaffé's view, for example, 'a far-reaching strengthening of state intervention in economic life' will be needed after the war in order to ensure the nation's 'future military readi-

[78] Thimme, 'Gemeinsame Arbeit', p. 230. For other examples in which the terminology of 'positive' and 'negative' is deployed with reference to Social Democracy, see Noske, 'Der Krieg', pp. 12, 18, 20; Winnig, 'Der Krieg', p. 41; Anschütz, 'Gedanken', p. 47; Scheidemann, 'Zur Neuorientierung', pp. 64–7; Legien, 'Die Mitwirkung der Arbeiter', p. 97; Heinemann, 'Vom Arbeiterrecht', p. 123.

ness'.[79] This long-term political-economic reorientation would amount, Jaffé declares, to a 'reshaping and "militarization" of our economic life, imposed on us by our national fate'.[80] Lensch similarly attributes existential significance to national organization, opening his chapter with the words: 'If Germany wins in this war, it will have won by virtue of its organization, military as well as economic.'[81] He concludes his chapter by evincing his hope for 'a higher form of [social] co-existence' characterized by 'the social regulation of the methods of production'.[82] Scheidemann associates 'socialism' with 'the development of our economy towards higher forms of organization';[83] and Tönnies concurs, stressing that '*organization* is the task, in peace as in war', particularly the 'organization of labor'.[84] Paul Natorp, too, calls ambitiously for an 'organization of social education' that 'encompasses all aspects of national culture', and regards the 'organization of national labor' as 'the most productive investment of national capital'.[85]

Finally, in Natorp's contribution we also find a Naumann-like concern with the quantity and quality of Germany's population. Natorp begins by stipulating in national-existentialist fashion that the 'rebirth of our nation after the war' — 'a rebirth as if out of death' — depends on Germany's ability to preserve the wartime 'assertion of our national existence through the arraying of all our energies'.[86] The biologistic slant suggested by the imagery of death and rebirth as well as of energy becomes patent when Natorp turns in this context to the 'population question', which he regards as 'a point . . . that a rebirth of our nation most earnestly needs [to address]'.[87] For 'the struggle for life' currently undertaken in the war cannot be allowed to 'devour life itself';[88] and that is precisely what is in danger of happening as a result of the war, which 'demands from us sacrifices in blood such that never before have been made by a nation. And unfortunately it is precisely . . . the age-groups that are physically and mentally and ethically the most decisive for the propagation of the nation' that are being sacrificed. Natorp continues with gnawing anxiety: 'From whence will an . . . offspring of noble nature come to us if only the

[79] Jaffé, 'Die Vertretung der Arbeiterinteressen', p. 106.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 114. On the primacy of 'defending the German fatherland', see also Noske, 'Der Krieg', pp. 12 f, 15; Heinemann, 'Vom Arbeiterrecht', pp. 122, 127; Thimme, 'Gemeinsame Arbeit', p. 222.

[81] Lensch, 'Die Neugestaltung', p. 139.

[82] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

[83] Scheidemann, 'Zur Neuorientierung', p. 65.

[84] Tönnies, 'Die Sozialpolitik', p. 156. Original emphasis.

[85] Natorp, 'Die Wiedergeburt unseres Volkes', pp. 202, 206 (respectively).

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 194; the expression 'rebirth as if out of death [*einer Wiedergeburt wie aus dem Tode*]' is on p. 196.

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 196.

physical, mental, and ethical cripples remain? And meanwhile a falling birth-rate is already visible'.[89]

It is this nationalist standpoint that necessitates, in Natorp's view, certain minimal welfare provisions for the 'working people, on whom the main burden of population renewal falls'. Both the workers and the 'female . . . part of the population' need to develop a 'consciousness of earnest social and national duty' to procreate.[90] The 'social and national education' that the 'male part of the nation' has received through 'many years of soldierly training' needs now to be complemented by a 'general and methodical social and national education of the female sex, directed towards the production and sustainment of life'. Through such 'socialization of education and breeding', a 'healthy construction of social and national life' will be made possible.[91] In these passages, Natorp in effect replicates (nay, outdoes) Naumann's population-centred national socialism, complete with all its existential, biologistic and militaristic trappings.

In sum, Friedrich Meinecke was right: the 'ideas of 1914' that received their quintessential expression in Legien and Thimme's edited volume are nothing other than a Naumannite national socialism.[92] Although the term 'national socialism' itself does not appear in the book, it does come up in another text, written by one of the chief proponents of the 'ideas of 1914' — indeed, the one who coined the term:[93] political economist Johann Plenge's book *1789 and 1914*.[94] Plenge had, even before 1914, called for a national, 'organizational

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[90] *Ibid.*, pp. 198 f.

[91] *Ibid.*, pp. 200 f. Natorp mentions Plato in this connection as his distant predecessor.

[92] Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe*, pp. 18 f. (see the passage cited earlier). On the affinity between Naumann's ideas and those expounded by the Thimme-Legien collection, see Ratz, ' "Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland" ', p. 3. Steffen Bruendel also mentions the Thimme-Legien volume as representative of the 'ideas of 1914'. See Bruendel, 'Die Geburt der "Volksgemeinschaft" ', p. 6. See also Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat*, pp. 118–24, where he indicates how 'national socialism' constituted a central pillar in the 'ideas of 1914'. Another scholar who makes an explicit link between the 'ideas of 1914' — especially the Lensch-Cunow-Haenisch group and Johann Plenge — and national socialism is R.P. Sieferle, 'Die Geburt des nationalen Sozialismus im Weltkrieg: Paul Lensch', in *Die konservative Revolution: Fünf biographische Skizzen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1995).

[93] W. Michalka, 'From War Economy to "New Economy": World War I and the Conservative Debate about the "Other" Modernity in Germany', in *War, Violence and the Modern Condition*, ed. B. Hüppauf (Berlin and New York, 1997), p. 91; and Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat*, pp. 111–13.

[94] J. Plenge, *1789 und 1914: Die symbolischen Jahre in der Geschichte des politischen Geistes* (Berlin, 1916). Another key text of the 'ideas of 1914' discourse is W. Sombart, *Händler und Helden: Patriotische Besinnungen* (Munich and Leipzig, 1915); see e.g. pp. 80 f. for national existentialism and pp. 124 f. for an implicit national socialism.

socialism' that would submit the nation's social and economic life to centralized state administration.[95] But the existential war experience seems to have lifted Plenge's confidence in the prospects of a national socialism to new heights. According to Plenge, the 'war economy' — consisting *inter alia* in the 'firm centralization of all the forces of the national productive organism [*aller Kräfte des nationalen Produktionsorganismus*]' — constitutes

> the first 'socialist' society that has become a reality . . . Under the exigency of the war, the socialist idea broke its way into German economic life, its [i.e. the German economy's] organization coalesced in a new spirit, and thus the self-determination of our nation gave birth for humanity the new idea of 1914, the idea of German organization, the people's confraternity of national socialism [*die Volksgenossenschaft des nationalen Sozialismus*].[96]

Friedrich Naumann, too, seems to have felt more confident to use the term 'national socialism' again, after more than a decade of repressing it following the collapse of the National-Social Association and his party-political migration to left-liberalism. In his 1916 book *Mitteleuropa* ('Central Europe') — one of the most widely read wartime books, in Germany and beyond — Naumann observes that 'there grows up from all sides a state- or national-socialism [*Staats- oder Nationalsozialismus*], there grows up the "administered national economy" '.[97] This passage may be read, I submit, as Naumann's confirmation that the wartime political economy is in a sense a fulfilment of his old national-socialist vision.

Conclusion

As the war progressed, and even more so after the war, national socialist ideas continued to be produced and disseminated with increasing vigour. From 1916 to 1919, Walther Rathenau and especially Wichard von Moellendorff, the two main architects of the German war economy, advanced the idea of a *Gemeinwirtschaft* or 'communal economy' along lines very similar to the agenda of the Thimme-Legien volume discussed above, arguing that the social and political-economic lessons acquired during the war should continue to shape German collective life in peacetime.[98] After the war, Weimar

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[95] J. Plenge, *Marx und Hegel* (Tübingen, 1911), e.g. pp. 178–81.

[96] Plenge, *1789 und 1914*, p. 82; also p. 125. Cf. Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat*, p. 119.

[97] F. Naumann, *Mitteleuropa*, in *Werke*, Vol. 4, ed. T. Scheider (Cologne and Opladen, 661964), p. 609. I follow, with slight modifications, Christabel M. Meredith's translation in F. Naumann, *Central Europe* (New York, 1917), p. 123. Cf. Klemperer, *Germany's New Conservatism*, pp. 50, 55 f., where Naumann's *Mitteleuropa* vision is placed at the very centre of the 'ideas of 1914'. See also the reference to Naumann by Ratz, ' "Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland" ', p. 3.

[98] On Moellendorff, see D.E. Barclay, 'A Prussian Socialism? Wichard von Moellendorff and the Dilemmas of Economic Planning in Germany, 1918–19', *Central*

Germany also witnessed an explosion of radical right-wing (or 'conservative-revolutionary') forms of national socialism, articulated and circulated by cultural icons such as Oswald Spengler, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck and Ernst Jünger; by Ernst Niekisch and his 'national Bolshevism'; by the circle around the influential periodical *Die Tat* ('The Deed'); by the celebrated sociologist and political economist Werner Sombart; and most dramatically, of course, by the National-Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), especially its left wing led by the Strasser brothers.[99] Beyond the ideational sphere, the Weimar Republic's corporatist arrangements, put into place shortly after the War, constituted in effect an institutional embodiment of cardinal elements of the national socialism described in this article, and the impetus for their

European History, 11 (1978); C.H. Werth, 'Wichard von Moellendorff: Konservativer Sozialismus und Gemeinwirtschaft', in *Sozialismus und Nation*; W. v. Moellendorff, *Konservativer Sozialismus* (Hamburg, 1932).

On Rathenau, see J. Joll, 'Walther Rathenau — Intellectual or Industrialist?', in *Germany in the Age of Total War*, ed. V.R. Berghahn *et al.* (London, 1981), pp. 53–7, 60; C.H. Werth, 'Walther Rathenau und die zentralistisch-maschinelle Gemeinwirtschaft', in *Sozialismus und Nation*; W. Rathenau, *Deutschlands Rohstoffsversorgung* (Berlin, 1916); W. Rathenau, *Probleme der Friedenswirtschaft* (Berlin, 1917).

99 On all of the names and movements mentioned, the best survey of their national socialism is Werth, *Sozialismus und Nation*. See also Klemperer, *Germany's New Conservatism*; H. Lebovics, *Social Conservatism and the Middle Classes in Germany, 1914–1933* (Princeton, 1969); and G.L. Mosse, 'The Corporate State and the Conservative Revolution in Weimar Germany', in *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left, and the Search for a 'Third Force' in Pre-Nazi Germany* (New York, 1970). On Moeller van den Bruck, see also F. Stern, 'Moeller van den Bruck and the Third Reich', in *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley, 1974). For Moeller's national socialism, see A. Moeller van den Bruck, *Das Recht der jungen Völker: Sammlung politischer Aufsätze*, ed. H. Schwarz (Berlin, 1932), pp. 112–16; A. Moeller van den Bruck, *Germany's Third Empire*, trans. E.O. Lorimer, condensed English edition (New York, 1971), esp. pp. 71–6; and Klemperer, *Germany's New Conservatism*, pp. 66–9, which includes additional references to Moeller's work. Spengler's national socialism is most extensively articulated in O. Spengler, 'Prussianism and Socialism [1920]', in *Selected Essays* (Chicago, 1967). For Sombart's national socialism, see W. Sombart, *Deutscher Sozialismus* (Berlin-Charlottenburg, 1934). On the national socialism of the left wing of the Nazi movement, see also M. Broszat, *Der Nationalsozialismus: Weltanschauung, Programm und Wirklichkeit* (Stuttgart, 1961), esp. pp. 47–62; and Bruendel, 'Die Geburt der "Volksgemeinschaft" '. The right wing of the movement, led by Adolf Hitler, which ultimately won out in the internal power struggle with the left wing, adhered to a national socialism qualitatively different from the variants discussed in this article, due to its single-minded focus on the extermination of the Jews. Nonetheless, it no doubt stood to gain from the ideational capital accrued to the national-socialist idea by the efforts of its other adherents.

instauration came to a large extent from the experience of cross-class cooperation in Germany's wartime political economy.[100]

By the time the NSDAP was founded, then, and throughout the Weimar period, there existed in Germany a complex, multifaceted conceptual field of national socialism spanning the entire political spectrum. To be sure, the immediate causes that led to the *initial* adoption by Hitler's movement of a national-socialist name and programme in 1920 are not to be found primarily in the bourgeois-reformist and Social-Democratic milieux that disseminated the idea of a national socialism before and during the Great War. Instead, the roots of the name and the programme are clearly traceable to *völkisch*-antisemitic movements in Germany and Austria, especially the Bohemian *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (DAP; German Workers' Party) founded in 1904 and its subsequent incarnations.[101] But can we limit ourselves to these immediate roots if we wish to understand the ideational conditions that made possible Nazism's longer-term survival, growth and seizure and exercise of power? Are we not impelled to go beyond immediate causes to investigate broader historical dynamics, including the ideational resources that the movement could draw upon in its interaction with German society? From this perspective, we might conjecture — and in the present article it will have to remain at the level of conjecture — that the national socialist ideas that circulated widely in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany may well have served, whether directly or obliquely, as valuable ideational capital that helped the Nazi movement gain broader attention within the German public sphere. Tracing these connections across the national-socialist spectrum lies far beyond the scope of this article, but they must be thoroughly explored if we are to gain deeper insight into the formative ideational currents of this fateful era.

Let us not, however, limit ourselves to grasping national socialism solely through the historiographical lens of the Nazi phenomenon. Such an approach would come perilously close to misconstruing Nazism as the inevitable, teleological culmination of Wilhelmine national socialism, while at the same time overlooking the latter's considerable historical import within its own contemporary constellation.[102] One way of grasping this contemporary import is in terms of the dialectical reversal experienced by national socialism during the

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100 G.D. Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor in Germany, 1914–1918* (Providence, 1992), pp. xv–xvi; C.S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 57 f., 70.

101 K.D. Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism*, trans. J. Steinberg (New York, 1970), pp. 50–7. For a first-hand account of the origins of the Nazi movement's national socialism, written by one of the NSDAP's chief ideologues in its early years, see R. Jung, *Der nationale Sozialismus: Seine Grundlagen, sein Werdegang und seine Ziele* (Munich, 1922).

102 In this sense, this article is consistent with the consciously non-teleological approach that has become increasingly characteristic of the historiography of the

Wilhelmine era, a reversal that encapsulates and might help to explain the tragic historical trajectory of Germany as a whole at the dawn of the twentieth century, one leading from nation-building to national ruin. Even as it deployed a discourse of (national) life to justify the subordination of the social to nation-building and power politics, existential national socialism ended up giving its blessing to massive death and to national ruin — a dialectic that would repeat itself a quarter of a century later in the Third Reich.[103] For without the systematic organization of the national economy during the First World War Germany's severe raw materials crisis might well have led to its defeat within a few months'.[104] In other words, the ideological support lent by national socialism to prolonging the war by way of regimenting and mobilizing the social turned it into a full accomplice to the production of the incalculable levels of human suffering, social devastation and political upheaval inflicted by the Great War upon German collective life. Such were the accomplishments of national socialism even before Adolf Hitler started preaching his National Socialist gospel in the beerhalls of Munich.

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Kaiserreich as a whole over the past two or three decades, as part of a broader paradigmatic shift away from the idea of a German *Sonderweg* or 'special path' to modernity. As much (though not all) of the recent literature on Imperial Germany testifies, the avoidance of a Nazi teleology need not involve a blunting of the critical edge of historical inquiry into pre-Nazi Germany, and it is my intention that the present article contribute to this critical stance. For a recent overview of these and other tendencies in the historiography of Imperial Germany, see S.O. Müller and C. Torp, 'Das Bild des Deutschen Kaiserreichs im Wandel', in *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich in der Kontroverse*, ed. S.O. Müller and C. Torp (Göttingen, 2009).

103 Developing this argument concerning the Nazi regime is far beyond the scope of this article. Instead, I will limit myself to referring the reader to two articles on the Nazi discourse of life and death written by B. Neumann: 'The National Socialist Politics of Life', *New German Critique*, 85 (2002); and 'The Phenomenology of the German People's Body (Volkskörper) and the Extermination of the Jewish Body', *New German Critique*, 36 (2009).

104 Feldman, *Army, Industry, and Labor*, p. 51.