

# ZACHARIAS WERNER AND THE CRUSADE AGAINST NAPOLEON

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Most of the major German Romantic writers joined in some way in the campaign to free Germany from the domination of Napoleon, although not many served on the battlefields. Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1807–08) and Schleiermacher's patriotic sermons helped to instil a new sense of German national identity and pride after the humiliation of Prussia in the battles of Jena and Auerstedt (1806) and the Treaty of Tilsit (1807). When Achim von Arnim worked with Clemens Brentano to preserve and restore Germany's heritage of folk-literature he hoped that their collection of folk-poems, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1806–08), would help to inspire a united German resistance to the French.<sup>1</sup> After King Frederick William III of Prussia and other monarchs eventually called their subjects to arms in March 1813 a number of writers, such as Fouqué and Schenkendorf, joined the colours, and Fouqué fought in France, although an old duel wound kept Schenkendorf from the front lines. In Berlin Fichte, Arnim, Savigny and Schinkel joined the 'Landsturm', which was established in April 1813; when it was stood down three months later Arnim retired in disgust to his estates.

Patriotic fervour gripped many of the Romantic writers who had made their way to Vienna. Already in 1809 Friedrich Schlegel as founder and editor of the army newspaper *Österreichische Zeitung* was a leading exponent of the Austrian chancellor Stadion's brief and disastrous policy of attempting to bind Germans together through national sentiment and under Austrian leadership. In the spring of 1813 Joseph von Eichendorff joined the dashing and marauding volunteer corps recruited by Adolf von Lützow, the 'Lützowsches Freikorps' or 'Lützower Jäger', though fortunately he saw little active service. In his poetry he praised the German war effort and the life of the soldier, as did Brentano, who arrived in Vienna in July of that year. He, however, was not cut out for the military life. Brentano's most forthright summons to arms against Napoleon was the patriotic 'klingendes Spiel', *Viktoria und ihre Geschwister*, which was written in

<sup>1</sup> See Arnim's 'Aufruf' (1805), in Clemens Brentano, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Jürgen Behrens, et al., vol. 8, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, Teil III, ed. Heinz Rölleke (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1977), 347.

October 1813 but could not pass the Austrian stage censorship and was eventually published in Berlin in 1817. The best-known of German soldier-poets, Theodor Körner, left a burgeoning career as a dramatist in Vienna and also joined the Lützower Jäger. At a squalid skirmish in August 1813 he achieved his ambition of death for the fatherland.<sup>2</sup>

Zacharias Werner came to Vienna in August 1814, initially temporarily, but he settled there. He was by now a priest, aged forty-five and recovering from many years of turmoil. He had become also a zealous apostle of the German national cause. Werner is best known today as the most successful playwright of the German Romantic movement, and above all as the author of *Der vierundzwanzigste Februar*, the play which began the vogue for fate-tragedy in the second decade of the nineteenth century. It was first performed in Weimar under Goethe's friendly eye on 24 February 1810. By the time it was published in Leipzig and Altenburg in 1815 Werner's life had changed fundamentally. On 19 April 1810, after a retreat devoted to the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius Loyola, he had been received in Rome into the Catholic Church. On 16 July 1814 he had been ordained into the priesthood, and when he moved to Vienna he rapidly became the most sensational preacher of the Congress period.<sup>3</sup> Amongst several publications in which he partially dissociated himself from his pre-conversion writings was the prologue which he wrote on the feast day of St Matthias (24 February) in 1814 for the published version of *Der vierundzwanzigste Februar*. Here he pays tribute to his mentors when the play was first written, Mme de Staël and Goethe, but he is chiefly concerned now to urge the people of Germany, 'das Deutungsland der Weltgeschichte', to put an end to

das Possenspiel . . .

Das, schon seit vielen Jahren angefangen,  
Mit blut'gen Fratzen hat die Welt behangen;  
Dazu thut Euch der Herr, Ihr Deutschen, senden!<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For varying accounts of Körner's death see *Die Befreiungskriege in Augenzeugenberichten*, ed. Eckart Kleßmann (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1973), 130–2. On the upsurge of nationalism in Prussia and Austria see *Die Erhebung gegen Napoleon, 1806–1814/15*, ed. Hans-Bernd Spies (Quellen zum politischen Denken der Deutschen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, 11, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981); Eugene Newton Anderson, *Nationalism and the Cultural Crisis in Prussia, 1806–1815* (New York: Octagon Books, 1976; reprint of 1939 edition); Walter Consuelo Langsam, *The Napoleonic Wars and German Nationalism in Austria* (Columbia University Studies in the Social Sciences, 324, New York: AMS Press, 1970; reprint of 1930 edition). A useful modern treatment of the patriotic literature of the Wars of Liberation is in Hasko Zimmer, *Auf dem Altar des Vaterlands: Religion und Patriotismus in der deutschen Kriegsliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Thesen Verlag, 1971), especially 11–70.

<sup>3</sup> On Werner's career in Vienna see Johannes Humpelstetter, 'Zacharias Werner in Wien' (University of Vienna D.Phil. thesis, 1937); Gerhard Koziellek, 'Prediger und Poet: Zacharias Werners Wirken in Wien', *Aurora*, 41 (1981), 93–134.

<sup>4</sup> *Zacharias Werners ausgewählte Schriften* (15 vols., Grimma: Verlags-Comptoir, 1840–41; reprinted in 5 vols., Berne: Lang, 1970), vi. xii. Future references to this edition will be made in the text, with the abbreviation AS.

Werner's belief in the divinely ordained mission of the German people to bring down the satanic empire of Napoleon Bonaparte is the main theme of a selection of poems and sermons from the period 1813–15 which are to be examined in this essay.

Werner wrote only a few political poems. Some critical attention has been given to his *Polenlieder*, poems which he wrote as a Prussian civil servant in Płock and Warsaw in the 1790s, and in which he supported the efforts of the Polish people to assert their independence in their resistance to the Second and Third Partitions of Poland by Austria, Russia and Prussia in 1792 and 1795. Here he fervently praised the Polish leader Tadeusz Kósciuszko, whom he saw as realizing the ideals of the French Revolution, ideals which Werner had promulgated in one of his earliest political poems *An die Freiheit* (1790).<sup>5</sup> It was indeed rather paradoxical that an administrator of Prussian occupation in Poland should glorify in verse the freedom of a country he was helping to subjugate, but Werner always thrived on paradox.

Most critics have made little more than passing references to his poetry celebrating the German war efforts in 1813–15. His war poems have not featured often in anthologies or critical studies of the literature of the Wars of Liberation. Anthologists may have neglected them because they were too long-winded, vague, subjective, and religious, or because they had little impact on contemporaries. If one compares them with poems which made it into the anthologies, with those of Arndt, Theodor Körner, Schenkendorf, or Wetzell, one can hardly believe that they were excluded because they were too inept or bombastic, or too frenzied, bloodthirsty or xenophobic. Indeed, it may have been felt that they just did not stir the blood enough. It was not the declared aim of Werner's war poetry to rouse his readers to hatred of the enemy, rather to call the German people to repentance, so that they might be fit vessels of God's wrath upon the usurper tyrant Napoleon.

A similar message is to be found in the relevant sermons, though here Werner is generally thanking God and commending the German monarchs and their people for their achievements, for most of the sermons in which he refers to the Wars of Liberation were delivered during the first period of the Congress of Vienna, after Napoleon's abdication in April 1814 and before the return from Elba in March 1815.<sup>6</sup> Such was Werner's reputation for histrionic and remorseful preaching that the churches in which he appeared were often filled to

<sup>5</sup> *An die Freiheit* in Gerhard Kozierek, 'Unbekannte Gedichte vom Verfasser des "Vierundzwanzigsten Februar"', *Germanica Wratislaviensia*, ix (1964), 90–3. See also Kozierek, 'Zacharias Werner und Polen', *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, 16 (1971), 431–49.

<sup>6</sup> See Zacharias Werner, *Nachgelassene Predigten gehalten in den Jahren 1814–1816* (Vienna: Wallishauser, 1836). Future references to this edition will be made in the text, with the abbreviation NP.

bursting-point, and it can be assumed that many members of the delegations to the Congress heard him. As a newcomer to the city and as an associate of the Redemptorist St Clement Maria Hofbauer he was kept under surveillance by the secret police, and on one occasion his rooms were searched. Yet he moved in the highest circles: he dined with Metternich,<sup>7</sup> and (highly inappropriately) he read from his tragedy *Cunegunde die Heilige, römisch-deutsche Kaiserin* to Napoleon's former empress, Marie Louise.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore understandable that in his sermons Werner should have offered a political view which did not conflict with Austrian foreign policy, or indeed with the Austrian Catholic hierarchy's view of the proper relationship between citizen and emperor. There was no danger of Werner following Arndt's example and of his making a substitute religion out of German nationalism, or indeed of his advocating a German revival in a popular nationalist uprising.

For Werner the defeat of Napoleon meant above all a victory over a satanically-inspired ruler who had paid the price of rebellion against God. Indeed, he said that the whole significance of the year 1814 lay in proof of the warning: '*Gott widersteht den Hochmütigen*' (NP, 91). It had been an apocalyptic struggle. Werner held that Napoleon, for all his heroic achievements, represented a mortal danger, not only to the national integrity of German states, but also to the very souls of all Europeans. He wrote in a sermon on 28 December 1814:

Nicht unsere Stärke, sondern Gottes unsers Seligmachers allmächtige Hand [hat] uns und alle Menschen dieses vergangene Jahr wunderbarlich errettet . . . , von der Gewalt eines mächtigen Feindes, der nichts Geringeres beabsichtigte, als ganz Europa und den Kern desselben, das herrliche Land unsrer Väter, das theure Deutschland, das Gott segnen möge, unter ein schändliches Slavenjoch zu schmiegen, und so alle Völker und auch Euch, meine theuren deutschen Mitchristen nicht nur zeitlich, sondern auch dadurch, daß er uns arglistig alles Gefühl des Guten, alles Vertrauen und allen Glauben an Gott rauben wollte, auch ewig unglücklich zu machen. (NP, 160)

Thus God had laid low (though he had not yet eradicated) the insidious philosophy which had brought Napoleon to power and which he and his cohorts had promoted – the Enlightenment (NP, 106). As many of his later sermons argue, the peoples of Europe had been awakened, and Germany was in the van, but the struggle against what he called 'das hochtrabende Schellengeklingel der übermüthigen Unvernunft' (NP, 106), or '[das] elende Gaukelwerk einer seichten, lahmen und blinden Aufklärerei' (NP, 325) was not yet over, and he

<sup>7</sup> See Friedrich von Gentz, *Tagebücher: Aus dem Nachlaß Varnhagen's von Ense* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1861), 339, 348; A. Graf Thürheim, *Ludwig Fürst Starhemberg* (Graz: Styria, 1889), 247.

<sup>8</sup> See Edouard Gachot, *Marie-Louise intime* (2 vols., Paris: J. Tallandier, 1911–12), ii. 174, 182. See also Werner's sonnet *An die Kaiserin Maria Louise*, AS, ii. 110–11.

warned that unless its influence was eliminated from German life, and especially from the Church, then Germany could be devastated once more (*NP*, 116–18). Werner called on his listeners to give thanks for their deliverance from the tyrant: ‘Dafür dankt also Gott, und nächst Gott Eurem theuren Kaiser, den Gott segnen möge, und denen die mit ihm ehrlich gekämpft haben, für Gott und Recht’ (*NP*, 160). Werner never varied from that order of supremacy: God, the Austrian emperor (or the other monarchs), and then the soldiers.

Werner perceived in great critical periods of human history, as at the fall of Rome, or the Crusades, evidence that ‘Gott peitscht die Völker zusammen’, and the same had now happened in 1814, at a time when individualism was leading so many from the true path (*NP*, 184–5). The monarchs could have been fitting instruments of God’s saving purpose only by truly humbling themselves before him (*NP*, 18, 48). Werner suggested that just as in the fourth century the emperor Constantine gained victory on the battlefield (of the Milvian Bridge in AD 312) through the miraculous vision of the Cross, so too ‘God’s heroes’, the rulers of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, were given inspiration at the Battle of Leipzig: ‘Das Kreuz hat den Helden Gottes vorgeleuchtet in der heiligen Völkerschlacht, und Gott hat gezeigt, daß er nicht nur durch ein am Himmel strahlendes Flammenkreuz, sondern auch durch ein auf treuer Brust geheftetes eisernes, wenn es einen heiligen Krieg gilt, Wunder thun kann!’ (*NP*, 68).<sup>9</sup> Werner also praises the self-sacrifice of those who bore arms, the German youth ‘die in den heiligen Schlachten jetzt den Tod kennen gelernt hat und die Liebe’ (*NP*, 106), and he makes clear his belief that those who laid down their lives ‘im letzten heiligen Kriege’ have gained their heavenly reward (*NP*, 207). In these early sermons Werner made probably his most influential contribution to popular patriotic sentiment. Their basic message is a simple one, and is similar to that found in lines from a popular ballad sung in Vienna at that time:

Bey Leipzig eh die Schlacht begonnen,  
Da sah das Kriegsheer auf zu Gott,  
Er war mit uns – der Sieg gewonnen,  
Er half aus aller Angst und Not.

Franz, Schwarzenberg, sie fielen nieder  
In Demut auf ihr Angesicht,  
Mit uns war Gott, ihr Waffenbrüder,  
Mit Frankreichs Herrscher war er nicht.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> In *Das eiserne Kreuz* Max von Schenkendorf makes a much more direct comparison between the cross worn by the Crusaders and the Prussian Order of the Iron Cross instituted by Frederick William III in March 1813. See Schenkendorf, *Gedichte*, ed. A. Hagen (third edition, Stuttgart: Cotta, 1862), 105–7.

<sup>10</sup> Cited in Franz Rebiczek, *Der Wiener Volks- und Bänkelsang in den Jahren von 1800–1848* (Vienna: Gerlach & Wiedling, n.d.), 29.

Werner's war poetry seems to have had comparatively little impact, but in the five poems on this theme which are extant<sup>11</sup> he was able to devote himself to his martial theme more systematically and latterly with less inhibition. The first, *Kriegslied für die zum heiligen Kriege verbündeten deutschen Heere*, dates from the latter part of 1813, possibly not long after the battle of Leipzig in mid-October (AS, ii. 88–91), and was published in Frankfurt am Main in 1814. From the first line Werner calls on Germans to serve – under God – in a just war to save humanity: 'Gott mit uns, wir zieh'n in den heiligen Krieg!' It is God's summons to which they must respond: He has already given miraculous victories on the battlefield, and they must fight for His glory alone, and to respond to the dishonour which insolence has done to Him. It is not a war of conquest or acquisition. Nor is it a nationalist call for a united German state. Werner states that particularist identities (Prussians, Austrians, Bavarians, etc.) are subsumed in a single German army, but they have come together for the purposes of liberating Germany from foreign rule and supremely of ridding humanity of the Napoleonic torment. Germany and the Allies are united in these common tasks. Werner makes it clear that he supports not only the legitimacy but the power of the German princes. The inspirational leaders who have died, as he sees it, for the holy cause, are also of royal blood – Queen Louise of Prussia, Louis Ferdinand of Prussia and Leopold of Hesse-Homburg. He makes no mention of the heroes who inspired so many other war poets (and who fought in defiance of their rulers) – such as Ferdinand von Schill or the Tyrolean leader Andreas Hofer. The antagonist is the French monarch, but just as God admonished Job that he could set limits upon the oceans, so too Werner believes that God will confine the tears of suffering which the victims of Napoleon have shed. The warcry and slogan at the end of the poem

. . . *Alte Zeit wird neu!*  
 . . . Trotz Teufel die deutsche Treu!!!

come, as Werner notes, from his then still unpublished patriotic 'romantisches Trauerspiel', *Cunegunde die Heilige, römisch-deutsche Kaiserin*, which glorifies the unity of faith of the medieval Empire, and which contains a scene where the pious and self-sacrificial empress

<sup>11</sup> A further poem, *Kriegslied* (1813), is included in AS, 91–2. It contains a number of themes to be found in his war poetry, and concludes:

Wir schützen uns in jeder Noth  
 Mit Deines Kreuzes Zeichen,  
 Davor muß Sünde, Höll' und Tod,  
 Ja selbst der Teufel weichen!  
 Vom Kreuze kommt allein uns Kraft,  
 Zu üben Deine Ritterschaft.

In view of the uncertain authorship of this poem, which is also attributed to Schenkendorf (*Gedichte*, 179–81), it is not examined in this essay.

goes to the usurper Harduin to appeal for peace (*AS*, vi. 104–23), in much the same way that Queen Louise made supplication to Napoleon on behalf of Prussia in 1807.

Like other contemporary war poets Werner frequently drew on the Old Testament and made analogies between the German and Allied armies and the armies of ancient Israel.<sup>12</sup> In his *Te Deum zur Feyer der Einnahme von Paris durch die zum heiligen Kriege verbündeten Heere* he praises the Lord of Hosts who has saved his people Zion (Germany) and has defeated Babylon (Paris). It has indeed been a cosmic struggle, for the archfiend Napoleon has been laid low by God's army of angels, and now the cherubim and seraphim, the apostles, the prophets, the martyrs (their ranks now increased by the martyrs of the battlefield), and God's Church on earth all join together in thanksgiving.<sup>13</sup> The victory has been gained, Werner insists, in spite of the German people's faithlessness, and their scorn for God. They may have been freed of Napoleon's tyranny, but they are still fettered by sin (*TD*, 6). Like another Jeremiah, whom he quotes (5. 22) in a lengthy motto to this *Te Deum*, Werner castigates his people and prays that they should be forgiven, and that true doctrine (of the Roman Catholic Church) should be restored:

König der Ehren, Jesus Christ,  
Gerettet ist von Teufels List  
Herr, Deines deutschen Volkes Ehr,  
Errett' nun, Herr, auch Deine Lehr!

Des ew'gen Vaters ew'ger Sohn,  
Vergib uns unsern frechen Hohn,  
Laß uns, mit treuem Kindersinn,  
Zieh'n reuig wieder zu Dir hin!  
(*TD*, 5)

Yet perhaps because he does so emphasize what he sees as the shortcomings of the German people he also includes a brief prayer that the enemy should not be punished:

. . . Auf half uns Dein Arm,  
Laß' uns auf's Neue sinken nicht!  
Führ' auch den Feind nicht in's Gericht!  
(*TD*, 7)

Such a general call for mercy for the enemy may be momentary (or conceivably even occasioned by the rhyme), but it is extremely rare in German war poetry of this period.

<sup>12</sup> See Karl Scheibenberger, *Der Einfluß der Bibel und des Kirchenliedes auf die Lyrik der deutschen Befreiungskriege* (University of Vienna D.Phil. thesis, Gelnhausen: Kalbfleisch, 1936), especially 16–53.

<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner, *Te Deum zur Feier der Einnahme von Paris durch die zum heiligen Kriege verbündeten Heere* (Frankfurt am Main: Andrea, 1814), 3–4. Future references to this edition will be made in the text, with the abbreviation *TD*.

As he follows the pattern of the *Te Deum* he seems confident in his final prayer that the latter-day Germans, once more united in faith, will emulate their ancestors and place their hopes in God (*TD*, 8). In another sense this was a work of faith, for Werner wrote it when he was a seminarist at Aschaffenburg – six weeks before the entry of the Allies into Paris on 31 March. As he prepared to assume holy orders he did not divest himself of his commercial acumen, and he planned to have the poem printed and ready for distribution on the day after the news of the victory reached Frankfurt. He also tried unsuccessfully to have this *Te Deum* used in a celebratory mass in Frankfurt cathedral. The Suffragan Bishop of Kolborn refused permission, because it was considered too partisan: at a time of peacemaking Napoleon could not be referred to as an ‘Erzfeind’, or ‘Tyrann’.<sup>14</sup>

Werner later composed a sonnet in celebration of the capture of Paris, *Einnahme von Paris* (*AS*, ii. 107–8). He announces in a prefatory note that it was written on Easter Saturday morning, 9 April 1814, as church bells rang out to celebrate the Allied victory. He draws a parallel between Christ’s resurrection from the grave and God’s release of the nations from Napoleon’s rule. The highly eclectic final tercet reads:

Der Herr zersprengt der Völker Grabeskammer  
Stürzt Babel, die gekreuzigt hat den Frieden,  
Der aufersteht, und Glaube, Kraft, Gesänge!<sup>15</sup>

A more substantial poem was Werner’s spiritual ‘*mea culpa*’, his *Die Weihe der Unkraft*,<sup>16</sup> in which he did penance for many of his earlier writings, and of which Friedrich Schlegel reportedly said ‘daß es unanständig sey so öffentlich seine Demuth zu verrichten’.<sup>17</sup> Werner writes here with shame, not because of the quality of his verse, but because his poems and plays were permeated by that spirit of egoistic self-reliance which he believed had laid Germany open to subjugation by Napoleon:

Denn hätte freches Meinen geschwächt nicht deutsche Kraft,  
Wär unsers Landes Stärke vom Feind nicht fortgeraft;

<sup>14</sup> See *Briefe des Dichters Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner*, ed. Oswald Floeck (2 vols., Munich: Georg Müller, 1914), ii. 260–2, 264–7, 269–71.

<sup>15</sup> On similar analogies in poems by Schenkendorf and Wetzlar between Easter and the German ‘uprising’ see Zimmer, *Auf dem Altar der Vaterlands*, 48–9.

<sup>16</sup> *Die Weihe der Unkraft: Ein Ergänzungsblatt zur deutschen Haustafel von F.L.Z. Werner cum notis variorum die besser sind als der Text. (Dixi – sed et animam salvavi?)*, reprinted in *Das Schicksalsdrama*, ed. Jakob Minor (Deutsche National-Litteratur, 151, Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, n.d.), 222–37. Future references to this edition will be made in the text, with the abbreviation *WU*.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted by Dorothea Schlegel in letter to Johannes and Philipp Veit, 19 March 1817, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler, et al., 3. Abteilung: *Briefe von und an Friedrich und Dorothea Schlegel*, vol. XXIX, *Vom Wiener Kongress zum Frankfurter Bundestag*, ed. Jean-Jacques Anstett and Ursula Behler (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1980), 311.



Hätt' Jeder nur gelernet täglich seine Lektion,  
 Würd's, ohne Blutvergießen, wohl im deutschen Hause stohn!  
 (WU, 231)

He addresses the 'heroic German youth' who have shed their precious blood, and also those poets who have inspired the struggle and amongst whom he feels unworthy to be counted. Yet he warns them that the victories gained through God's aid could all be dissipated if in their triumph Germans succumbed again to arrogance and pride. The German people could avoid doing so if they modelled themselves on their rulers – the great heroic emperors of the past, such as Charlemagne and Rudolph I, but also their present monarchs Francis and Frederick William (and here again Werner makes the comparison with Constantine):

Doch was sprech ich von Alten! Soll nicht des Vliesses Zeichen,  
 Das noch *Franziskus* zieret, der Demuth Bild Euch reichen?  
 Das Kreuz das eisern, farblos, blitzt durch des Irrsals Nacht,  
 Hat's *Friedrich Wilhelms* Demuth, die hohe, nicht erdacht?  
 (WU, 230)

He excludes also the 'warrior youth' from his warning: he does not need to commend humility to them, for they have seen death, but he excoriates the 'Lügenbrut', the 'Lügenpöbel' in his own, older generation, the generation of the Enlightenment, that enemy of Europe. They who have brought devastation to their country must learn determination and renunciation from the pure German army, which now has to undertake Germany's restoration as it engages in the holiest of wars (WU, 230, 231).

Werner says that the nations' revenge is more than just, yet once more he shows that he is far from advocating the savage war of retribution which was advocated by Kleist, Arndt, and Körner. This holy war must be fought with chivalry: no atrocity must desecrate it; the unarmed must be protected. (But he also advocates that those opponents who are armed should be cut down – does he mean that no prisoners should be taken?) Above all the fatherland should be spared, and no German cottage should be plundered, a point that what was left of the Lützower Jäger could have taken to heart (WU, 234).<sup>18</sup> In this holy war he also attributes a vital role to the army chaplains, and he appeals for volunteers to join their ranks, for such priests are also part of the warrior band. They could bring spiritual inspiration to German soldiers and consolation to those who fell on the battlefield, be they German, Russian, or French. They would carry the Cross into battle:

<sup>18</sup> For an example of admonition on humane conduct in the war see Brentano's *Soldaten-Katechismus* in *Viktoria und ihre Geschwister*, Clemens Brentano's *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Christian Brentano (Frankfurt am Main: Sauerländer, 1852), vii. 392–5.

they would not fear the bullet, or the pestilential air of the army hospitals – a note of realism which is most unusual in the poetry of the Wars of Liberation. In other words, theirs would be a sacrificial role, and in this they combine the functions of priest and soldier. Indeed, in general Werner attributes to the priest and soldier a similar mission:

Die Beid' Ihr Menschenretter vom Höchsten sey'd gesandt,  
Im Wege nur verschieden, im Ziele nah verwandt!

(WU, 234)

Werner's last and most emotive war poem is the *Schlachtgesang für die zum neuen Kreuzzuge gegen den Erzfeind der ganzen Menschheit verbündeten deutschen christlichen Strafheere*. This was written during the Hundred Days, probably some time shortly after Napoleon's return to power in Paris on 20 March 1815, certainly before his defeat at Waterloo on 1 June. At this period there was no chance of the Austrian censor permitting the publication of polemics against Napoleon, who was after all still the son-in-law of Emperor Francis.<sup>19</sup> The poem appeared in two versions in 1913, one in Rudolf Dieckmann's Münster dissertation,<sup>20</sup> and one in August Fournier's collection of documents on the Viennese secret police.<sup>21</sup> The versions are very similar. Dieckmann's is closer to the manuscript version in the Vienna Stadtbibliothek (IN 39585), though there are some variants. For instance, in line 3 the description of Napoleon as 'Sieger' in Dieckmann's version and 'Tilger' in Fournier's version should read 'Tyger' according to the manuscript, an appellation which many of Werner's contemporaries applied to Napoleon,<sup>22</sup> though one which no doubt the Suffragan Bishop of Kolborn would have found even more objectionable. Indeed, Werner is now much less restrained: his patience with the French has reached its limits, for they have repaid German magnanimity with scorn. Again the Germans are commissioned by God to take up the sword, for in 1814 the Allies failed to deal with Napoleon's henchmen in Paris, 'den kleinen Teufel Pack' (S, 444). In fact the enemy is now seen as France, not just its monarch or

<sup>19</sup> On Austrian censorship see August Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress: Eine Auswahl aus ihren Papieren* (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1913); Julius Marx, *Die österreichische Zensur im Vormärz* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1959); Donald E. Emerson, *Metternich and the Political Police* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968). In 1817 all pictures of Napoleon or of members of his family were banned in Austria (Emerson, *Metternich*, 153).

<sup>20</sup> Rudolf Dieckmann, 'Zacharias Werners Dramen: Ihre Quellen und ihr Verhältnis zur Geschichte' (University of Münster D.Phil. thesis, 1913), 139–44, reproduces a manuscript copy held then in the library of the Germanistisches Seminar of the University.

<sup>21</sup> Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei*, 442–6. Fournier reproduces a copy acquired by a police agent from a 'friend' of Werner's (441). Citations in the text are from the Fournier edition, with the abbreviation S. Slight modifications to the punctuation have been made to conform to the Vienna manuscript.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, *Fremdherrschaft und Befreiung, 1795–1815*, ed. Robert F. Arnold (Deutsche Literatur in Entwicklungsreihen: Reihe Politische Dichtung, 2, Leipzig: Reclam, 1932), 157 (Zuckschwerdt), 179 (Schink), 204 (Annette von Droste-Hülshoff).

his entourage. France is now 'die, Hur, . . . Die sich in unserm Blut befraß' (S, 445). Like Belshazzar, France has been weighed in the balance and found wanting, and the cannon-fire is now to teach its defiant people a lesson (with women, the elderly and children to be spared). For the French are an unholy nation that has trampled on the cause of the Lord, not only recently, by giving allegiance to Napoleon, but indeed over the centuries (S, 445). For Werner, France has been the fount of secularism, and of the Enlightenment, and that same evil has brought dissension and deceit and eventually defeat to Germany, with the demise of the Holy Roman Empire (S, 443).

During the Hundred Days Werner told one of his Viennese congregations that at the Seine humanity was sick (NP, 295), and he voiced the hope that Emperor Francis, and with him Europe and God, would provide the remedy. Yet the *Schlachtgesang* also warns of the Germans' loss of faith, of how unworthy they have been to face the secularist challenge. Whereas their ancestors joyfully bore the victorious sign of the Cross in victory and joyfully set off to fight for the Holy Sepulchre:

Wir, weil wir nicht gewollt bewahren  
Den Glauben, den lebend'gen klaren,  
Senken in's Grab der Schmach hinab!  
(S, 443)

Now Germans, having been steeled by prayer, must put on the whole armour of God, including the helmet of faith and the lance of true devotion, and must exact divinely-commissioned retribution. Not least on the enemy within, the treacherous Illuminati – bullets are too good for them.

The Illuminati were that secret Masonic order founded in 1776 in the Bavarian university town of Ingolstadt by Adam Weishaupt. Although the order advocated radical enlightenment and was keenly anticlerical, indeed anti-Christian, it took as a model the authoritarian organization of the recently banned Jesuit Order. It was itself banned in Bavaria from 1783 onwards, and many of its members were victims of a witch-hunt and of an early conspiracy theory: in the 1790s and beyond some conservative thinkers in Britain and Germany blamed the Illuminati for instigating and spreading the French Revolution. In reputation the Illuminati became synonymous with Jacobinism, indeed with conspiratorial and fanatic radicalism of any kind. Even German opponents of Napoleon could be dubbed Illuminati. After Friedrich Staps's abortive attempt to kill the French Emperor in Vienna in October 1809 Napoleon told him: 'Sie sind von Sinnen, junger Mann, Sie sind ein Illuminat!'.<sup>23</sup> The supposed conspiracy of

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Johannes Rogalla von Bieberstein, *Die These von der Verschwörung, 1776–1945* (second edition, Frankfurt: Lang, 1978), 132.

the Illuminati to foment the French Revolution is the sub-theme of Werner's first play, *Die Söhne des Thals* (1803), which depicts the downfall of the Templar Order, the alleged spiritual ancestors of the Illuminati and of modern revolutionaries. At this most controversial point in the poem readers are advised what to do if they encounter any of these subversive Illuminati:

Erwischt ihr solche Teufelsbraten,  
Die Deutschland, heimlich, *noch* verraten,  
Brennt ihnen Galgen ein und Rad!

(S, 445)

It is extremely ugly, but hardly to be taken any more literally than earlier references to the unsheathed sword or the wreath of oak-leaves. Here Dieckmann and Fournier do not fully reproduce the Vienna manuscript. The last three lines of stanza one are repeated as a refrain, and there is a similar pattern in most of the rest of the stanzas, with occasional variants. But in this stanza on the Illuminati the refrain begins: 'Was gilt's, sie [die Illuminaten] riechen schon den Braten.' This implies that both Werner and the 'Illuminati' are anticipating anti-radical measures in Germany in the Restoration period. The terms may be figurative, but this sudden flash of savagery does catch the eye, for in these poems the mood is comparatively moderate.

In the poems under review and especially the *Schlachtgesang*, Werner is at pains to show that the Germans are engaged in a just war, just, that is, according to the criteria laid down by authorities such as St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, or Francisco de Vitoria. Indeed, these basic criteria are still accepted by many theologians in our own times: one may go to war only when all other peaceful measures have been unsuccessful; only a legitimate authority can wage war; a war must be fought in order to bring about justice such as the freeing of a territory which has been occupied by an aggressor; the war must be conducted as humanely as possible.<sup>24</sup> Yet Werner's war poetry offers a clear illustration that the more the justice of one belligerent's cause is emphasized the more likely it is that the war will turn into a 'holy war', against utter evil, a war that must be won at all costs.<sup>25</sup> In the *Schlachtgesang* the 'holy war' has become a crusade, and it can only end with the utter downfall and destruction of the Archfiend, this wholly villainous enemy of God and man, an enemy with whom no compromise is possible, to whom no quarter can be given. Further,

<sup>24</sup> On concepts of the 'just' war see Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), especially 85–135; Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: University Press, 1975).

<sup>25</sup> On concepts of the 'holy' war see *The Holy War*, ed. Thomas Patrick Murphy (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1976).



*Polukarpus so wie die  
1807*

DIE  
SÖHNE DES THAL'S  
—  
EIN  
DRAMATISCHES GEDICHT  
VON  
FRIEDRICH LUDWIG ZACHARIAS WERNER



LACOB BERNHARD VON MOLAI  
ERSTER THEIL:  
DIE TEMPLER AUF CYPERN.  
*Wird bei der nächsten  
Ausg. d. 2ten Aufl. s.o.d.*  
Zweite durchgängig verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage.  
BERLIN, BEI I. D. SANDER, 1807.

FIG. 1.

Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner, *Die Söhne des Thal's: Ein dramatisches Gedicht*, 1807

frontispiece and title page, with engravings after Franz Ludwig Catel  
Cambridge, The Master and Fellows of Trinity College

now that the treacherous and impudent French have finally thrown in their lot with their tyrant they have to be taught a lesson and suffer retribution, though it is by no means clear just how the German soldiers are to put that into effect. And Werner has to proclaim the absolute moral rightness of the German mission, a declaration tempered only by his belief that the Enlightenment has rendered Germany unworthy of this high calling. Thus spiritual combat within Germany is a concomitant of war on the battlefield, and it is his duty as a preacher and a poet to engage in that struggle for German souls, to make them fit warriors of the Lord.

Already in the *Kriegslied* there is an apparent reference to the belief that warriors who die in such a holy war, the 'Gestirne der Herrlichkeit', are like martyrs who receive their immediate eternal reward (AS, ii. 90). This has been a familiar topos of crusade literature since the eleventh century, indeed a commonplace of most European

literature since then which celebrates participation in any 'just war'. The Crusaders were told that in taking up arms they were following Christ: they were bearing their Cross, and this would lead to absolution of their sins; they were assured that if they fell in battle their souls would be taken straight up to heaven and that they would be venerated on earth as martyrs. Pope Leo XI seems to have been the first to make such explicit promises when he was recruiting for war against the Normans in 1053.<sup>26</sup> Other poets of the Wars of Liberation, especially Körner, voiced this comforting belief much more frequently and fully than Werner, but it was certainly a belief which Werner held, even in his pre-conversion days. Later, in a sermon in 1822, he asked for which cause the noble youths had died in the Wars of Liberation: 'Etwa für's Vaterland? Ach, was ist das Vaterland! – Freilich auch für's Vaterland, aber für's himmlische Vaterland, für die himmlische Heimath, für Gott, für *Jesum Christum!* Und haben auf diese Weise durch Christi Blut, durch die Gerechtigkeit, die vor Gott gilt, mit ihrem schönen Tode gewonnen und errungen die Krone des Lebens.'<sup>27</sup>

Werner was rather unusual in that he made a direct comparison between the 'holy war' against Napoleon and the medieval Crusades against the Saracens. Of the prominent poets only Schenkendorf has this as a dominant theme. The analogy with the Crusades may be fairly rare because many contemporaries would not have seen the comparison as favourable, as a way of vindicating the Wars of Liberation. The very hostile view of the Crusades adopted by writers of the Enlightenment was still prevalent. Typical was the indignation in the *Encyclopédie* (1751–72) that people should be dragged 'dans une malheureuse petite contrée, afin d'en égorgger les habitants, & de s'emparer d'une pointe de rocher qui ne valait pas une goutte de sang, qu'ils pouvaient vénérer en esprit de loin comme de près, et dont la possession était si étrangère à l'honneur de la religion'.<sup>28</sup> For Lessing ('diese Kreuzzüge selbst, die in ihrer Anlage ein politischer Kunstgriff der Päbste waren, wurden in ihrer Ausführung die unmenschlichsten Verfolgungen, deren sich der christliche Aberglaube jemals schuldig gemacht hat'),<sup>29</sup> the generally critical presentation of warrior Christians in the Holy Land in *Nathan der Weise* (1779) was standard. Still in Kotzebue's *Die Kreuzfahrer* (1802) Peter the Hermit's call to free the Holy Sepulchre is presented as a 'frommer Schwindel',<sup>30</sup> and

<sup>26</sup> See Carl Erdmann, *Die Entstehung des Kreuzzuggedankens* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965; reprint of 1935 edition), 111–12, 218, 264–5, 312, 317.

<sup>27</sup> *Geistes-Funken von F.L.Z. Werner* (second edition, Würzburg: C.C. Etlinger, 1834), 182.

<sup>28</sup> Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. VI (= *Encyclopédie*, II), ed. John Lough and Jacques Proust (Paris: Hermann, 1976), 523.

<sup>29</sup> Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, 7. Stück, in *Werke*, ed. Herbert G. Göpfert, et al. (8 vols., Munich: Hanser, 1970–79), iv. 263.

<sup>30</sup> August von Kotzebue, *Auswahl dramatischer Werke* (10 vols., Leipzig: Kummer, 1867), iv. 17.

the Christian knights are mostly depicted as avaricious, intolerant and brutal. Even when some Romantic writers upheld the Middle Ages as an age of faith and Christian unity they did not necessarily depict the Crusaders as model defenders of the Faith. In *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802) Novalis has his Crusaders sing of washing the Holy Sepulchre in heathen blood, and the Moslem girl Zulima condemns the bitterness and division which futile Christian warfare has brought to her homeland.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, in Tieck's *Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva* (1799) Charles Martel's armed defence of Christendom against the Moors is seen as glorious service of the Lord, and in *Halle und Jerusalem* (1811) Arnim offers an idealized portrait of Sir Sidney Smith as a latter-day Crusader. Werner too made his contribution towards rehabilitating warfare for the Lord when he wrote *Die Söhne des Thals* and *Das Kreuz an der Ostsee* (1806), which depicts the Teutonic Knights.

Yet Werner's positive attitude in 1815 towards the medieval ideal of the Crusades, where Christian warriors follow the 'oriflamme' into battle,<sup>32</sup> is very different from the views he expressed in an essay he wrote when a student at Königsberg in 1787: 'Über die Entstehung und die Folgen der Kreuzzüge in Rücksicht auf Geistesaufklärung und Staatsverfassung von Europa'.<sup>33</sup> There he loftily preached Voltairean enlightenment:

Nur der alle Vorstellung übertreffende Verfall der ganz mit Priester-Wahn bekleideten Religion, und des von Unwissenheit und Irrthum ganz unkenntlich gemachten Menschen-Verstandes, verbunden mit der schändlichen Politick des damals noch überall würcktsamen päbstlichen Hofes, und der damals im politischen System aller Staaten Europens herrschenden Verwirrung konnten es begreiflich machen, wie der Verstand ganzer Völcker zu einer so unsinnigen Unternehmung, als die Kreuzzüge aller Betrachtung nach waren, herabsincken konnte.<sup>34</sup>

In spite of all of the benefits which a wise Providence ensured would flow from this 'foolish enterprise' it was nevertheless a product of human ignorance and superstition. The young Werner seems though to have had some sympathy for those who were misled, the 'Kreuzträger . . . , welche sich mit einem Kreutze bezeichnen ließen,

<sup>31</sup> Novalis, *Schriften*, ed. Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel, second edition, vol. I, *Das dichterische Werk* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960), 233, 237.

<sup>32</sup> The 'oriflamme' was originally the church banner of the Abbey of St Denis, and it became the battle standard of French monarchs, but at the end of the *Schlachtgesang* Werner offers his readers a note explaining that the 'Oriflamme' was the chief banner of the Christian armies in the Crusades (445). Theodor Körner seems to give it a similar interpretation in his *An die Königin Luise* (*Werke*, ed. Hans Zimmer, 2 vols., Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, n.d., i. 91). In the prologue to *Der vierundzwanzigste Februar* it is not clear whether 'der Freiheit Oriflamm' (AS, vi. viii) refers ironically to the French forces, as the editor of the Reclam edition, Johannes Krogoll suggests (Universal-Bibliothek, 107, Stuttgart: 1967, 6), or to Napoleon's opponents.

<sup>33</sup> Erich Jenisch, 'Ein unbekannter Jugendaufsatz Zacharias Werners', *Euphorion*, xxxiv (1933), 413-37.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 422.

um sich in Palästina der Eroberung eines Grabes wegen schlachten zu lassen'.<sup>35</sup> It should be added too that, earlier, Werner's view of Napoleon could be much less hostile than in the period of the Wars of Liberation, especially when he was dealing with eminent men whom Napoleon had honoured. From Paris on 22 November 1808 he wrote to Goethe to congratulate him on Napoleon's award of the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and to express his pleasure – 'daß das Creutz sich Ihnen liebeich genähert hat'. He added that he had to express his respect for the one who had given the award – 'Deutschlands größter Lehrmeister'.<sup>36</sup>

One would be hard put to find originality in Werner's war poems. There is scarcely a sentiment that is not expressed (often much more vividly) by other poets of the period. It should be stressed though that by the standards of the time Werner's poems are comparatively moderate. Werner does not indulge in the prolonged savagery of Kleist's *Germania an ihre Kinder*, nor in the sadistic bloodlust of Körner's *Das Lied von der Rache*. He does not share the hatred of all things French that is such a marked feature of the sanguinary doggerel of Arndt, and one is spared the more grotesque polemics against Napoleon such as can be found in Johann Friedrich Schink's *Dem Korsen: Schand- und Schimpfode*. But his writings on the war are generally remote from the reality of war. One of their purposes was to propagate inspiring myths, and one cannot know to what extent Werner fell victim to his own propaganda. It is doubtful if he really believed that Germans were united in a common cause, with no thought of their region or state, or that German soldiers fought as latter-day Crusaders, or that their leaders saw themselves as humble instruments of God's wrath. He gives the impression that primarily the *Germans* were ranged to defeat Napoleon (with a little help from their friends). One oblique reference to the Thames is the only hint of an English contribution (AS, ii. 89). But one only has to read the account by a German military surgeon of the horrific aftermath of the battle of Leipzig or of excesses by Allied troops in France to realize how delusive this poetry was.<sup>37</sup>

At least Werner does not propagate the myth fostered by Körner and Arndt that the Wars of Liberation were a popular uprising against foreign rule. Körner wrote:

Es ist kein Krieg, von dem die Kronen wissen;  
Es ist ein Kreuzzug, 's ist ein heil'ger Krieg!<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, 425.

<sup>36</sup> Werner, *Briefe*, ii. 154. See also his comments on Johannes von Müller, ii. 95. On Werner's general lack of patriotism at this period see Louis Guinet, *De la Franc-Maçonnerie mystique au Sacerdoce, ou La Vie romantique de Friedrich-Ludwig-Zacharias Werner (1768–1823)* (Caen: Association des Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Caen, 1964), 196–9.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, *Die Befreiungskriege*, ed. Kleßmann, 192–5, 228, 236.

<sup>38</sup> Körner, *Aufruf*, i. 89.



If one reads letters and diaries of this period one can gauge the enormous enthusiasm that was indeed expressed for the German cause, but it came mostly *after* the Prussian king's appeal to his people, and it was voiced largely by middle-class intellectuals. Some German peasants engaged in sporadic protest against requisitions and quarterings, but in general they were conscripted into German armies and fought either for or against Napoleon as their rulers judged it advantageous. Unlike Russian or Spanish peasants they did not practice wholesale partisan warfare or a scorched-earth policy against the foreign occupier.

In *Viktoria und ihre Geschwister* Brentano's Corporal denounces 'die meisten neumodischen Kriegslieder':

Theils sind sie für Theaterhelden geschrieben  
Die hinten wieder aufstehn, wenn sie vorne geblieben;  
Theils sind sie wie papierne Helme erhaben,  
A la Kakadu, wie sie die Modehüt' haben. . . .

And he concludes:

Da lob ich mir die alten Kriegslieder doch,  
An denen man selber das Pulver roch!<sup>39</sup>

Werner's poems do rather read as if they had been written for 'Theaterhelden', or to be declaimed to uplift those who would never set foot on a battlefield. War experiences are not valued for their own sake. He writes nothing of the excitement of battle, the thrill of danger, the comradeship of the campfire. Werner was a pulpit-patriot, and his battle-songs reek of incense rather than gunsmoke. But if they are less graphic, less fervent, less rousing than those poems which did find their way into the school primers of many generations of German children, then that is hardly a cause for criticism or regret.

<sup>39</sup> *Brentano's Gesammelte Schriften*, vii. 344-5.