



"We are Trying... to Change the Face of the World"--Ideology and Motivation in the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front: The View from Below

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“We are trying . . . to change the face of the world”—Ideology and Motivation in the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front:
The View from Below



Stephen G. Fritz

The man is the first weapon of battle. Let us study the soldier, for it is he who brings reality to it.

Ardant du Picq

ONE of the enigmas of World War II has been why the average German *Landser* (soldier) fought so furiously in defense of such a deplorable regime. In an article written during the war and based on interrogations of German prisoners, Peter Weidenreich explained the continued resistance of the *Landser* by a mix of factors, among them comradeship, fear, good leadership, and faith in Hitler. Shortly after the end of the war, Edward Shils and Morris Janowitz, in their classic study of the combat motivation of the German soldier, narrowed the focus by asserting that the unity and “extraordinary tenacity” of the German Army “was in fact sustained only to a very slight extent by the National Socialist political convictions of its members.” Indeed, to Shils and Janowitz, “More important in the motivation of the determined resistance of the German soldier was the steady satisfaction of certain primary personality demands afforded by the social organization of the army,” that is, by the cohesion of his immediate primary group, which met certain basic needs, such as comradeship, esteem, concern, and a sense of well-being and power. Still, Shils and Janowitz hedged a bit by acknowledging the importance of ideology for a “hard-core minority of fervent Nazis in the German Army,” by admitting that the bulk of the rank and file retained, until quite late in the war, a “belief in the good intentions” of Hitler as a leader who had promoted the economic and

social well-being of the German people, and by recognizing the impact of the National Socialist Leadership Officers (NSFO) in promoting ideological indoctrination among the troops. Nonetheless, in their conclusion Shils and Janowitz again stressed the importance of immediate primary group structures and comradeship in sustaining the fighting spirit of the *Landser*.¹

This almost exclusive emphasis on the relevance of the primary group for German combat behavior remained largely unchallenged for three decades. In 1978, however, Victor Madej returned to the issue of motivation. He rejected the central role of the primary group, arguing instead that German cohesion in combat stemmed from the military skill and efficiency created by an outstanding organization. To Madej, superior performance issued not from cohesion, but cohesion instead resulted from exceptional organization, training, and military skill. Martin van Creveld seemed to settle the debate when, in effect, he combined the thesis of Shils and Janowitz with that of Madej in claiming, "The average German soldier . . . did not as a rule fight out of a belief in Nazi ideology . . . Instead he fought for the reasons that men have always fought: because he felt himself a member of a well-integrated, well-led team whose structure, administration, and functioning were perceived to be . . . equitable and just." Thus, to Creveld, the tight-knit military groups endured because they satisfied "the needs, social and psychological, of the individual fighting man."²

Just a year after the appearance of Creveld's work, however, Elliot Chodoff returned to the issue of ideology. Although agreeing on the significance of both organization and the physical and psychological cohesion of the unit, Chodoff emphasized the importance of ideology in precombat motivation, but stressed that once in action ideology gave way to primary group loyalty as a motivating factor.³

It was left to Omer Bartov, then, to take the debate a step further by suggesting that ideology played a decisive role in determining motivation even during combat. As Bartov demonstrated in a number of works, the *Landser*, perhaps to a surprising degree, carried preordained ideological beliefs with him into the war, especially in Russia. The consequence of

1. Peter H. Weidenreich, "Why He Fights," *Infantry Journal* 56 (February 1945): 43–45; Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht," in Daniel Lerner, ed. *Propaganda in War and Crisis* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 368, 396–413. (This is a reprint of the original article published in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Summer 1948, 280–315.)

2. W. Victor Madej, "Effectiveness and Cohesion of the German Ground Forces in World War II," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 6 (Fall 1978): 233–48; Martin van Creveld, *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939–1945* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 163–65.

3. Elliot P. Chodoff, "Ideology and Primary Groups," *Armed Forces and Society* 9 (Summer 1983): 569–93.

incessant Nazi propaganda and ideological indoctrination in the schools as well as in institutions such as the Hitler Youth and the army was a body of men whose remarkable cohesion in war was a result of the binding force of these ideological beliefs. Bartov emphasized that the brutality of the fighting quickly broke up these carefully nurtured primary groups, so that the only explanation for the amazing resilience of the *Landser* lay in his ideological motivation.⁴ In his stress on ideology, however, Bartov focused exclusively on negative factors such as racism, anti-Semitism, and a brutal disregard for the occupied peoples.

Certainly these malevolent influences existed and exerted an influence on the *Landser's* behavior, but when this issue of ideology and motivation is viewed "from below," from the perspective of the average soldier, a picture both more nuanced and complex emerges. In spite of historians' fascination with events "at the top," the true reality of war is to be found in the anguish, confusion, and motivation of ordinary combatants. John Keegan has suggested that there exist areas where social history and military history abut. War from the perspective of the common soldier constitutes one of those areas. The Wehrmacht in World War II had almost twenty million men under arms, the overwhelming majority of whom were enlisted men, noncommissioned officers, and junior officers. These men came from a variety of backgrounds, yet had one thing in common: they lived the war from below, where everyday life could be frighteningly concrete.⁵

Difficulties, of course, surround this approach. The *Landser* rarely had the time and solitude with which to record his thoughts concerning the nature of war. In any case, even if time and solitude had been at hand the bulk of enlisted men were typically unversed in expressing themselves analytically, so that many first-hand accounts remain sunk in banalities, or else speak of intimate matters of personal separation

4. Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941–1945: German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986); idem, "Extremfälle der Normalität und die Normalität des Aussergewöhnlichen: Deutsche Soldaten an der Ostfront," in Ulrich Borsdorf and Mathilde Jasmin, eds., *Über Leben im Krieg* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rohwolt, 1989); idem, "Daily Life and Motivation in War: The Wehrmacht in the Soviet Union," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 12 (1989): 200–214; idem, "The Missing Years: German Workers, German Soldiers," *German History* 8 (1990): 46–65; idem, "Von unten betrachtet: Überleben, Zusammenhalt und Brutalität an der Ostfront," in Bernd Wegner, ed., *Zwei Wege nach Moskau* (Munich: Piper, 1991), 326–44; idem, "Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich," *Journal of Modern History* 63 (March 1991): 44–60; idem, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

5. Robin Fox, "Fatal Attraction: War and Human Nature," *The National Interest*, Winter 1992–93, 15; John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), 77–78; Wolfram Wette, "Militärgeschichte von unten. Die Perspektive des 'kleinen Mannes,'" in Wolfram Wette, ed., *Der Krieg des Kleinen Mannes. Eine Militärgeschichte von unten* (Munich: Piper, 1992), 13–14, 24.

rather than of the character and texture of life at the front. Often, the very soldiers with the most direct experience of battle remain least able to reflect on that experience in writing, some because of the magnitude of the trauma they suffered, others because they lacked the ability to express what it was they saw and experienced even though their level of literacy was generally higher than that of the average G.I. or Tommy. Reading their letters and diaries, one is struck by the remarkable level of intelligence and lucidity. In part this was a consequence of the rigorous German educational system, but to a great extent owed much to the manner in which the Wehrmacht utilized its personnel. Unlike the American army which, until late in the war, shunted its most educated men into specialized roles, the Wehrmacht from the start deployed a remarkably high percentage of its manpower as combat troops.⁶ Thus, even college educated men routinely found themselves in the frontmost ranks. Further, Nazi doctrine emphasized the notion of a *Volksgemeinschaft* roughly modeled on the legendary trench socialism of World War I, a national community whose social harmony, unity, and political authority rested on the integration of people from all walks of life, thus transcending class conflict. Since the German Army had a high proportion of educated men in the forward lines who had the ability to reflect on their experiences and commit them to paper, the result was a remarkably rich record of life at the front.

The historian seeking to understand the mind of the *Landser* must nevertheless exercise caution, since the reality of censorship meant that many *Landser* not only had to avoid any information of a military nature, but political statements which, if critical of the government, could lead to the death penalty. "The censor obviously might not see everything that is written," confirmed one *Landser*, then admitted, "But believe me, much crap is still written home." Still, the flood of letters to and from the front (estimated at forty to fifty billion total) meant that many passed through censorship unopened; and the longer the war continued, the less seriously many *Landser* regarded the censor. As two of the leading authorities on German *Feldpostbriefe* (letters from the field) concluded after studying thousands of such missives, "The mass of soldiers expressed their opinions and views in a surprisingly open and uninhibited fashion."⁷

6. Ibid., "Kriegsalltag," 223; Wette, "Militärgeschichte von unten," 19–23; Richard Holmes, *Firing Line* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985), 8–11; Creveld, *Fighting Power*, 42–61.

7. Letter of anonymous soldier, 27 March 1943, in Joachim Dollwet, "Menschen im Krieg. Bejahung—und Widerstand? Eindrücke und Auszüge aus der Sammlung von Feldpostbriefen des Zweiten Weltkrieges in Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz," *Jahrbuch für Westdeutsche Landesgeschichte* 13 (1987): 289; see also: idem, 281–82; Ortwin Buchbender and Reinhold Sterz, eds., *Das andere Gesicht des Krieges*.

As a result, these letters and diaries provide valuable insights into this puzzling problem of what motivated the *Landser*. After all, no one forced a soldier to make positive comments about the Nazi regime, so that if some letters have the ring of propagandistic mimicry about them, others reflect a genuine sympathy and support for Hitler and Nazism. An army tends to reflect the society from which it sprang, so that if the men of the Wehrmacht fought steadfastly in support of Nazism, something within the Hitler-state must have struck a responsive chord. As Hegel long ago pointed out, men will much more readily fight to defend ideas than material interests. From the German perspective, World War II, especially that part of it fought in Russia, could be seen as the ultimate ideological war, since many of the *Landser* understood it as a war of ideas, with the enemy threatening the validity of National Socialist concepts. The staying power of the average German soldier, his sense of seriousness and purpose, what often went beyond sacrifice, courage, and resolution to fanaticism, depended in large measure on the conviction that National Socialist Germany had redeemed the failures of World War I and had restored, both individually and collectively, a uniquely German sense of identity. The paradox of war remains, as Robin Fox points out, "that so important is the defense of our ideas—our definitions of ourselves and our societies—that . . . [we] will willingly strive to destroy [our] perceived enemies and exhibit the highest forms of human courage in so doing."⁸



In order to come to grips with the motivation of the *Landser* in World War II, one must look back to the impact of the Great War. Men had been transformed by the horrifying experience of the trenches. Indeed, the very concept of the hero, of the soldier fighting for his country, was redefined in World War I, when, as Jay Baird put it, "bare-chested men stood against the full force of the weaponry of a technological age." The ideal of creating a new man after the bloodletting of the trenches stemmed from the belief that this sort of war had produced a new type of individual, a "frontier personality" who served as an agent of rebirth, regeneration, and new life, a person who journeyed to the limits of existence seeking renewal out of the destruction of war. This new man was not a fighter who enthusiastically sacrificed himself for glory and honor, as did the soldiers of 1914. Instead, amoral, cool, functional, and hardened, he could withstand the ultimate test of battle with-

Deutsche Feldpostbriefe 1939–1945 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1982), 13–14, 24; Dollwet, "Menschen im Krieg," 281–82.

8. Fox, "War and Human Nature," 20.

out his nerves cracking. He was both a technological warrior who understood that the war had produced a revolution of modernism, as well as a man of steel who gained personal fulfillment through a narcissistic dynamism of will and energy. A certain matter-of-factness thus marked the new man, who replaced the romantic relics of a failed bourgeois age with the image of mechanical precision. "The German factory," despaired a French soldier already in 1917, "is absorbing the world."⁹

More than any other writer, Ernst Jünger popularized this image of the new man and of a world in which the worker and soldier, made one by the energy of technology and the vitalism of war, fused to create a being who combined "a minimum of ideology with a maximum of performance." War, he asserted, afforded personal rebirth through passage into the intoxicating world of instinct and emotion, where men thrown together in the hurricane of battle rediscovered courage and passion. "Perhaps one must lose all in order to gain one's self," wrote Horstmar Seitz in October 1942. "We must throw away all culture and education, . . . for us there is only one thing: to begin completely anew, to erect new values and create new forms." War thus fostered both transfiguration and redemption, forging a community of men who shared a great destiny and encompassed a higher mission, a *Gemeinschaft* whose merits of action, decision, and existential commitment resulted in genuine self-realization.¹⁰

Modern war, Jünger proclaimed, transformed life into energy, so that it resembled a machine. Indeed, the new face of war led to the development of soldiers with ruthless will, men who were resilient and malleable under the new conditions of battle, men who were "day laborers of death . . . for a better day." Overblown rhetoric perhaps, although in a letter written in November 1944 Sebastian Mendelssohn-Bartholdy claimed that he "would like to be one of the nameless in the greater community who takes on every sacrifice for the war in order to serve a future that we don't know and yet in which we still believe."¹¹

9. Jay W. Baird, *To Die For Germany: Heroes in the Nazi Pantheon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), xii; Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 211, 223, 325; Bernd Hüppauf, "Langemarck, Verdun and the Myth of a New Man in Germany after the First World War," *War and Society* 6 (September 1988): 84–96; Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 2, 30.

10. Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 70–76, 92; letter of Horstmar Seitz, 31 October 1942, in Walter Bähr and Hans W. Bähr, eds., *Kriegsbriefe gefallener Studenten, 1939–1945* (Tübingen and Stuttgart: Rainer Wunderlich Verlag, 1952), 285.

11. Walter Struve, *Elites Against Democracy: Leadership Ideals in Bourgeois Political Thought in Germany, 1890–1933* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973), 392, 407; Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 91, 104–5, 107; Hüppauf,

To Jünger the soldier, whose face was “metallic . . . galvanized” and who stoically accepted pain, was a fighter made of modern material. “We don’t cry,” Harry Mielert noted from Russia in December 1943, “and our exteriors appear hard and like a bizarre personification of the pure manly, cold, warrior.” “This war has shaped us soldiers into something else,” mused Ansgar Bollweg in November 1943. “With the sharpness of a predator’s eyes we recognize that the remains of the old world will be crushed between the millstones of this war. The middle ages comes finally to an end. . . . I see how in the epoch of masses and machines each individual life will always become more explicitly that of a ‘life of a worker’ and how because of that the war gets its cruel character.” “You can’t afford to be soft in war,” Karl Fuchs asserted in a letter to his wife. “Indeed, you have to be pitiless and relentless. Don’t I sound like a different person to you?”¹² A different person, indeed, one, in fact, very much like the image of the new man that Jünger had described.

Jünger argued as well that pleasure and horror were inseparable in war, horror at the destruction but pleasure in the will to sacrifice. “The deepest happiness of man,” he declared, “lies in the fact that he will be sacrificed.” To Jünger, domination and service were identical, or as Reinhard Goes put it in November 1941, “I have learned that one is only free not only when one can give orders, but also when one can take orders.” Heinz Küchler wrote from Poland in September 1939, “Our greatness must lie in the ability, not to master fate, but rather to maintain our personality, our will, our love in defiance of fate and unbowed to be a sacrifice to a world order that is not ours.” After all, Jünger asserted, war was “a matter of taste.”¹³

Sacrifice and massive loss of life became the most striking reality of World War II for the *Landser*, especially on the eastern front. “After a week long . . . march, my division went into action at the Dnieper,” wrote Gerhard Meyer in July 1941. “The first encounter of our side with a superior force without artillery preparation cost blood on top of blood. . . . The positive strength of the division had now sunk under half, eighty

“Langemarck,” 84–85, 89–90, 93, 96; letter of Sebastian Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, 27 November 1944, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 394.

12. Struve, *Elites Against Democracy*, 392, 407; Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 93, 104–105, 107; Hüppauf, “Langemarck,” 84–85, 89–90, 93, 96; letter of Harry Mielert, 6 December 1943, in Gerda Mielert-Pflugradt, ed., *Russische Erde: Kriegsbriefe aus Rußland* (Stuttgart: Reclam-Verlag, 1950), 114; letter of Ansgar Bollweg, November 1943, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 302; letter of Karl Fuchs, 28 June 1941, in Horst F. Richardson, ed., *Sieg Heil: War Letters of Tank Gunner Karl Fuchs 1937–1941* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1987), 116.

13. Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 94, 103; letter of Reinhard Goes, 23 November 1941, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 457; Struve, *Elites Against Democracy*, 403, 406–7; letter of Heinz Küchler, 3 September 1939, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 157; Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 97.

percent of the officers had fallen, but we remained engaged." Nor was his outfit unique. By mid-September 1941, Corporal E. K. of the 98th Infantry Division despaired, "In our company we have 75% casualties. . . . On 26 October there were only 20 men," he wrote. "In each regiment of our division so few remained that a battalion was disbanded. So now each regiment has two battalions and each battalion has two rifle companies, with a strength of 65 men." Though reduced in strength, these *Landsers* now faced a massive Soviet counterattack. Writing on Christmas eve 1941, Hans Pietzcker remarked of the savage fighting, "of my thirty-six men there are still only six with me." Caught in the same maelstrom before Moscow, Harald Henry exclaimed to his parents, in a burst of unguarded optimism, his "increasing certainty of coming even out of this mess, even if as the last single man of the entire company."¹⁵ The next day Henry was killed northwest of Moscow. Similarly, Will Thomas noted in January 1942, "I am now the only remaining officer of the regiment present since the summer and the only one of the company commanders who were appointed in the fall." Two weeks later, Sergeant W. H. lamented, "We marched off with 200 men, and now our company is only 140 men strong." Martin Lindner commented dryly in September 1942 that his unit had been placed in the most dangerous position in the line, "therefore we also have high losses. . . . In my company there are only a few . . . who have been in action as long as I without being wounded." Little more than a month later, Lindner, just back from leave and plunged immediately into battle, noted that "two-thirds of my platoon have become casualties."¹⁵ Lindner himself was killed three days later.

After the first brutal year of the war in Russia, then, the Wehrmacht had already suffered crippling casualties, losses which exploded those primary groups so carefully nurtured by the German Army. In the midst of the fierce fighting around Sevastopol in July 1942, Friedrich Haag reflected on the stark reality produced by this enormous loss of life, "I have recently experienced how difficult it is to lead a company into fire and to sacrifice men whom you hardly know . . . They fall next to you, and perhaps one cries: 'Lieutenant, you must write home,' and you don't even know what his name is." Soldiers unknown even to each other thus

14. Letter of Gerhard Meyer, 23 July 1941, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 209–10; letters of Corporal E. K., 19 September 1941; and Corporal E. K. (no relation), 21 November 1941, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 80, letter 124; 87, letter 145; letters of Hans Pietzcker, 24 December 1941, and Harald Henry, 21 December 1941, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 212–13, 90.

15. Letter of Will Thomas, 19 January 1942, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 100; letter of Sergeant W. H., 30 January 1942, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 92, letter 155; letters of Martin Lindner, 15 September 1942, and 28 November 1942, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 170, 172.

faced an anonymous death on an obscure battlefield. "A letter to an unknown soldier of the company arrived," Wilhelm Prüller noted ruefully in his diary in February 1942, "in which a girl asked to have information about her dead fiancée. No one wanted to answer it, because there's no one here any more who was there when he fell."¹⁶ And yet the dominant theme running throughout the letters of these *Landser* is not so much disillusionment as stubborn resiliency. "In deep darkness I sit among the vacationers (those on leave) who are returning from the homeland," wrote Siegfried Roemer in March 1944. "Many are concerned about the aerial bombing damage. They speak bitterly and out of deep resignation, yet I am convinced that at the front each of them will continue to do his duty." In the midst of his misery, Hans Pietzcker stressed, "We stuck it out true to our duty and responsibility." And in the same letter in which he expressed his loneliness at the loss of his old comrades, Will Thomas went on to note proudly, "The attitude of the men is also wonderful despite all of the difficulties and all of the privations." Horstmar Seitz, so full of despair in noting that "the past is distant and dark and deadened by the blows of shells" nonetheless marveled, "and yet we stand here for women and their laughter, for beauty, for the homeland, and for ourselves." Similarly, Helmut Pabst threw off his acrid cynicism to declare that in the struggle for Germany's existence, "duty was not good or evil, but rather an inviolable attitude until the final consequence."¹⁷

Had the anonymous *Landser*, then, become the embodiment of Jünger's worker-soldier who thrilled in the dark, chaotic, inexplicable beauty of war, and for whom ideological motivation was superfluous? Certainly one can find examples of nihilist bravado among the letters written by *Landser*s, many of whom seem consciously to have adopted a Jüngerian attitude. "The front line, the entrenched riflemen, have deeply impressed me," wrote Hans-Heinrich Ludwig from Russia, "especially their attitude. These fellows are fabulous. A complete resignation to fate." Seeking to explain this feeling to his wife, Harry Mielert claimed, "There forward in my foxhole I was a free man. . . . Can you understand that I yearn somewhat for the freer life in the dangerous trenches?" During the retreat out of Russia, Mielert again emphasized this sense of existential freedom. The war, he claimed, "is again a great selection process. Whoever is not able to come along is left behind. The men abandon all their belongings and possessions in order to save their naked lives." Sim-

16. Letter of Friedrich Reinhold Haag, 12 July 1942, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 211; diary entry of Wilhelm Prüller, 23 February 1942, in idem, *Diary of a German Soldier*, trans. H. C. Robbins Landon (New York: Coward-McCann, 1963), 143.

17. Letters of Siegfried Roemer, 27–28 March 1944; Hans Pietzcker, 24 December 1941; Will Thomas, 19 January 1942; Horstmar Seitz, 9 September 1942; and Helmut Pabst, 20 January 1943 in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 328, 213, 100, 284, 255.

ilarly, Harald Henry admitted to distress, but claimed, "Our suffering is . . . an infinitely beautiful, colorful, painfully lively suffering." Confessed Hans-Friedrich Stäcker, in a reference to Jünger's most famous statement, "I have slowly come to the understanding behind the words: 'war is the father of all things.'"¹⁸

Others also closely mimicked Jünger. "Men die daily, and daily rise from the dead," wrote Wolfgang Kluge in an eery parallel to Jünger's notion of rebirth through war, while in another letter he touched on the notion of affirmation, arguing, "We who must walk on the shadowy side of life hang on to the beauty of life more than those who possess it." War affirmed life, as life, to Siegfried Roemer, seemed to affirm war: "But to us the war has now become a life-form, to be sure full of danger and filth and blood, but we stand in the middle of it and affirm it to a certain degree." To Heinz Küchler, it seemed "really curious to go marching into war with the attitude that we must have: without hate, without passion. . . . And in spite of it we 'fight.'" Küchler later noted that "the war here [in Russia] is being carried on in a 'pure cultural' sense, every evidence of humanity appears to have disappeared in deed and in heart and conscience."¹⁹

At first glance, then, the Jüngerian worker-soldier, the so-called new man glorified in the years following the Great War, seemed to be personified in the anonymous *Landser*, who endured the grim everyday life of war and persisted in his job in spite of objective considerations of victory or defeat. "To have created the new warrior," boasted *Signal* magazine, a slick wartime product of Joseph Goebbels's propaganda apparatus, in 1942, "who dared to advance against the products of war techniques, was the proud achievement of the German Infantry [of 1918]," a feat which touched the *Landser* even now, for those front fighters had "passed on to the coming generation a legacy of the spiritual kind, the science and teaching of the new man."²⁰ Still, this image of the dispassionate, functional warrior obscures the complex interplay of forces that was the reality of the *Landser's* motivation. It is not so much that this image is incorrect, as that it is incomplete.

18. Letter of Hans-Heinrich Ludwig, 18–21 October 1941, *ibid.*, 67; letters of Harry Mielert, 7 February 1943 and 19 September 1943, in *Russische Erde*, 52, 98; letters of Harald Henry, 10 September 1941; and Hans-Friedrich Stäcker, 21 July 1940, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 76, 32.

19. Letters of Wolfgang Kluge, 3 October 1943 and 5 October 1943; Siegfried Roemer, 9 December 1943; and Heinz Küchler, 3 June 1940 and 11 July 1941, *ibid.*, 288, 333, 157, 159–60.

20. *Signal* magazine quoted in John Laffin, *Jackboot: The Story of the German Soldier* (Newton Abbot, UK: David and Charles Publishers, 1989), 142. For a further explication of the Nazi fascination with the new man as a product of World War I, the myth of sacrifice, and the redemptive power of youth, see Baird, *To Die For Germany*.



Although some *Landsers* seemed to validate Jünger's contention that modern war produced an emotionless soldier acting in harmony with the machine but lacking any ideological motivation, such a reading for the average German soldier would be misleading. The typical *Landser* functioned not as a robot devoid of a sense of purpose, but was in fact sustained by a broad spectrum of values. Anti-Semitism, anti-communism, and *Lebensraum* were all inextricably linked with the *Landser's* conception of duty. The notion that Germany was under assault from an alleged "Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy" served for many as the prop which sustained them under the burden of war. "Now Jewry has declared war on us along the whole line," wrote Corporal A. N. not atypically the day after the German attack on the Soviet Union. "All that are in bondage to the Jews stand in a front against us. . . . We ourselves know exactly what is at stake in this game." This sense of combating a heinous conspiracy was seconded by Private H. K., who asserted, "We are . . . fighting against . . . the Bolshevik world enemy."²¹

This racist, ideological hostility, when combined with the belief in a preventive war, produced a strange sense of relief mingled with the notion of performing an indispensable task. "The German people have a great obligation to our Führer," claimed a corporal in mid-July 1941, "for if these beasts who are our enemies here had come to Germany, murders would have occurred like the world has never seen before. . . . No newspaper can describe what we have seen . . . and what crimes the Jews have committed." To Private M. M. the purpose of the war seemed self-evident, as "just now one really realizes how it would have been with our women and children if these . . . Russian hordes had invaded our Fatherland. I have had here the opportunity to see and observe these uncultivated, mongrel people." Indeed, "a complete destruction [of Bolshevism] is . . . required," asserted Corporal W. F. in November 1941, "[for] if these bestial hordes of soldiers were to fall upon Germany all would be gone that is German." Karl Fuchs alleged that "the battle against these subhumans, who've been whipped into a frenzy by the Jews, was not only necessary but came in the nick of time. Our Führer has saved Europe from certain chaos." "Every *Landser* has seen the strange character of Bolshevism," claimed a soldier in a letter to his mother, "[and] knows what will happen if it comes to Germany." "For what the Asiatic hordes would not have wrecked," wrote Captain E. P. "would have been annihilated by Jewish hatred and revenge."²²

21. Letters of Corporal A. N., 23 June 1941; and Private H. K., n.d. (probably September 1941), in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 71–72, letter 98; 81, letter 127.

22. Letters of Corporal (without identification), 10 July 1941; Private M. M., 20 August 1941; and Corporal W. F., 17 November 1941, *ibid.*, 74, letter 104; 78, letter

Not surprisingly, since both Nazi propaganda and ideology hammered at the notion of an identity of interests between Bolsheviks and Jews, some *Landser* displayed a murderous anti-Jewish attitude. "The political doctrine of Bolshevism . . . is but a purely political act of world Jewry," claimed Wilhelm Prüller. "And just as the Talmud teaches nothing except murder and destruction, so Bolshevism knows but one science: murder and destruction, cruel and barbaric murder." To Hans Kondruss, Russia furnished ample evidence that "a whole people has systematically been reared into subhumanity. This is clearly the most Satanic educational plan of all times, which only Jewish sadism could have constructed and carried through. . . . It will be necessary to scorch out this boil of plague radically, . . . [since their goal] was the brutalization of a whole people, in order to make use of it as an instrument in the war for Judas's world domination."²³

Others, too, denounced the Jews. "Overall this country makes a ghastly impression on me," wrote a soldier from Poland in September 1939. "Beginning with the roads, which are indescribably bad and dusty, then this dump with its many pests and finally the endless great number of Jews, these disgusting *Stürmer*-types." To Lieutenant H. C., the "mass [of Jews] are filthy swine," a sentiment readily accepted by others. "I long ago recognized the Jewish poison in our people," claimed Corporal F. K. in mid-August 1942. "We see every day what the Jewish regime has done in Russia, and in view of that even the last doubters are likely cured. We must and will be successful in liberating the world from this plague . . . and we will not return before . . . the center of the Jewish-Bolshevik 'world benefactors' is destroyed." Russia thus served as a great ideological proving ground, as many *Landser*s previously skeptical of Nazi propaganda confronted the apparent reality of the Jewish-Bolshevik destruction of a whole nation. Some gleefully noted that the Jews were, in a favorite phrase of Hitler's, being "eradicated root and branch." In Russia "the Eastern Jew now reveals himself in all his brutality," observed Corporal H. K., himself an avid *Stürmer* reader, then referred approvingly to Hitler's famous prophecy concerning the fate of the Jews: "that should the Jews once again bring it about that the nations are again plunged into a world war, it would be the destruction of their race and not ours."²⁴

116; 86–87, letter 143; letter of Karl Fuchs, 4 August 1941, in Richardson, *Sieg Heil*, 124; letter of anonymous soldier, quoted in Dollwet, "Menschen im Krieg," 286; letter of Captain E. P., 15 February 1943, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 113–114, letter 203.

23. Diary entry of Wilhelm Prüller, September 1943, in Prüller, *Diary*, 166; Hans Kondruss, quoted in Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, 160–61.

24. Letter of anonymous soldier, 24 September 1939, in Dollwet, "Menschen im Krieg," 309; letters of Lieutenant H. C., 7 July 1944; Corporal F. K., 14 August 1942;

The Wehrmacht high command made determined efforts to encourage racist hatred in the *Landser* through general orders (such as the infamous decrees of Generals Reichenau and Manstein in late 1941 urging German soldiers to wreak destruction on the “Jewish Bolshevik” system), written propaganda (especially front newspapers), and by means of spoken propaganda, initially by “education officers” and later in the war through the use of the NSFO, whose task, as Wilhelm Prüller indicated in a letter to his wife, was “to support the battle from the philosophical standpoint and to educate the troops along these lines.” Front newspapers typically sought to reinforce racial and ideological conceptions, referring to the war as an unavoidable struggle “for liberation of the Aryan people from the spiritual and material bondage” of the Jews. Accompanying the message that the Jews were “a plague,” was also an attempt in these newspapers to stiffen morale and urge the soldiers on to new exertions by emphasizing the “inner strength” to be derived from National Socialism, “the greatest power of our times.” These efforts evidently met with some success according to a monthly Wehrmacht report from August 1944 on the mood of the *Landser*. The authors pointed to the good comradeship between officers and men and the general acceptance in the ranks of Nazi ideas as evidence of the rootedness of the National Socialist body of thought.²⁵

“In our ranks there are certainly those who fight for the sake of the idea of National Socialism,” Egon Freytag acknowledged in a letter from Russia in August 1941. As if to substantiate Freytag’s observation, Wilhelm Prüller enthused in his diary in October 1941: “No one knows what [the Führer’s] beloved voice means to us. . . . What a lift his words give us. . . . Is there a finer reward after a day of battle than to hear the Führer?” Nor did the bitter fighting of 1941 and 1942 necessarily shake

and Corporal H. K. 22 July 1942, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 173, letter 355; 172, letter 353; 172, letter 352.

25. Letter of Wilhelm Prüller, 16 January 1945, in Prüller, *Diary*, 177; Leon Poliakov and Josef Wolf, eds., *Das Dritte Reich und Seine Diener: Dokumente* (Berlin: Verlags, 1956), 398–416; Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 68–105; idem, *Hitler’s Army*, 132–37; Manfred Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat: Zeit der Indoktrination* (Hamburg: Decker’s Verlag, 1969), 441–80; monthly report of Feldpostprüfstelle, Pz.AOK.3, 2 September 1944, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 22.

On Wehrmacht ideological indoctrination, see Bartov, *Hitler’s Army*, 106–78; Poliakov and Wolf, *Das Dritte Reich*, 398–416; Bartov, *Eastern Front*, 68–105. On the NSFO, see Messerschmidt, *Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 441–80; Gerhard L. Weinberg, “Dokumentation: Adolf Hitler und der NS-Führungsoffizier (NSFO),” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 12 (1964): 443–56; Volker R. Berghahn, “NSDAP und ‘Geistige Führung’ der Wehrmacht 1939–1943,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 17 (1969): 17–71; idem, “Meinungsforschung im ‘Dritten Reich’: Die Mundpropaganda-Aktion der Wehrmacht im letzten Kriegshalbjahr,” *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 1 (1967): 83–119.

the ideological faith of many *Landser*. Trapped in the Stalingrad pocket, Lieutenant P. G. wrote on the first day of February 1943, and the last day of German resistance: "National Socialist Germany has never been taken so seriously as now. . . . We live in a time whose value will be recognized only many years later." "The Führer made a firm promise to bail us out of here," moaned another Stalingrad soldier in a perverse litany of faith, "they read it to us and we believed in it firmly. Even now I still believe in it." Indeed, claimed Prüller of a Hitler speech in December 1942, "We sat there on the clay floor and listened to this voice that we love so dearly. . . . With what enthusiasm we shall carry the attack forward to the enemy tomorrow! . . . Even the last man . . . has shown his colors for Germany, for his people, and thus for the Movement too."²⁶

By August of 1944, with hope of victory fading rapidly, the *Landser* often looked to the ideological instruction of the NFSO as a welcome prop in sustaining morale and motivation. One officer reported that average soldiers express greater interest than one usually expects "in instruction in political and other current issues." Another claimed that "the [ideological] initiative was viewed quite positively" by the soldiers who "listened to the lectures attentively." Obviously impressed by a lecture sponsored by the NSFO, Corporal W. P. C. related how "The meaning came out in the speeches that our situation is serious, to be sure, but not hopeless . . . We must and will not be crushed by this almost overwhelming uncertainty." Reflecting a union of Jünger's impassive warrior and the true Nazi believer, Lieutenant K. N. contended, "War must always remain a calculation of understanding and burning will. . . so that it gives material strength a heroic flight." Friedrich Grupe, who trained as one of those front fighters who were to serve as "political shock troops" in the German army, noted that "everything should correspond to the social community of deeds." In other words, spirit, idealism, and action were to mesh, as German troops were to be inspired not by lectures, but by "speaking as one soldier to another."²⁷

This notion that ideology should be communicated from one comrade to another was important, for trusted officers and fellow *Landser* exerted great influence on the beliefs of others. As the Nazis surely real-

26. Letter of Egon Freytag, 28 August 1941, in Bähr, *Kriegsbrieft*, 150; diary entry of Wilhelm Prüller, 3 October 1941, in Prüller, *Diary*, 110; letter of Lieutenant P. G., 1 February 1943, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 105, letter 181; Franz Schneider and Charles Gullans, eds. and trans., *Last Letters From Stalingrad* (1962; reprint ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974), 50–51; entry of Wilhelm Prüller, December 1942, in Prüller, *Diary*, 160–62.

27. Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, 133; letters of Corporal W. P. C., 4 August 1944, and Lieutenant K. N., 31 August 1944, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 154–55, letter 314; 157–58, letter 322; Friedrich Grupe, *Jahrgang 1916. Die Fahne war mehr als der Tod* (Munich: Universitas Verlag, 1989), 280, 281, 284.

ized, it was not necessary for all, or even a majority of troops, to be ideologically motivated; a hard core of believers, especially men respected by the others, served to motivate and bind the remainder together. Guy Sajer provided a glimpse of this dynamic at work in his description of a popular Captain brimming with ideological faith:

Captain Wesreidau often helped us to endure the worst. He was always on good terms with his men . . . He stood beside us during countless gray watches, and came into our bunkers to talk with us, and make us forget the howling storm outside . . . “We are advancing an idea of unity which is neither rich nor easily digestible, but the vast majority of the German people accept it and adhere to it, forging and forming it in an admirable collective effort. . . . We are trying . . . to change the face of the world.” . . . We all loved him, and felt we had a true leader, as well as a friend on whom we could count.

Concern, friendship, sincerity, idealism: clearly this was a complex and dynamic relationship, something that could not easily be created through the establishment of an NSFO. Yet once developed, it could result in a formidable bond. “I couldn’t find the words,” Sajer later maintained, “to express the intensity of emotion which German idealism created in me.”²⁸

Many *Landser*, undoubtedly influenced by Nazi propaganda, thus depicted themselves as conducting an ideological crusade in defense of European civilization and the German community. But there was more to their ideological motivation than just preconditioned racist hatred. Indeed, the profound disbelief and disgust felt by the *Landser* at the primitive conditions in the communist heartland, the very brutality of everyday life, produced a sense of waging an apocalyptic struggle against a cruel and backward power. The hard fact of the matter was that the reality of the Soviet Union stunned the average *Landser*. “This primitiveness surpasses every conception,” wrote Lieutenant J. H. in October 1941. “There is no yardstick for comparison [with Germany]. For us it is a totally odd feeling . . . merely filth and decay—that is the Soviet paradise.” “Peasant houses with straw roofs which look more like dog huts,” Wilhelm Prüller observed of Russia in his diary, “a ragged, dirty, animal-like people. . . . The paradise of the workers was nothing but a conglomeration of hunger and misery, murder and mass imprisonments, slavery and torture.” “No matter where you look . . .,” Karl Fuchs concluded in a letter to his wife, “you can’t find a trace of culture anywhere. We now

28. Guy Sajer, *The Forgotten Soldier* (1967; reprint ed. Washington: Brassey’s, 1990), 216–18, 291.

realize what our great German Fatherland has given its children. There exists only one Germany in the entire world.”²⁹

Nor were these merely the sentiments of middle-class soldiers. *Landser* from a working-class background reared in the belief that Soviet Russia was the workers’ paradise often seemed especially shocked and revolted. Direct experience thus reinforced Nazi propaganda, as the men saw for themselves what they regarded as the cruelty and barbarity of Russia. “We are deep in Russia, in the so-called paradise . . .,” Private H. wrote disdainfully in July 1941. “Here great misery rules. . . . We all would rather die than live through such misery and agony.” Raged Corporal W. F., “I am fed up with the much-praised Soviet Union. The conditions here are antediluvian. Our propaganda has certainly not exaggerated, rather understated.” This opinion was seconded by Sergeant H. S., who noted ruefully that “again and again one can almost not imagine how poor and primitive the red paradise is.” A working-class soldier commented in disgust:

Our dwelling for the night was a wooden house already occupied by a Russian family. . . . We were bitten all night by vermin. . . . The inside walls of this hovel were wall-papered with pages from newspapers. . . . The children all had the protruding bellies of long-term malnutrition and this was the Ukraine, the great wheat-growing region of the Soviet Union. . . . The satirical joke which I had heard in a Berlin night club years ago but had never really believed had become true. “The first communists were Adam and Eve. They had no clothes to wear, had to steal apples for food, could not escape the place in which they lived, and still thought that they were in paradise.”

“Why the men can bear to hold out,” echoed another soldier in September 1943, “one can learn here in the east.”³⁰

Even the legendary ability of the average Russian to bear hardships seemed to the *Landser* to have something sinister about it. “The Russians are poor souls . . . who live a rather wretched existence in their fox-holes,” Harry Mielert reflected, then noted: “But the Russian is also more primitive, animalistic, and lives more eagerly and routinely in the

29. Letter of Lieutenant J. H., 25 October 1941, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 85, letter 138; diary entry of Wilhelm Prüller, 21 July 1941, in Prüller, *Diary*, 84–85; letter of Karl Fuchs, 15 August 1941, in Richardson, *Sieg Heil*, 125–26.

30. Letters of Private H., 9 July 1941; Corporal W. F., 22 August 1941; and Sergeant H. S., 21 September 1941, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 73, letter 103; 79, letter 118; 80–81, letter 125; anonymous soldier quoted in James Lucas, *War on the Eastern Front, 1941–1945: The German Soldier in Russia* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1982), 34–35; letter of anonymous soldier, 29 September 1943, in Dollwet, “Menschen im Krieg,” 303.

ground” than we. Erich Dwinger noted in awe the stern, stubborn silence of wounded Russians:

Several of them burnt by flame throwers had no longer the semblance of a human face. They were blistered shapeless bundles of flesh. A bullet had taken away the lower jaw of one man . . . Five machine-gun bullets had thrashed into pulp the shoulder and arm of another man, who was without any dressings. His blood seemed to be running out through several pipes . . . I have five campaigns to my credit, but I have never seen anything to equal this. Not a cry, not a moan escaped the lips of the wounded.

The combustible mixture of astonishment, disgust, and fear with which many *Landser*s viewed Russians caused them to see their enemy as something unreal, the product of a brutish and menacing system which had to be eliminated. “It’s not people we’re fighting against here,” concluded Wilhelm Prüller, “but simply animals.”³¹ This potent combination of ideology, idealism, and first-hand experience contributed to the extraordinary endurance of the *Landser*, as many, confronted by a culture which seemed both alien and barbaric, brutal and threatening, believed that they were fighting for their very existence.



If the resilient and resolute *Landser* thus went beyond Jüngerian functionalism and embodied to a great extent the Nazi notion of the hard, dynamic soldier in the service of an ideal, what was it for which they fought? Certainly the incessant stream of propaganda served to produce in the minds of many soldiers a legitimacy for the Nazi regime which encouraged willing obedience. And the flow of racist and anti-Semitic ideological indoctrination undeniably reinforced a general sense of racial superiority on the part of many *Landser*. But this negative integration, so thoroughly documented by Bartov, by itself could not induce the amazing resilience under conditions of extreme disintegration demonstrated by the average German soldier, a point even Bartov seems recently to have conceded. “When the fighting in the East physically destroyed such socially cohesive groups [primary groups], the sense of responsibility for one’s comrades, even if one no longer knew them, remained extremely strong,” he admitted in a significant change from his earlier position that the savage fighting destroyed all such connections. “At the core of this loyalty to other members of the unit was a

31. Letter of Harry Mielert, 30 November 1942, in *Russische Erde*, 40; Erich Dwinger, quoted in Alan Clark, *Barbarossa: The Russian-German Conflict, 1941–1945* (1965; reprint, New York: Quill, 1985), 146; diary entry of Wilhelm Prüller, 4 July 1941, in Prüller, *Diary*, 75.

sentiment of moral obligation.” And what did this sense of obligation encompass? “The new sense of existential comradeship extended also far beyond the purely military circle to encompass first the soldier’s family and friends in the rear, and ultimately the Reich as a whole, if not, indeed, what the propagandists of the period referred to as ‘German culture’ and ‘European civilization,’” Bartov asserted. “Both the worsening situation at the front and the growing impact of the war on the rear convinced increasing numbers of soldiers that they were in fact fighting for the bare existence of everything they knew and cherished.”³²

The extraordinary resilience of the German soldier thus also demanded the celebration of a positive ideal. But where Bartov referred to home, family, and country as the rather generic ideals for which they fought, many *Landser*, in fact, demonstrated a very acute sense of defending another ideal, that new society, under construction in the 1930s, for which so many had yearned after World War I, a society that would redeem Germany socially, economically, and nationally. The notion of *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community), that seductive idea of a harmonious society which would eliminate class conflict and integrate the individual into the life of the community, holds the key to unlocking the attraction National Socialism asserted for many *Landser*. Although the importance of the ideal of *Volksgemeinschaft* as an agent of social integration within the Third Reich has long been overlooked, denied, or downplayed, it contributed greatly to Nazi success in creating a sense that a new society was in the offing. Among the young, especially, the belief in this national community represented the vital principle around which a new German society was to be organized.

In order to understand the motivational power of *Volksgemeinschaft* for the German soldier in World War II, one must again go back to World War I, at least in its mythical dimension. The outbreak of the Great War illustrated the intoxicating power of the idea of *Volksgemeinschaft*. With the so-called *Burgfrieden* of 1914, Germany seemed to have overcome class division and internal disunity, as people from every segment of society came together in a profound wave of national enthusiasm. This promise of unity dazzled many Germans, for whom the war seemed the

32. In his earlier works, Bartov downplayed the whole notion of primary group loyalty and comradeship as an explanation for the resilience of the German soldier, asserting instead that the enormous losses suffered on the eastern front must have destroyed any such cohesive groups. Instead, Bartov emphasized the role of Nazi propaganda, indoctrination, and ideology in creating a formidable fighting force. For citations, see note 4.

Without disputing the role of ideology (indeed, I agree with its importance), Bartov overlooked the impact of more positive ideals such as that of *Volksgemeinschaft* in motivating German troops, an oversight perhaps partially addressed in his article, “The Conduct of War: Soldiers and the Barbarization of Warfare,” *Journal of Modern History* 64 (Suppl., December 1992): S32–S45, especially S36–S37.

birth pangs of, as Thomas Mann put it, a “spiritual revolution.” Writing to the *Svenska Dagbladet* in May 1915, Mann neatly encapsulated this notion: “Why did Germany recognize and welcome [the war] when it broke upon us?—because she recognized in it the herald of her Third Reich.—What is her Third Reich then?—It is the synthesis of *might* and *mind*, of might and spirit—it is her dream and her demand, her highest war aim.”³³

In August 1914, many Germans believed they had achieved just such a synthesis, as a wave of national unity gripped Germany in a euphoric millenarian outpouring of emotion. “A god at last,” wrote Rainer Maria Rilke in the heady first week of war, later referring to the magical feeling of unity and idealism as “a new creature invigorated by death.” Similarly, Stefan Zweig noted that “thousands and thousands felt what they should have felt in peacetime—that they belonged together.” The war, for many Germans, merged personal duty with communal demands to create a powerful sense of shared destiny. This mood deeply affected Adolf Hitler, the ultimate outsider to this point in his life, for he claimed later that World War I made “the greatest of all impressions,” as he discovered that “individual interest . . . could be subordinated to the common interest.” The trenches of the Great War thus proved a breeding ground for a new idea, the notion that the front experience had forged a community of men in which all social and material distinctions disappeared.³⁴ The memory of this unity, especially in its mythical dimensions, ensured that the spirit of 1914, when a new society beckoned, would remain a potent political force in Germany.

How disillusioning the postwar period must have been for those Germans imbued with the spirit of 1914, with its political fragmentation, economic conflict, interest group squabbling, and national humiliation. What once had been tangible, the great accomplishment of the war, now appeared lost. A mood of crisis was palpable. The postwar years kindled in Germans a restlessness, a desire for a restored sense of community to replace the lost unity of 1914. “It is not freedom [Germans] are out to find,” Hugo von Hofmannstahl claimed in 1927, “but communal bonds.” The secret of Nazi popularity lay in understanding this, of reviving the passions of 1914. National Socialism, as an organizing idea, owed its very existence to the war, to the model of “trench socialism” held so dear by

33. Martin Broszat, “National Socialism, Its Social Basis and Psychological Impact,” in E. J. Feuchtwanger, ed., *Upheaval and Continuity: A Century of German History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974), 136–40; Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 90, 93–94, 118; Peter Vansittart, *Voices From the Great War* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1984), 21, 67. See also: George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), *passim*.

34. Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 193, 195–96, 354 n. 13; Vansittart, *Voices*, 25, 27, 261; Bartov, “Missing Years,” 51.

Hitler. As Walter von Brauchitsch, the commander in chief of the army, noted in 1938, Hitler simply “recast the great lessons of the front-line soldier in the form of National Socialist philosophy. . . . Above and beyond all classes, a new unique fellowship of the nation has been created.” The Nazis promised a new beginning, a national community that would restore the lost feeling of camaraderie. In this respect, Nazism was idealistic, a call to the national spirit, a promise of salvation and national renewal on many levels. Purpose, belonging, and meaning would thus be restored to a life based on values. Hitler proposed to transform the German *Volk* into a group of comrades, equal in status if not in function, under the strong leadership of the new man just back from the front. It marked a plunge into the future, but the promise of deliverance was beguiling. As Gottfried Benn confessed, “We were not all opportunists.” Just as importantly, this national socialist idea resonated all the more powerfully in that it appealed to many who believed it had already been realized in the trenches of World War I. “The German revolution began in the August days of 1914,” exulted Robert Ley, the head of the German Labor Front in the Third Reich: “The people were reunited in the trenches . . . The grenades and mines did not ask whether one was high- or low-born, if one was rich or poor, or what religion or social group one belonged to. Rather this was a great, powerful example of the meaning and spirit of community.”³⁵

Nor did Hitler hesitate, once in power, to promote both the symbol and, to a lesser extent, the substance of *Volksgemeinschaft*. Even before 1933 the Wehrmacht was intrigued by the notion of *Volksgemeinschaft*, seeing in it a way to promote a more cohesive and effective military force. Any future war was bound to be a total war that required the complete mobilization of German society, so Wehrmacht leaders pursued the *Volksgemeinschaft* idea as a means to create an effective national unity. Nor was this mere rhetoric. According to David Schoenbaum, even in the army the Nazis promoted “a quiet social revolution . . . [with the] premise of careers open to talent. . . . The Wehrmacht officer corps was en route to becoming the least snobbish in German history . . . [with a] general sympathy for the idea of *Volksgemeinschaft*.” Hitler himself welcomed and championed this process. “When you look at the promotion

35. Hofmannstahl quoted in Fritz Stern, “Germany 1933: Fifty Years Later,” in idem, *Dreams and Delusions: National Socialism in the Drama of the German Past* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 154; Brauchitsch, quoted in Robert J. O’Neill, *The German Army and the Nazi Party, 1933–1939* (New York: James H. Heineman, 1966), 67–68; Benn, quoted in Stern, “Germany 1933,” 151; Robert Ley, quoted in Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 38 n. 57. See also Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 297–324; Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 64–65, 78–80, 166–169, 182–185, 208–211; Hüppauf, “Lange-marck,” 78; Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 37–38; Barbara Miller Lane, “Nazi Ideology: Some Unfinished Business,” *Central European History* 7 (1974): 23.

of our younger officers,” he said in a speech in September 1942:

the penetration of our National Socialist *Volksgemeinschaft* has already begun here in its full extent. There is no privilege given to a birth certificate, to a previous position in life, there is no conception of wealth, no so-called origins . . . , there is only a sole evaluation: That is the assessment of the brave, courageous, loyal man who is suited to be the leader of our people. An old world is truly being brought to a collapse. Out of this war will emerge a *Volksgemeinschaft* established through blood, much stronger even than we National Socialists through our faith could convey to the nation after the World War.³⁶

The twin pillars of this new *Volksgemeinschaft* would be the army and the party. “We must educate a new type of man,” Hitler proclaimed at the Nuremberg Party Rally in September 1935, and he left no doubt upon whom this task fell, proclaiming at Reichenberg in December 1938:

These young people learn nothing else but to think as Germans and to act as Germans; these young boys . . . move from the *Jungvolk* to the Hitler Youth and there we keep them for another four years. And then we are even less prepared to give them back into the hands of those who create our class and status barriers. . . . And if they . . . have still not become real National Socialists, then they go into the Labor Service and are polished there for six or seven months. . . . And if . . . there are still remnants of class consciousness or pride in status, then the Wehrmacht will take over for a further treatment.³⁷

The Nazi stress on comradeship, achievement, and action produced a restless dynamic which drew many fervent followers into the circle of belief. “What I liked about the HJ [Hitler Youth] was the comradeship,” remembered one Hitler Youth leader after the war. “Here sat apprentices

36. David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany, 1933–1939* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 247–49; Hitler speech of 30 September 1942, in Max Domarus, *Hitler. Reden und Proklamationen 1932–1945* (Wiesbaden: 1973), 1922; Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler: Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), 141–42 (for a fuller discussion, see 122–45).

On the modernizing aspects of the National Socialist revolution on the army, see also Klaus Jürgen Müller, “The Army and the Third Reich. An Essay in Historical Interpretation,” in idem, *The Army, Politics, and Society in Germany, 1933–1945: Studies in the Army's Relation to Nazism* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1987), 16–53; O’Neil, *German Army*, especially Chapter 5: “The Army and Party Ideology,” 62–83; Bernhard Kroener, “Auf dem Weg zu einer ‘nationalsozialistischen Volksarmee.’ Die soziale Öffnung des Heeresoffizierkorps im Zweiten Weltkrieg,” in Martin Broszat et al., eds., *Vom Stalingrad zur Währungsreform: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland* (Munich: 1988), 651–82.

37. Manfred Messerschmidt, “The Wehrmacht and the *Volksgemeinschaft*,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 18 (1983): 719–23; Domarus, *Reden und Proklamationen*, 534; Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, *Nazism, 1919–1945: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts* (New York: Schocken Books, 1983), 1: 416–17.

and school boys, the sons of workers and civil servants side by side and got to know and appreciate one another.” Indeed, remembered Gustav Köppke, a worker from a communist family in the Ruhr and himself a communist after the war, “Our worker’s suburb and the HJ were absolutely not contradictory. . . . The HJ uniform was something positive in our childhood.”³⁸

This attempt to bring together Germans from differing backgrounds made a deep impression. “The creation of that *Volksgemeinschaft* in which the workers would be fully integrated,” appeared to Friedrich Grupe, himself a *Landser*, “as the embodiment, the realization of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.” “This community of working men,” he continued, “is something unique. From all sections of society we come here together . . . no one is asked his origins or class, whether he is rich or poor. . . . Snobbery, class consciousness, envy, and idleness are left out on the street.”³⁹ The Labor Service, along with the Hitler Youth, thus reinforced specific values important to the Nazis, notions such as camaraderie, sacrifice, loyalty, duty, endurance, courage, obedience; and perhaps as well a certain contempt for those outside the bonds of community. The “socialist” aspect of National Socialism could and did have a significant impact on Germans of Grupe’s generation. The allure of Nazism, then, lay in creating the belief that one was in service to an ideal community that promoted both social commitment and integration.

Despite the coercive nature of this *Volksgemeinschaft*, to many *Landser* the Nazis accomplished enough in the 1930s, in terms of restoration of employment, the extension of social benefits, and the promotion of equality of opportunity and social mobility, to sustain their belief that Hitler was sincere about establishing a classless, integrative society. In a study of German prisoners of war, H. L. Ansbacher discovered that large numbers of average soldiers voiced positive opinions regarding Nazi accomplishments, highlighting such things as the provision of economic security and social welfare, the elimination of class distinctions and the creation of communal feelings, concern for every *Volksgenosse* (national comrade), and expanded educational opportunity for poor children. Especially prevalent was the belief that the com-

38. Hitler Youth leader, quoted in Noakes and Pridham, *Nazism*, 427–28; interview with Gustav Köppke in Lutz Niethammer, “Heimat und Front: Versuch, zehn Kriegserinnerungen aus der Arbeiterklasse des Ruhrgebietes zu verstehen,” in idem, *Die Jahre weiß man nicht, wo man die heute hinsetzen soll. Faschismuserfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet. Lebensgeschichte und Sozialkultur im Ruhrgebiet 1930–1960*, 2d ed. (Berlin: J. H. W. Dietz Nachf., 1986), 1: 210. On worker support for Hitler and National Socialism within the Wehrmacht, see Bartov, “The Missing Years,” 46–65; Marlis Steinert, *Hitler’s War and the Germans*, trans. Thomas E.J. DeWitt (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1977), 196–302.

39. Grupe, *Jahrgang 1916*, 40, 62, 67–69.

nity for poor children. Especially prevalent was the belief that the common man and workers had benefitted most from Nazi measures, so that Hitler appeared to be “a man of the people.” Indeed, a great many POWs from working-class backgrounds claimed that the Nazi regime had achieved a number of key socialist goals. So pervasive was this sentiment that all Germans had benefitted from the Nazi revolution that half of Ansbacher’s sample of prisoners could find nothing at all wrong with National Socialism. “Hitler’s only mistake,” concluded Hermann Pfister, a miner, in a postwar interview, “was that we lost the war.” Nor was Pfister’s an isolated opinion. Hitler’s popularity among German POWs consistently remained above the 60 percent mark, signs of disaffection appearing only in March 1945. Hitler, of course, was not unaware of this appeal. He, in fact, ended one of his last messages to the German people, on 24 February 1945, by asserting, “It is our firm will never to cease working for the true people’s community, far from any ideology of classes, firmly believing that the eternal values of a nation are its best sons and daughters, who, regardless of birth and rank, just as God gave them to us, must be educated and employed.” “It was exactly the striving for these goals,” Ansbacher concluded, which appealed to National Socialism’s followers.⁴⁰

Indeed, the idea of *Volksgemeinschaft* became a kind of leitmotif for many soldiers. “We stand before the burning door of Europe,” exclaimed one in early September 1939, “and only a shower of faith illuminates our path.” This sense of living in intoxicating times impressed Wolfgang Döring as well, as he held “our era for revolutionary.” Reinhard Becker-Glauch agreed, sensing that “this epoch appears to be very similar to a threshold.” And what would this revolutionary threshold portend? “This [battle] is for a new ideology, a new belief, a new life!” exclaimed a private in a not atypical burst of enthusiasm for “our National Socialist idea.” “We know for what ideals we fight,” boasted Private K. B. in April 1940, and as if finishing the thought, Hans August Vowinkel insisted in December of the same year, “Our people stands in a great struggle for its existence and for its mission. We must fight for the meaning, for the giving of meaning to this struggle . . . Where our people fights for its existence, that is for us destiny, simple destiny.”⁴¹

40. H. L. Ansbacher, “Attitudes of German Prisoners of War: A Study of the Dynamics of National-Socialistic Followership,” *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied* 62 (1948): 15, 21–38; Hermann Pfister, quoted in Niethammer, “Heimat und Front,” 175; Steinert, *Hitler’s War*, 196–302; Ansbacher, “Attitudes,” 33. See also Berghahn, “Meinungsforschung im ‘Dritten Reich,’” 3–119; Ian Kershaw, *The ‘Hitler Myth’* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 200–225; Bartov, “Missing Years,” 52–65.

41. Letters of Oskar Prinz von Preussen, September 1939; Wolfgang Döring, 16 June 1941; and Reinhard Becker-Glauch, 23 June 1942, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 13, 19,

An anonymous *Landser* insisted in late summer 1944 that he welcomed the war which had “ripped us out of our childhood and placed us in a struggle for life,” since the “battle was for our future” which “will end in a victory of our . . . beliefs.” Following the German conquest of Poland, Wilhelm Prüller enthused, “It is a victory of sacred belief . . . , a victory of National Socialism.” To Prüller, Hitler had saved Germany because he had provided a unifying ideology “which may be described as ideal: and really one which grew out of the people themselves.” “When this war ends,” Prüller concluded, “I shall return from it a much more fanatical National Socialist than I was before.”⁴²

For other *Landser*, too, the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* remained the ideal. “Everything small and base must be remote from us as just now it is in battle and in the face of death,” Eberhard Wendebourg exclaimed, “then the *Volksgemeinschaft*, a true goodness and love among all Germans, will be secured new and better even than in the years before the war.” Friedrich Grupe recorded a speech given by Hitler to officer candidates in May 1940, in which the Führer “emphasized that the German soldier should be . . . ready for any sacrifice for the German people. To always see in our soldiers national comrades, that is our task, always we should trust the worth and the strength of the German workers. With them he would give our world new meaning, new powers.”⁴³ A world of new content, made of new substances, better even than before the war, this notion of *Volksgemeinschaft* contributed both to the resiliency of the German soldier and to the harshness of the struggle for survival which many *Landser* felt themselves waging.

“I am giving here much of my best strength, both physical and emotional,” Günter von Scheven remarked of the first summer in Russia, noting later, “The war is becoming a decisive fate for me, the deepest incision . . . What strengthens me is the insight that each individual sacrifice is necessary, because it is connected with the necessity of the whole.” And Scheven left no doubt that the necessity of the whole was linked to the *Volksgemeinschaft*. “One doesn’t need to stand in a hail of grenades to experience the change in our era,” he claimed: “Your attitude at home has the same consequences as ours at the front. . . . I see the whole nation in a recasting process, in a stream of suffering and blood, that will enable it to win new heights.” In his last letter, written

399; letter of Private von Kaull in Bartov, *Hitler’s Army*, 166; letter of Private K. B., 15 April 1940, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 48, letter 42; letter of Hans August Vowinkel, 18 December 1940, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 41.

42. Letter of anonymous soldier, quoted in Dollwet, “Menschen im Krieg,” 294; diary entries of Wilhelm Prüller, 8 October 1939, November 1939, September 1943, and December 1942, in Prüller, *Diary*, 46, 49, 164, 161.

43. Letter of Eberhard Wendebourg, 5 October 1941, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 107; Grupe, *Jahrgang 1916*, 113–14.

on the day he died, Scheven reflected, "All of our hopes are concentrated on the homeland, the only soil with the authentic people for our creation. It is important that . . . the holy fire is not extinguished. We are internally armed."⁴⁴

Other *Landser*s, too, had a clear view of the new creation centered on the homeland. "Can a vision, strong in faith, be born into a new world?" mused an anonymous soldier in a letter to his wife in August 1944. "The social order rooted in National Socialism cannot be delayed forever." "The primary thing," claimed Sebastian Mendelssohn-Bartholdy in October 1944, "is the necessity of a new social order in the world to overcome the present contrast between acquired and inherited property, between manual and intellectual labor, between followers and leaders." The "greatness" of the German soldier, claimed Heinz Küchler, lay precisely in going "unbowed [as] a sacrifice to a [new] world order." This was, he argued, "a new struggle for the better future."⁴⁵

The average *Landser* often embraced this notion of community with a startling passion, seeing in it the justification for his own sacrifices. Trapped in Stalingrad, Sonderführer H. greeted the new year of 1943 by asserting, "I do not begrudge the fate that has placed me here. The harsh difficulty . . . is to us merely a requirement of a higher fulfillment of duty, a lofty service to the community." "I suddenly feel a great strength," declared Lieutenant H. H., also ensnared in the Stalingrad cauldron. "In times of distress there is only one commandment. What is the individual, when the life of the nation is at stake?"⁴⁶

Others found meaning in this notion of community as well. The cause, the devotion to *Volksgemeinschaft*, led Karl Fuchs to exclaim to his wife:

With loyalty and a sense of duty we must fight for our principles and endure to the end. Our Führer represents our united German Fatherland . . . What we do for him, we do for all of you; what we sacrifice in foreign lands, we sacrifice for all of you . . . We believe . . . in the future of our people and our Fatherland . . . It is our most holy duty and our most beautiful assignment to fight and struggle for this future. It is worthy of every sacrifice we can make.

For many, this faith seemed a daily reality. Retreating in the winter of

44. Letters of Günter von Scheven, 18 August 1941, 2. Advent 1941, 9 March 1942, and 21 March 1942, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 110–11, 113, 116.

45. Anonymous soldier quoted in Max Hastings, *Overlord: D-Day and the Battle for Normandy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 219; letters of Sebastian Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, October 1944 and 27 November 1944; and Heinz Küchler, 3 September 1939, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 391, 394, 157.

46. Letters of Sonderführer H., 1 January 1943; Lieutenant H. H., 28 January 1943; and Lieutenant P. G., 1 February 1943, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 100, letter 171; 104–5, letter 179; 105, letter 181.

1943, bereft of supplies and hungry, Guy Sajer nonetheless marveled at “the unity of the Wehrmacht. . . . The sense of order which was part of National Socialism was still very much alive among the troops who were fighting for it.” In late 1944 Sajer still wondered that he and his comrades “could live only for the cause . . . and despite all the difficulties and disappointments I had endured, I still felt closely linked to it.”⁴⁷

Many *Landsers* saw their mission as one of creating a new world. Harry Mielert, in November 1941, spoke of a “fervent seeking after new forms,” while a month later Friedebald Kruse emphasized the fierce “desires and requirements being placed on the new.” “We held to this one final idea (a new society) which would justify our sufferings,” Sajer claimed, while recalling an officer saying, “Think of yourselves as the trailblazers of the European revolution.” In June 1942 Friedrich Grupe praised one of his fellow soldiers as being “the best comrade.” And why? Because he was “open, without arrogance, and very brave . . . full of sympathy and understanding for his men. . . . He was . . . a faithful harbinger of a new Germany.”⁴⁸

A harbinger of a new Germany; an anonymous *Landser* rejoiced in like fashion in August 1941 that “never has a vision, the soul, an idea . . . , the superiority of a thought . . . so triumphed as today.” Indeed, confirmed another *Landser*, “We know for what the Führer is fighting and we don’t want to stand in the rear, but rather . . . to be faithful followers! And should fate also demand sacrifice of blood and property from us, then we will grit our teeth and with determined brow, defiance on our tongue, say: I’ll do it. Long live the Führer and his great work!” Harry Mielert noted in July 1943, “We live in high morale. Many comrades have fallen. But they live immortally in that spirit which shapes a common spirit of the nation.” Other *Landsers* as well betrayed this sense of fighting for a new Germany. Writing in April 1940, Corporal E. N. claimed that “as long as we front soldiers have Adolf Hitler, there will be loyalty, bravery, and justice for his people. I believe that the best days . . . are just coming.” And why was this? Because, he concluded, “There will be a day on which the people will have their freedom, peace, and equality returned to them.” For many, faith like this meant that no conditions were placed on their loyalty to Hitler. “Now, where the Fatherland has called us,” Wilhelm Rubino exclaimed in a letter to his mother, “I belong life and death to the Führer, and you should not despair if the worst should happen to me.” “As with me,” Friedrich Grupe later confessed, “all *Landser* were deeply bound by oath, orders, obedience, and—this

47. Letter of Karl Fuchs, 9 November 1940, in Richardson, *Sieg Heil*, 80; Sajer, *Forgotten Soldier*, 342, 399.

48. Letter of Harry Mielert, 27 November 1941, in *Russische Erde*, 34; letter of Friedebald Kruse, 31 December 1941, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 316; Sajer, *Forgotten Soldier*, 388, 400; Grupe, *Jahrgang 1916*, 252.

still counted for many—in the unshakable belief in Hitler’s final victory.”⁴⁹

Indeed, the July 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler seemed actually to bind more *Landser* to him. Wrote Private B. P. indignantly, “Thank God that Providence allowed our Führer to continue his task of the salvation of Europe, and our holiest duty is now to cling to him even more strongly, in order to make good what the few criminals . . . did without regard for the [welfare of] the entire nation.” Lieutenant K. N. thought it “unspeakably tragic that the enemy nations will see symptoms of disunity, where before they perhaps supposed only a unanimous solidity.” To Corporal A. K., Adolf Hitler represented “the man who will bring a New Order to Europe.” “These bandits tried to destroy that for which millions are ready to risk their lives,” exclaimed Lieutenant H. W. M. “It is a good feeling to know that a November 1918 cannot be repeated.”⁵⁰

November 1918, the penultimate example to many Germans of a nation defeated because of internal disunity, a happenstance not likely to reoccur. Powerful, profound, almost mystical, to the end this sense of defending, not just Germany, but a valuable idea as well remained strong in many soldiers. Reflecting on the world situation in September 1944, Lieutenant K. asserted:

History is today showing a picture that one could term the bankruptcy of the West. What Nietzsche proclaimed a dead world is today hard reality. . . . What the English and Americans win with their blood passes over days later to Bolshevism. . . . In this chaos . . . stands Germany. . . . It is not at all allowed to us to be weak. . . . We are the last bastion, with us stands and falls all that German blood has created over the centuries.⁵¹

Even after the war, unrepentant soldiers such as Hans Werner Woltersdorf clung to the “tried and tested nationalism of the community,” taking pride in the “National Socialist idealism [which] redeemed ourselves” after the humiliation of World War I. “We believed in a new community—free from class conflict, united in brotherhood under the self-chosen Führer . . . , national and socialist,” Friedrich Grupe claimed, and many people of his generation thought that Hitler, too, aimed at the

49. Letters of anonymous soldiers, 19 August 1941, and 26 September 1942, in Dollwet, “Menschen im Krieg,” 317, 319; letter of Harry Mielert, 7 July 1943, in *Russische Erde*, 85; letter of Corporal E. N., 15 April 1940, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 51, letter 48; letter of Wilhelm Rubino, 12 July 1941, in Bähr, *Kriegsbriefe*, 60; Grupe, *Jahrgang 1916*, 230.

50. Letters of Private B. P., 8 August 1944; Lieutenant K. N., late July 1944; Corporal A. K., late July 1944; and Lieutenant H. W. M., 28 July 1944, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 147, letter 294; 142, letter 280; 143, letter 281; 146, letter 289.

51. Letters of Lieutenant K., 3 September 1944; and Lieutenant H. H., 17 September 1944, in Buchbender and Sterz, *andere Gesicht*, 158–59, letter 323; 139, letter 273.

realization of this ideal. As the historian Detlev Peukert has noted, the Nazis intended to impose a new order on the unsettling complexities and social turbulence that had accompanied the upheavals of World War I and the modernization of the twenties. At bottom, their promise was to bring modernization without conflict within the context of community. As their letters illustrate, many *Landser* indeed wanted a life different from that they had lived before, a life based on something similar to the sense of community they felt in the army, but without the killing and fear, a life of men bound together who frankly embraced each other as equals in a common endeavor. With modern models and mythic images borrowed from the trenches of the Great War, the Nazis set out to substitute harmony and a feeling of community for the intense upheavals produced by war and economic modernization. As Modris Eksteins has noted, their intention was to create a new man, a new social system, and a new order; in short, to change the face of the world. Hitler aimed at nothing less than a reorganization of society and the creation of a *Volks-gemeinschaft* of social integration where class conflict had vanished. Nor was the Nazi vision of modernization without internal conflict and a political community that provided both security and opportunity unattractive, for as Peukert observed, after the war, at least in West Germany, this promise of opportunity and social integration, stripped of the ideological overtones of the Nazi era, was now realized.⁵² To many Germans it was, and remained, a highly potent vision of the future, to the extent that they willingly overlooked its racist ideological essence. Nazi efforts to create a new order and new man were real, and as the example of many *Landser* showed, could inspire a fierce loyalty and devotion. In the quest for the utopian, however, both the ideal and those average soldiers who fought to realize it were perverted by Hitler's racism and sucked into a whirlpool of evil.

52. Hans Werner Woltersdorf, *Gods of War: Memoir of a German Soldier*, trans. Nancy Benvenga (Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1990), 141, 170; Grupe, *Jahrgang 1916*, 60–61; Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany*, 241–42; Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 303.