INTRODUCTION

THE INVERTED NATIONALISM
OF HUGO BALL’S CRITIQUE
OF THE GERMAN INTELLIGENTSIA

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I

Hugo Ball’s Critique of the German Intelligentsia is simultaneously a historical document and a provocation. A passionate indictment of the German intelligentsia for its chauvinism in the First World War, the Critique is also an extraordinary instance of the messianic politics that inaugurated our epoch. Above all, it is the consummate performance of an extraordinary career that, in only a few years, took Ball from Munich’s expressionist avant-garde to the founding of Dada in Zurich, to theological anarchism and antiwar politics in Bern, and, only a year and a half later, to the spiritual refuge of the Catholic faith.

First published in January 1919, the Critique is on one level a historical account of how German religion and philosophy conspired with dynastic absolutism and militarism to produce the disastrous betrayal of August 1914. But in esoteric counterpoint to this prosaic and critical dimension is Ball’s theological politics. On this level the book culminates in an apocalyptic vision in which Bakuninist anarchism, French romantic poetry, and chiliastic revolt all combine to restore the originary ideal of Christian justice sacrificed to throne and altar. Catastrophe and anticipation thus fuel the Critique’s mood of rhetorical urgency and its ultimate desire for a final conflagration of the German “spirit” that would usher in a new order of things.

Reading it from the perspective of German unification and the

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The influence of music on society and politics is a topic that has captured the attention of historians, sociologists, and political scientists for centuries. Music has played a significant role in shaping the course of history, influencing the behavior of individuals and groups, and affecting the decisions made by leaders and policymakers. In this chapter, we will explore the ways in which music has been used to express political ideas, influence public opinion, and shape the cultural landscape of societies around the world.

Music and Politics

Music has long been used as a tool for political propaganda. During times of conflict, leaders have employed music to rally support for their cause, while during times of peace, it has been used to promote unity and harmony among citizens. The power of music to reach people on an emotional level is one of its most compelling features, making it an effective means for传达 political messages.

Music and Culture

Music is not only a tool for political communication, but it is also an integral part of cultural expression. Each culture has its own unique musical traditions, which reflect the values, beliefs, and experiences of its people. By studying the music of different cultures, we can gain valuable insights into their history, society, and way of life.

Music and Society

Music has the ability to unite people from diverse backgrounds and bring them together in shared experiences. It is a powerful force for social cohesion, fostering a sense of belonging and identity. Through music, individuals can connect with others who share similar interests and passions, creating a sense of community and belonging.

Music and Education

Music education is an important part of modern education systems worldwide. It is recognized for its ability to develop a wide range of skills, including creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Moreover, music education has been shown to have positive effects on academic performance and overall well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, music is a multifaceted art form that has played a significant role in shaping human societies throughout history. From its use in political propaganda to its role in cultural expression, music has been a powerful force for communication and unity. As we continue to study the influence of music on society and politics, we will gain a deeper appreciation for its enduring impact on our world.

Further Reading


Appendix

Additional resources and references for further study are provided in the appendix at the end of this chapter.
sudden leaps, and steep emotional ascents and descents. Of Ball’s intellectual biography, it might be said that the only thing that is predictable is its disjointedness. By 1919 Ball had distinguished himself as a leading Expressionist poet and playwright, as a theoretician of the Munich avant-garde, as the founder of Zurich Dada, and as an indefatigable antiwar publicist. The Critique was his first venture into sustained intellectual activity, an attempt to harmonize his political opposition to the war with his odd philosophical blend of radical anarchism and Catholic gnosticism. The Critique can thus be viewed as a point on the strange artistic and political itinerary that finally ended in August 1920 in the village chapel of Aghuzzo, where Ball found what he called the “solution to the question of guilt,” returning thereafter to the religious orthodoxy that he sustained until his premature death in 1927.2

Born in the town of Pirmasens in the Rhineland Palatinate in 1886, Ball grew up in a large and devoutly religious Catholic family. His lifelong companion Emmy Hennings, whom he met in 1913, recalled that Ball’s mother taught him only “to stand, to walk, and to pray.”3 As a student in Heidelberg and later in Munich, Ball was scornful of the strictures and dogmas of his childhood, as is evident in his enthusiastic embrace of Nietzsche, the subject of his never completed dissertation written at the University of Munich in 1910.4 Somewhat misstated “Nietzsche in Basel: A Polemic,” it presents the view of the philosopher then prevalent among the Munich avant-garde. Nietzsche stood for the “emancipation of the passions, of the drives, of nature, including a correspondingly magnificent subjugation through art.”5 However much Ball sought to subordinate conventional morality to what he called Nietzsche’s aesthetic “cosmody,” he nonetheless remained, psychologically speaking, a moralist, not least in his assertion that a new type of “philosopher-artist” was to be the harbinger of the regeneration of German culture.6

The work on Nietzsche was casually abandoned in Ball’s abrupt departure from Munich in the summer of 1910, a move apparently occasioned by the seductions of the theater and Berlin society. Such abrupt exits would become a distinctive character trait from that point on: bolting the scene, for whatever reason, was Ball’s trademark. During the fall of 1910 he studied briefly in Berlin with Max Reinhardt who noted his gifts as a director and dramaute. In 1912, after a short stint as director of the State Theater in Plauen, Ball returned to Munich, where he frequented Expressionist circles and wrote poems and prose for Franz Pfemfert’s Die Aktion, Der Sturm, and other radical journals. In October 1913, together with the playwright and poet Hans Leybold, Ball founded Die Revolution, which carried on its masthead Erich Mühsam’s slogan “Lasst uns chaotisch sein” [Let us be chaotic]. Die Revolution proclaimed its opposition to everything in the German cultural scene, and, predictably, its first number was confiscated by the authorities because of Ball’s irreverent poem, “The Hangman.” Not unusually, the short-lived journal extolled Dionysian destructiveness and the negation of all values, but in contrast to the other journals of the expressionist avant-garde, Ball’s writings also emphasized spiritual regeneration through the “inner necessity” of the works of the ascetic artist. Of his discovery of Kandinsky in 1912 he wrote enthusiastically: “If we speak of Kandinsky and Picasso, we don’t refer to painters but to priests, not craftsmen but to the creators of new worlds, new paradises.”7

Ball’s 1910 characterization of Nietzsche could also serve as an accurate self-description: art was Ball’s “undertaking, his calling, his muse, and the determining factor in his life.”8 He was a ferocious autodidact, a compulsive talker, and a chain-smoker who frequently eschewed food and abjured alcohol. This combination of hedonism and asceticism is not insignificant. Ball’s attraction to asceticism and spiritual quietude was a constant accompaniment to the exhaustions of Dionysian revolt. In 1915, during his first year of exile in Zurich, he wrote of his fascination with yogis and Jesuits: “I have seen enough. To sit in a cell and say, here is closure, no one may enter.”9 Certainly before 1914 Ball showed little interest in the supremacy of the deed or in any sort of political action, unless one counts his rather frivolous proposal to boycott bookstores carrying works that diluted Nietzsche’s radicalism. After 1914 his somewhat contradictory embrace of both revolt and spiritual quietude allowed him to equate the libertarian anarchism of Bakunin with Kandinsky’s “purity of color and grandeur of intuition” and to see both as the “Last Ramparts” of Russian romanticism. For all his gesture and Nietzschean hyperbole, Ball consistently maintained that asceticism was the true sign of creative genius: Kandinsky was the modern monk who gave the age “its strongest artistic expression.”10

In August 1914, not unlike many other young artists and intellectuals caught up in the electric atmosphere of Berlin in the avant guerre, Ball enthusiastically volunteered for military service. Art
as the extension but never as the adoption of the legacy of the

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purpose. In 1916 he wrote that those who had permitted words to sink to the level of propaganda could only be opposed by recalling the earliest “naming” of things, in which language evincèd its original messianic intensity. Benjamin, it might be mentioned, became Ball’s next-door neighbor in Bern several years later. It is not too far-fetched to see in Ball’s sound poems and in Benjamin’s reflections on language and catastrophe the same impulse to retrieve the primal mimetic purpose of all language in the face of the political debacle.

During the Dada period Ball refined his philosophical reflections on anarchism and intensified his search for certain “secret” strands in the history of Catholic theology, even if the atheist Bakunin remained for him something of an exception in this regard. What attracted Ball to the Russian thinkers, however, was not merely that some anarchists considered the New Testament a “revolutionary book,” or even their exemplary spirit of sacrifice and the “imitatio Christi” of their poverty. Rather, the chaotic and childlike naïveté of the Russian writers evoked a sense of freedom and “right of negation” that seemed to affirm Ball’s definition of the Dadaist as a “childlike, Don-Quixote-like person.”22 Ball once compared Dada’s infantilism to the practices of certain medieval gnostic sectarians, who as adults placed themselves in the cradle and, trembling, allowed themselves to be suckled and swaddled like the Christ-child: “Dadaists,” he concluded, “are similar infants of the new epoch.”23

To this admittedly overintellectualized image of Dada as a pre- oedipal theology, we should add the caveat that the Cabaret Voltaire was first and foremost a performance troupe. Ball played piano, Hennings sang ditties, and Richard Huelsenbeck bellowed poems to an often unappreciative and sometimes barely conscious clientele. This world of Dada is described in Ball’s 1916 Flanetti, an autobiographical novella that depicts the frustrations of the Cabaret, but also its “true circus nature.”24 Ball’s disappointment with Dada, which he characteristically punctuated with a flight from Zurich, was registered shortly after the first Dada Soiree of July 14, 1916, and had many motives: personal quarrels, political ineffectiveness, and, lastly, celebrity. Dada failed because it had become yet another art movement.

Returning to Zurich in November 1916, Ball rejoined the Dadaists—Huelsenbeck, Marcel Janco, Hans Arp, Tristan Tzara—and on March 17, 1917, the new Galerie Dada opened. In this second phase of Zurich Dada, Ball began to exhibit a more reverent attitude toward “the Russian Ramparts,” an attitude that would become even more pronounced in the months leading up to the writing of the Critique. Once again, radical nihilism is set off against deeply Catholic asceticism. In a lecture on Kandinsky [whose art he then called “liberation, solace, redemption and becalming”] Ball asked rhetorically if “Russian Christianity is not the strongest and final bulwark of Romanticism in Europe today?”25 In his novel Tenderenda der Phantast, it might also be noted, Ball depicted Dada as “Satanopolis,” a demonic and nihilistic mirror of the war’s own chaotic destruction, while the author seems to identify most with what he calls “peace, stillness, and Latin absence.”

Perhaps Ball’s most astonishing aperçu in the Zurich phase concerns the well-known coincidence that in the same street, directly opposite the Cabaret Voltaire, a certain Russian exile called Mr. Ulyanov-Lenin had taken up residence. “He must have heard our music and tirades every evening; I am not sure with what pleasure and profit. And, as we opened the Galerie in the Bahnofstrasse, the Russians traveled to Petersburg to set the revolution on its feet. As both sign and gesture is Dada the counterpart to Bolshevism? Does it oppose the completely quixotic, pointless, and incomprehensible side of the world to destruction and consummate calculation? It will be interesting to observe what happens here and there.”26 Did Ball, we might also ask, whose own aesthetic and political avant-gardism were constantly at odds with each other, recognize in Lenin and Dada two sides of his own avant-gardism: its political destructiveness and its quixotic purposelessness? Nonetheless, less than a year later Ball’s antipathy to Bolshevism had solidified while Dada was cast off to the reliquaries of the bohème. Skepticism once again took the form of a flight to the Tessin, culminating in his final break with Dada in May 1917 and in his move to Bern, the center of political antiraw activity.

In stark contrast to the carnivalesque cosmopolitanism of Zurich, Bern was the headquarters of espionage, Entente propaganda, and organized resistance to the German war effort. A remarkable group of émigré intellectuals had gathered around the central organ of the “anti-Kaiser Germans,” Die Freie Zeitung, founded in April 1917. Its prestigious list of contributors included Annette Kolb, Alfred Fried, Karl von Ossietsky, René Schickele, and Hermann Hesse. Ernst Bloch, who would become one of Ball’s closest friends and admirers, wrote more than one hundred articles for the paper
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A book that would synthesize his religious and political philosophy and address the issues of the time, was written by the young Alexander Herder, who had just completed his studies at the University of Jena.

In 1792, Herder began to publish his ideas in the German journal "Gesellschaftsblatt", where he argued for a new type of education that emphasized moral and intellectual development over the traditional emphasis on rote learning and religious orthodoxy.

Herder's ideas were influential in the development of the enlightenment and the romantic movement, and his works continue to be studied and discussed by scholars today.

The following pages will explore the life and work of Alexander Herder, focusing on his contributions to the fields of education and philosophy.
with his antiwar politics. According to Ball, the inspiration for the *Critique* came from René Schickele, editor of the exile literary journal, *Die Weißen Blätter*, who proposed that Ball write a book on “German intellectuals” for Schickele’s press. When he finished the expose on November 14, 1917, Ball registered his enthusiasm for the new project: “The ideas were whirling around in my pen. It was supposed to be a book about the modern intellectuals, especially about the authors of *Die Weißen Blätter*, and it has become a sketch of German development and more like a draft against the ‘Manifesto of the 93 Intellectuals.’” But Ball also saw the *Critique* in more personal terms as “a hygiene for myself. A certain lightness and enthusiasm give me a wholly peculiar intense and energetic style.”

The basic themes the *Critique* were already outlined in many of Ball’s articles for *Die Freie Zeitung* and Ball needed only this “encouragement” for his “entire inner self to draw itself together.” The *Critique*, he said, had to be written in simple and clear prose, and be “productively effective.” Above all, it was directed at a German audience, with Ball refusing to even permit a French translation. The *Critique* would explain why Germany had become insular, unreachable, and above all, universally despised. His comment on the day of the German revolution, November 9, 1918, makes this point:

> When I consider that Germany has been cut off from the great currents of life, that we here in Switzerland register new convulsions daily, while over there every free gasp of breath is suppressed, then I ask myself how a reconciliation can still be possible when the borders suddenly come down. The West communicates its experiences, plans and arrangements, the world association [League of Nations, A. R.] has actually come into being, but Germany plays the role of the despised, with all the terrible consequences.

Only after the *Critique* was finished, he promised, would he then compose a very different kind of “manifesto for freedom,” one without any knowledge or science, “entirely subjective and personal.”

III

Ball’s *Critique* documents the momentary confluence of two extraordinary political and intellectual currents among German-speaking exiles in Switzerland at the end of the First World War. First, it repudiates the German autocratic and nationalist tradition while proclaiming an unequivocal support for the political ideals of the “Western” powers: republicanism, democracy, and liberalism. Its implicit polemic against the intellectual legacy of writers like Heinrich von Treitschke, Houston St. Chamberlain, Max Scheler, Werner Sombart and, even more importantly, Thomas Mann, is carried out by historically situating them at the end of a long line of German philosophers and writers who slavishly fitted their ideas to the dictates of the Prussian monarchy and its politics.

The other key idea of the *Critique* stems from Bakunin’s remark, “the source of all evil lies in the Reformation.” This emphasis on the missing dimension of “Godly” as well as of “human rights” in Germany links the theocratic politics of the *Critique* to the broad current of theological anarchism that flourished in the Swiss emigration during World War I. The central texts of this tradition are Ernst Bloch’s *Spirit of Utopia* (1918), Walter Benjamin’s anarcho-theological writings of 1918/19, and Gershom Scholem’s early efforts at reconstructing an authentic Jewish esoteric tradition from the Kabbalah. The *Critique* promotes a chiliastic and messianic politics of spiritual regeneration and divine justice by invoking such figures as Thomas Münzer, who represents the antipode to Luther and Protestantism, or Wilhelm Weitling, who is contrasted to Marx and Lassalle.

However, the elective affinity of these soon to diverge currents in German intellectual history can be explained by the encounter of these intellectuals with the catastrophic experience of the war, which was, not surprisingly, interpreted in theologically inspired apocalyptic terms. The bitter and ironic tone of the first pages of the *Critique* reminds us that the intellectual “betrayal” that provoked Ball was not merely the chauvinism of the nationalist ideologues, but the prowess stance of some of the most respected thinkers in Wilhelmine Germany. It is not surprising, therefore, that among those young German intellectuals who fled to Switzerland many were shocked to discover that some of the figures they most idealized had signed on to the war: Bloch, for example, saw Max Weber and Georg Simmel in this light, Walter Benjamin broke decisively with his formerly revered teacher Gustav Wyneken, for Gershom Scholem the negative exemplars were Martin Buber and Hermann Cohen; and for Ball the philosopher Max Scheler and his former teacher Max Reinhardt certainly played this role.
war as the direct result of the complex aspects of a German policy.

The current situation in the Western domain, while beneficial for many countries, has also created tensions and conflicts. The West's decision to support Western countries and its opposition to Westernization has led to conflicts. The current situation can be seen as an example of how Western policies can lead to conflicts and tensions. Although the West has promoted Christian democracy and human rights, this has led to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and political leadership that could pose a challenge to the West's policies. For instance, the influence of the West on the Islamic world has led to political and religious tensions that could escalate into conflict.

Moreover, the West's policies have been met with resistance from countries in the Middle East and North Africa. This has led to political and social unrest, which could further escalate into conflict. The West's policies have also been criticized for promoting Western interests and values, which could lead to political and social tension.

The current situation in the Western domain is complex and multifaceted. It requires a nuanced understanding of the different factors that have led to the current situation. To address these challenges, it is necessary to develop policies that are sensitive to the different interests and values of the countries involved. This requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the political, social, and economic factors that have led to the current situation.
For Ball the estrangement of Germany from the West was an estrangement from liberalism as well as from the church—French and Russian. The much acclaimed antithesis of culture and civilization, he claimed, was only possible in Germany because its overtheologized concept of culture completely rejected the “godless, mechanistic industrial world.” In the Critique Ball excoriates Mann’s prowar essays, and in April 1918 he ironically commented that the “smartest people today are plagued with decorously separating these two words,” that is, culture and civilization, adding that the German cultivation of the concept of culture “crassly contradicts the facts as they now stand.”

Ball seemed to refer to his own Dada phase when he said that the style of the Critique had to be sober and rigorous: “In Germany,” he wrote, “there is no use gesticulating. The Germans require arguments.” Before turning to politics in 1917, Ball could still be moved by Nietzsche’s image of the artist as an “ascetic priest” who stood in opposition to society like the heretics of the middle ages. But the prophet of a cultural religiousness praised in the dissertation gives way in the Critique to the “Pastor-Son” who sows moral confusion by conflating goodness with its misuse by the omnipotent state. In the Critique, Nietzsche appears as a late-blooming idealist and as the court philosopher of the post-Napoleonic glorification of violence and force. Already in October 1917 Ball accused Nietzsche of trying by means of his doctrine of genius to destroy the cult of reason, the state cult of the Reformation. “But,” he added, “genius itself is a classical concept” that ultimately leads to paganism, to “antique nature-mysteries, to the unleashing of drives.” In a Catholicizing gesture, Ball inverts Nietzsche’s contempt for ascetic priests, praising the ascetic will to sacrifice in Münzer, in Mazzini’s campaign against the papacy, and in the authentic mystics from Jakob Böhme to Tolstoy.

Despite Ball’s emphasis on the “invisible” as opposed to the “visible church,” it seems misplaced to assert, as does Philip Mann in his critical study, that the Critique “can be seen as relinquishing both the radical modernist critique of culture and the revolutionary remedies and espousing a conservative ideology which, rejecting the present age as fallen and decadent, looks backwards to an idealized Golden Age and forwards to a future Utopia when the Golden Age will be reestablished.” Certainly Ball’s Catholic mysticism and his apocalyptic radicalism appear to clash with his political support for the Entente. Yet, there is little evidence of antidemo-

docratic conservatism in the Critique, which is the work of a republican radical for whom “Rights of Man” and democracy are not incompatible with Christian anarchism and revolutionary gnosticism. As late as July 1920 Ball delivered a speech where he clearly rejected all rightist “stab-in-the-back legends” and laid blame for the German defeat squarely on the “moral superiority of the opponents.” Ball’s vision is that of a holy Christian revolution and the unio mystica of a democratically liberated world: “The new democracy that we believe in and whose principles are being fought for by the world today has not drawn the conclusion that ‘freedom in God’ can coexist with an absence of freedom in the law, with the use of force in the state . . . nor has it concluded that a German parliamentary system modeled after Western democracies will resolve all conflicts currently separating Germany from the rest of the world” (Critique, p. 111).

In a note on Rousseau, Ball once called Switzerland a land “where aesthetic and political enthusiasm meet.” The Critique is no exception, and it is as misplaced to regard it as the encasement of Ball’s expressionist and Dadaist avantgardism in political form as it is to see it as a work of conservative Catholicism. Reading Ball either forward from the standpoint of the wartime anarchist, Dadaist, revolutionist or backward from the endpoint of his Catholic quietude is to miss precisely the extraordinary artistic, philosophi-
cal, and political synthesis that the Critique represents. The event—the end of the dynasty, the German Republic, the revolution, and its [for Ball] betrayal—can be read in the text itself. Nor is it incidental that the publication of the Critique coincided with the breakup of the exile community around Die Freie Zeitung. From that world, Ball once said, “my Critique is a break, a flight toward the imprecise designation of the causes of this flight.” Writing the Critique seemed to have exhausted him completely, “as if he had used up and expended all his force” on it.

Ball’s sudden reconversion to Catholicism in the church of Agnuzzo was not, at least not primarily, motivated by political disappointment though it bears comparison to the equally precipitous embrace of communism by any number of radical avantgardists at the same time. This time the decision proved not to be another impetuous flight. The Church, he noted in 1917, was the only place where romantic individuals could still “find the inner space that they miss in modern life.” His conversion was once explained by Emmy Hennings as a turn from “critique of conscience to the
and as a bizarre diary entry makes clear, that the Jewish belief that race and religion are identical "should serve as an undying example for the racial theorists."70 Ultimately, the Critique places the blame for "the most horrible of all wars," the deaths of twenty million people, and "Germany's ruin" on the "advances gained by Judaism" [Critique, p. 144].

Despite his disclaimers, Ball's anti-Semitism was already apparent before the Critique appeared and was in fact the cause of strains in his relationship with Bloch, who, not surprisingly, reacted strongly to Ball's editorial in Die Freie Zeitung on November 16, 1918. The offending passage contains the following statement about the dissolution of the monarchy and the role of social democracy in the founding of the German Republic:

They send anational Israelites forward, in order to achieve the most advantageous liquidation. This too is wrong. The soil of the Israelite Republic is the promised land, not Germany. We gladly work alongside these people as long as they unambiguously dedicate themselves to the moral deed. The legend of the chosen people is triumphant.

Berlin is not Sinai. We want a German nation, a German Republic, we want a German National Assembly, which disavows the business makers and the opportunist, and declares itself for the resurrection of a great, truly purified nation. Only thus can we win back the trust of the world.71

Bloch's shocked reaction to Ball's assertion that, once again, alien Jews are holding Germany hostage is evident from a letter written to his patron, the businessman Wilhelm Muehlon, only eight days later: "I have something else to say that is important for me. It concerns the astonishing concluding sentence of Ball's editorial. I wrote Ball immediately that this sort of anti-Semitism is scandalous, no matter how he means it."72 If Bloch and Ball were "completely at one in the explicit denunciation of the Ludendorff war," by November 1918, their friendship was shaken, though not entirely ruptured.73 Bloch added that he planned to write the editor of Die Freie Zeitung, Hans Schlieben, about the affair so that he would not appear as a buffoon when his own article appeared in the next issue: "Ball knows full well, and Schlieben has never been in doubt, that I am a completely racially conscious Jew, and that I am proud of my old, secretive people, and that I am, in my best aspects, at home in Jewish blood and the great religious tradition of my people."74 Bloch also planned to write Ball and Schlieben that he would not write another single line for the Freie Zeitung if "such a simple-mindedness" is repeated. It should be added that Bloch did not consider Ball to be an anti-Semite, at least not before the incident ("otherwise he could not be my friend"), but he now saw that the complexities and inconsistencies of Ball's attitude toward the Jews could hardly be seen in the "short telegram sentences" of the editorial.75 No doubt Ball's editorial was the "not very pretty reason" for Bloch's decision to part from the Freie Zeitung in December of that year.

Certainly it is possible to attribute the anti-Semitism of the Critique to Ball's anti-Protestantism and lingering anti-Catholic resentments. It is more plausible, however, that by the end of 1918 Ball's anti-Protestantism was fuelled by his belief that statism, amorality, and authoritarianism were essentially Jewish theological inventions, and that a "Jewish-Junker conspiracy" linked the German revolution to the Bolshevik revolution. The November 1918 reference to "Israelites" whose interests are with the universalism of a "stateless people" and who are thus dedicated to obstructing a Catholic community of Christian renewal—as are the Protestant militarists and national chauvinists—takes the theme of a Prussian and Social Democratic conspiracy to an absurd conclusion. Ball's desire to "mobilize the secret powers of the nation" against this conspiracy turns him into yet another protagonist of the German "special path" between East and West. Against his best intentions, Ball ultimately shares with his opponents—for example, Treitschke and Thomas Mann—the conviction that neither Western liberalism nor Russian Bolshevism could end the spiritual malaise of Germany. By this route, Ball's anti-Semitic and radical vision of the apocalypse and his monochromatically theological standpoint make him the best example of the system he set out to expose.

Ball's strange odyssey through gnostic revolt and anti-Semitism raises yet another question. Did Ball's remark about his "patriotism" in his comment after Bahr's review or his 1914 avowal of a "patriotism" that did not extend to sanctioning an unjust war remain an unacknowledged motif in the Critique? Did not Ball see himself as the spokesman for that very same "secret Germany" that had been suppressed and hounded by the conspiracy of crown and altar, Junker and Jew? Was Die Freie Zeitung the equivalent of Weitling's League of the Just? And is the Critique not, as one critic recognized, a book that remains after all "stuck in nationalism, even if in a negative one"?76 How else can we interpret the remarks
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CHAPTER 1

The Czars and the Covenants of Póns

In the summer of 1792, the French Revolution swept across Europe, sweeping away monarchical order and replacing it with the egalitarian ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The French Revolution had profound implications for the Czars of Russia, who found themselves caught in the crossfire of these revolutionary winds. The Czars, traditionally seen as autocratic rulers, had to navigate the treacherous waters of this new political landscape. The Covenants of Póns, on the other hand, were a collection of agreements and treaties that played a crucial role in shaping the political landscape of the region. These covenants were签订于 the early 18th century and were intended to stabilize the region by establishing clear lines of authority and governance. However, they were not without their flaws, and their implementation was often marred by conflict and discord. The Czars and the Covenants of Póns were two sides of the same coin, each representing different aspects of the political order of the time. The former represented the autocratic rule of the Czars, while the latter represented the attempt to establish a more stable and democratic order through the Covenants. In the face of the French Revolution, both the Czars and the Covenants of Póns were forced to adapt and evolve in order to survive. This chapter will explore the complex relationship between the Czars and the Covenants of Póns, and how they both contributed to the political landscape of the region.
ently suppressed in coordination with Weimar. This good Germany, the good spirit, [Ball] views as opposed to the triumphant Potsdam. [.] Now, this is highly exaggerated, Potsdam and Weimar were not to that extent apologetically linked. The paradoxes, contradictions, and deep inner conflicts in the German idealist tradition are entirely invisible in Ball's optic.

Nowhere is the Critique more infuriatingly inconsistent than in its political loyalties. Ball's commitment to the Entente and to republicanism coexists uneasily with his emotional and critical allegiance to French romanticism and Russian mysticism. If he praises the Rights of Man and Wilson's "Four Points," he simultaneously insists that the French revolution was an essentially Catholic event. Moreover, his assertion that German romanticism was divided between "pagans" like Goethe, Kleist, Wagner, and Nietzsche and anti-autocratic authentic Catholics like Baader, Novalis, and Beethoven is at best confused, especially in light of Baader's support for the post-Napoleonic German restoration and in light of Novalis's poetic exaltation of the mystical essence of death and warfare. Finally, Ball's defense of the democratic and republican ideals of the West carries far less weight than his defense of Russian and French mysticism. Ball's intemperate fusion of Potsdam and Weimar is only the reverse side of the well-known argument of prowar German liberals like Friedrich Meinecke, Max Weber, and Ernst Troeltsch that the unity of Potsdam and Weimar (e.g., of sword and spirit) would protect Germany from becoming a ruthlessly imperialist power.

These observations reveal some of the limits of the Critique, but they also enable us to appreciate Ball's unacknowledged affinity with the very traditions he disparages. His antipathy to classical German philosophy and to the Enlightenment as systems of values is not fundamentally different from the arguments made by many of the conservative nationalists and liberals who supported the war. As the historian Fritz Stern pointed out several decades ago, it is not the myopic racists and hard-core reactionaries who explain the allure of Germany's cultural remove from the traditions of the West. Rather, this stance was the achievement of an elite and educated mandarinate, which considered itself unpolitical and was dogmatically opposed to utilitarianism, liberalism, and materialism. Finally, Ball's own theologico-criticism continues the very link between religion and politics that he ostensibly rejects, vitiating his own argument that theology, not politics nor culture per se, lies behind German rationalism's nihilistic and Machiavellian impulses. The Critique recapitulates the theologization of politics that, according to Ball, is Luther's first sin. Ball's attempt to offer an account of Germany's solipsism and isolation from the West does not—especially in its own inverted nationalism and anti-Semitism—escape from that very solipsism and intellectual isolation.

VI

After World War II, German intellectuals like Karl Jaspers, Theodor Adorno, and Günter Grass reframed and restated many of the arguments of the Critique in their own rejection of Germany's militarist and nationalist past (without, of course, Ball's eccentricities and excesses). For this later generation the critique of the German intelligentsia is motivated far less by an apocalyptic vision of political redemption than by a deeply ethical sense of trauma and by what Primo Levi once called "remembrances of emergencies, of suffered or inflicted offenses." Above all, for the postwar intellectuals there was an unequivocal recognition that the fact that democracy came to Germany late, that it was not the product of a strong tradition of bourgeois liberalism, and finally, that it was introduced by the allied victors deprived it of strong emotional connections.

To be sure, the broad thesis of German exceptionalism, to which Ball subscribes, has frequently been challenged by comparative analysis of other European societies (above all Britain and France) that remained strongly conservative in outlook and stratified in social structure until well into the twentieth century. If the simplistic view that National Socialism was "preprogrammed" by social, economic, or intellectual preconditions has been largely corrected, the fact remains, however, that the repudiation of modernity and the liberal political culture of the West were considered respectable hallmarks of the educated Bildungsbürger in Germany until (and to a large extent even after) 1933. Nor, as the Critique itself demonstrates, was this kind of criticism limited to conservatives and the antidemocratic thinkers of the political right. Rather, the inverted nationalism of the Critique leaves little doubt that there were currents of political irrationalism and anti-Semitism on the left of the political spectrum as well. Thus, it may not be far-fetched to conclude that the most disturbing element of the Critique may be its most instructive lesson. At least among intellectuals, the conservative ideologies of German nationalism and militarism have
The question of Germany's role in Europe continues to be a central issue. The recent developments in the European Union and the challenges posed by the EU's eastern neighbors have brought this question to the forefront. The question of Germany's influence in the EU and its role in shaping European policy is increasingly important. The recent shift in German foreign policy has raised questions about the country's commitment to the European project. The German government's stance on issues such as migration, the eurozone crisis, and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict have all been scrutinized. The role of Germany in the EU is not just a matter of domestic politics, but also a reflection of its historical and cultural identity. The German narrative of reunification and the challenges of integration continue to shape its foreign policy. The question of Germany's role in Europe is not just a matter of power politics, but also a question of values and ideals.
Since the “Turn” of 1989/90 these judgments have come under fire from critics who point to the self-righteousness and myopia of the left intelligentsia for imposing a strict taboo on the idea of unity in the face of an irrepressible reality. The novelist Peter Schneider, for example, in an article aptly entitled “Some People Can Even Sleep Through an Earthquake,” included himself in the charge that Germany’s left political culture was complacent and oblivious of the harsh dictatorship in the Eastern half and kept faith in the dogma that anticommunism was merely a mask of West German capitalism. To be sure, what for some critics like Schneider serves as a critical reassessment has, for others, become a new myth that accuses left intellectuals of lacking a “positive basic decision for unity.” The “anti-Fascist” intelligentsia of the former GDR is likewise condemned for participating in and tacitly sanctioning the system of surveillance and control while decades of “Ostpolitik” are now being assaulted for appeasing and legitimizing the leaders of the communist state. In this highly charged atmosphere German intellectuals are once again accused of betrayal and are increasingly placed on the defensive.

The Critique is of course a reminder of the perils of nationalism and national self-assertion for German intellectuals caught up in the euphoric mood that followed unification. But Ball’s own case underscores the opposite risk: that German intellectuals today have to be as aware of the dangers of an inverted nationalism of the left as they need fear a resurgence of the malevolent right-wing nationalism of 1914 and 1933. Any account of the Critique today must also consider this dilemma since Ball exemplifies the paradox of an intellectual who repudiated the nationalism of the right, while seeing Germany’s salvation in an apocalyptic and inverted nationalism that believed German politics was held hostage by a mysterious “Jewish” power. The obvious parallels to contemporary arguments against German involvement in global politics and to the perverse idealization of Germany as the nation of a higher morality as well as the recognition that this mentality has its historical antecedents in the antiwar politics of 1918 may in fact be the Critique’s most important legacy. In this sense, the dilemmas German intellectuals have encountered in the aftermath of the epoch ushered in by the revolutions of 1918/19 continue to resonate from the Critique to the present.

NOTES

1. Lack of attention to Ball’s anti-Semitism can to no small degree be attributed to the strange history of the publication of the Critique in the Federal Republic of Germany during the 1970s and 1980s. The second edition of Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz, published by Rogner & Bernhard in Munich in 1970, was heavily censored, apparently by the editor, Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner. Although neither the deletions nor the reasons for removing the offensive material are acknowledged in Kaltenbrunner’s lengthy introduction, twenty-four pages, including sections of several pages in length, were removed. The majority of the excised passages consist of those revealing Ball’s anti-Semitism—for example, allusions to the “conspiracy of Protestant and Jewish theology,” or to “Jewish-Junker world domination.” Several others soften his anti-Catholicism and antisemitism. Without mentioning the deletions in his introduction, Kaltenbrunner explicitly denied that the Critique is anti-Semitic: “That Ball was no anti-Semite is demonstrated by his repeated polemic against Treitschke, H. St. Chamberlain and other anti-Jewish ideologues, as well as by his sympathy for Heine or Karl Kraus, those Jewish spirits who most relentlessly criticized the German misery.” (Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner, Introduction, Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz [Munich: Rogner & Bernhard, 1970], p. 25). Kaltenbrunner’s comments are all the more duplicitous since if the Critique was not anti-Semitic, then why was it necessary to excise the relevant passages and offer no explanation or indication? Nor do Ball’s negative references to anti-Semitic ideologues or positive ones to “Jewish” opponents of German patriotism add up to a convincing argument on behalf of Ball’s lack of anti-Semitism. The main point is that the practice
40. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 121.
41. Ball, Flucht aus der Zeit, November 14, 1917 p. 213.
42. Mann, Hugo Ball, p. 116.
43. Ball, Flucht aus der Zeit, November 18, 1917, p. 213.
48. Ibid., April 28, 1918, p. 228.
49. Ibid., April 15, 1918, p. 222.
50. Ibid., August 11, 1917, p. 184.
51. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 120.
52. Höhendahl, “Hugo Ball,” p. 750.
64. Review of the *Critique*, Paul von Mathies [PM], *Die Freie Zeitung* 3, no. 15 [February 19, 1919]: 59.
70. Ibid., July 31, 1918, p. 234.
73. Korol notes that no documentary evidence for a rupture exists in Ball’s published writings. However, Knüffemann points out that Ball’s letters indicate that tensions existed as early as early 1918, when Ball charged that Bloch had used his “ideas without attribution.” Knüffemann “risks the hypothesis that Ball, irritated by the earlier history of Bloch’s plagiarism, saw in this publication [of Bloch’s *Schadet oder nützt Deutschland eine Niederlage seines Militärs?* Bern, 1918] a new and heavier burden on their friendship and that from this perspective the sharp utterance about ‘‘national Israelites’ of November 16, 1918, might be explained.’’ [Knüffemann, “Hugo Ball und Ernst Bloch,” p. 38]. See also Korol, *Kampf nicht Krieg*, p. 52, and Hugo Ball *Briefe 1911–1927*, ed. Annemarie Schärt-Hennings [Zürich: Benzerger, 1957], p. 119. An attempted visit to the Blochs in Thun that did not take place, since the Blochs had already returned to Germany, was “a great disappointment for Ball.” [Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 133.]
75. Bloch had apparently even agreed to write a preface to Ball’s proposed critique of nineteenth century Jewry, so that Ball could not be suspected of vulgar anti-Semitism (“Schmutzverdacht des gemeinen Antisemiten?”)] Ibid.
77. Ball-Hennings, *Ruf und Echo*, p. 121.
78. Ibid., p. 128.
83. Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the*
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE