THE HISTORICAL WRITING OF HEINRICH VON SRBIK

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Of all the Austrian historians of this century, Heinrich von Srbik made the greatest impression upon his contemporaries.[1] During a productive period spanning the years 1904-1951, his work went through various phases, but a main trend was toward self-conscious identification with the tradition of German idealism and toward *Geistesgeschichte* (generously interpreted) as the frame for the treatment of political and historiographical themes. In the years of resurgent German nationalism, 1928-1945, he was the outstanding spokesman for the so-called all-German (*gesamtdeutsche*) point of view, and his four-volume work, *Deutsche Einheit,* is the classic expression of this historical conception. He had previously become widely known for a biography of Metternich, a product of his middle years, published in 1925. At the end of his life he produced a third major work, *Geist und Geschichte,* a history of German historical writing from the Middle Ages to his own day.

Srbik died at Ehrwald in Tirol on February 16, 1951, at the age of seventy-two. He had left Vienna early in 1945 when frequent air raids made it impossible for him to continue his lectures at the University. After the war he had not been permitted to resume his professorship because of earlier ties with the National Socialists; for the same reason he was denied a pension. He was arrested briefly by the French during their occupation of Tirol, and for some time thereafter he was required to report regularly to the police.

During these last bitter years Leopold von Ranke was much on his mind — Ranke who even as a young man during the War of Liberation against Napoleon "already felt an inner compulsion to observe what went on in the world as from a free, high watchtower."[2] In Srbik himself the tension had been greater. He too had felt the urge for the high tower, and he had an exceptional sense of vocation as an historian, but he could not ignore the

1. For the facts of Srbik's life I have depended particularly on Wilhelm Bauer, *Heinrich Srbik: Nachruf* (*Sonderdruck aus dem Almanach der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 101) (Vienna, 1952) and Adam Wandruszka, "Heinrich Ritter von Srbik," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 59 (1951).

2. Srbik, *Geist und Geschichte vom Deutschen Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart,* 2 vols. (Munich and Salzburg, 1950-51), I, 239.

siren call from the rushing political currents of the day. In yielding to temptation, in becoming politically engaged, his life gained in drama and pathos what it lost in serenity, and acquired a representative character and an interest as a piece of contemporary history which it might not otherwise have had for us.

I. EARLY LIFE

Srbik was born in Vienna November 10, 1878, and lived fifty-seven of his first sixty-seven years in Vienna. The Srbiks were of Czech origin, but long Germanized. Heinrich von Srbik's grandfather had risen to high rank in the Austrian government service, and was elevated to the nobility in 1868. Hence the title of *Ritter* in the Srbik name. Heinrich's father followed the same career and retired as *Hofrat* in the Imperial and Royal Ministry of Finance.

Contrasting with this bureaucratic old-Austrian tradition of the Srbiks was an academic West German background from the mother's side of the family. Heinrich von Srbik's maternal grandfather was the historian Wilhelm Heinrich Grauert, a Westphalian, who had been called to Vienna in 1850 from the University of Münster by Leo Thun, the Austrian *Kultusminister,* as part of his program of raising the scholarly standards of Austrian universities and strengthening their specifically Catholic character. After being trained as an ancient historian by Niebuhr, Grauert had turned to modern history and published several substantial works.[3] He survived the transplanting to Vienna only two years, just long enough to have the honor of founding the Historical Seminar at the University.

Heinrich von Srbik began life in the conventional world of the higher Viennese bureaucracy. There was, of course, deep veneration for the Emperor and devotion to the Habsburg Monarchy; at the same time — and this is where the influence of mother and grandmother was reportedly felt — Austrian patriotism was infused with a sense of being part of a Great German community whose political destiny was as yet unrealized.

The bent toward history was manifest before Srbik completed his secondary schooling at the aristocratic *Theresianum,* the academy founded by Maria Theresa to train young noblemen for service to the Habsburg state. Here he came under the influence of a teacher of rather exceptional attainments, Eugen Guglia, who later was to become editor of a Vienna newspaper and a *Hofrat,* and author of a number of books covering a wide range — biography, history, drama, belles lettres. He would appear to have been

3. Srbik published a study of his grandfather in the *Proceedings of the Austrian Academy of Sciences* 176 (1914) entitled "Ein Schüler Niebuhrs: Wilhelm Heinrich Grauert."

influential in guiding Srbik toward two of the lasting interests of his life — Leopold von Ranke and the age of Metternich. When Srbik was a student at the *Theresianum,* Guglia had already published the biography of Ranke which is still the best source for the facts about the great historian's life.[4] And Guglia at that time was also studying and publishing on the age of Metternich.

In 1897 Srbik matriculated at the University of Vienna. The following year, again influenced by Guglia, he applied successfully for acceptance by the Institute for Austrian Historical Research, which, like the historical seminar founded by Srbik's grandfather, had its origin in the zeal of Count Leo Thun to bring Austrian historical scholarship in line with the highest Western standards. It was modeled after the École des Chartes in Paris. The dominant influence in shaping its character had been Theodor Sickel, a strong-minded medievalist who believed in rigorous emphasis on paleography and the other disciplines required for the critical handling of medieval documents.

Looking back at the end of his life, Srbik had sharply critical words for the role of the Institute in the Austria of Franz Joseph. Modern history, he complained, was neglected, political history was neglected, and a great opportunity was missed to develop a national history of Great Austria with appropriate all-German overtones. This was partly due, he said, to the reluctance of the Austrian government after 1866 to promote a self-consciously German-national treatment of history or to use history to produce an all-German political attitude for fear of the reaction of the nationalities in the Monarchy. Instead, there was overemphasis on the "merely Austrian," for which a hard price eventually had to be paid not only in academic, but also in political terms.[5]

If the Institute kept itself aloof from pan-German influence, the same cannot be said of the university community as a whole while Srbik was a student there. In the year he matriculated, 1897, Badeni brought forth his famous ordinance putting the Czech language on a basis equal to German in the "inner administration" throughout Bohemia. The result was a wave of German-national resentment in Austria. The nationalist fever continued high for several years, not least of all in the university fraternities, which were centers of pan-German enthusiasm. Srbik belonged to one of the most nationalistic fraternities, the Gothia, which was also sharply radical in the anti-clerical sense.

In Srbik's day, there was somewhat less exclusive emphasis at the Institute on paleography and related disciplines than there had been at the time of

4. See T. v. Laue, *Leopold Ranke: The Formative Years* (Princeton, N.J., 1950), 223; Srbik, *Geist und Geschichte,* I, 420.

5. Srbik, *Geist und Geschichte,* II, 99.

Sickel, but although practically all attention was still directed to the Middle Ages, legal, administrative, economic, and social aspects of medieval history were receiving more attention, notably by Alfons Dopsch; and Oswald Redlich was already extending his interest to the political history of the modern period. Srbik often expressed regret in later years that he had not had more formal training in philosophy, and although he had exceptional capacity for assimilating vast quantities of printed matter, he does not seem to have been particularly widely read in the literature of intellectual history in his early years as a scholar. His interest in the history of historiography was, however, already keenly developed.

II. EARLY WORK

Srbik's first writings followed, not surprisingly, the pattern typical of the Institute in his day, for he was impressionable, eager to win the approbation of his masters and to establish himself on the academic ladder. His doctoral dissertation, written under Oswald Redlich's supervision, was on a medieval subject, "Burggraf Friedrich von Nürnberg," as was his first published work, "Die Beziehungen von Staat und Kirche in Österreich während des Mittelalters" (1904), which began as a study under Dopsch.

The Director of the Institute apparently perceived even at this time, however, that Srbik's bent lay more in the direction of modern history. In any case, upon completion of the doctorate in 1902, Srbik was appointed to the staff of the "Commission for Austrian Modern History" rather than to a research post in medieval history which was also open. Under the auspices of the Commission he undertook his first major scholarly work: the editing of Austria's state treaties with the United Netherlands. While he soon became involved in many other activities as well, the first volume of the *Treaties with the United Netherlands 1668-1722* occupied part of Srbik's time over the next ten years. The editorial task consisted not only in printing the treaty texts, but in describing on the basis of detailed research in the archives the historical background and the main stages in negotiating the treaties. This work was to be a very important part of what Srbik later was to describe as his "self-education" in modern history.

Meanwhile he had become in 1904 assistant in the Institute for Austrian Historical Research under the new director, Emil von Ottenthal. His own research was now increasingly concentrated in the field of economic history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and during the next thirteen years he produced, at regular intervals, respectable monographs aimed at a small audience of professional historians.[6] By 1917, when he was promoted,

6. *Der staatliche Exporthandel Österreichs von Leopold* I *bis Maria Theresia* (1907);

aged thirty-nine, to full professor at Graz University, his academic position was established, and at a flatteringly early age. But he had demonstrated no exceptional flair for economic history. If he had continued in this field, it may be doubted that he would have become, let us say, another Otto Hintze — a contemporary who, from somewhat similar beginnings, was to broaden the concept of social and economic history and to lay bare some of the assumptions of German idealist historiography.

In the decade before 1914 Srbik's concern with the political issues of the day does not seem to have been very intense. With the coming of the war, he satisfied his sense of patriotic obligation by working out an arrangement to be with the forces during the summer holidays, continuing his teaching during the remainder of the year.[7] He never altered his opinion that the Habsburg Monarchy had shown real cohesion under wartime stress. For its breakup, he always maintained, the Germans in Austria-Hungary had no need to blame themselves; their record in performing a supra-national role approached the limits of what was humanly possible.[8] Nor did the war convince him that democracy and parliamentary institutions on the western model were suited to Central European conditions.[9] He accepted the Republic of Austria on sufferance and with resignation, but with hopes fixed toward closer association with the Greater German community.

The dissolution of the Habsburg Empire did not divert Srbik from his work, however; nor did it diminish his conviction about the importance of the vocation of historian. If anything, the 1918 collapse seemed to have a stimulating effect upon him. He said goodbye to economic history and moved off in new directions.

III. *WALLENSTEIN*

The first major production of the "new Srbik" was *Wallensteins Ende: Ursachen, Verlauf und Folgen der Katastrophe,* published in 1920. It was a transitional work. On the one hand, the influence of the Institute for Austrian Historical Research was still very evident in the method. Indeed, of all Srbik's books, this is the one in which the primary sources are most to the fore and where Srbik concerned himself most intensively with their critical

Wilhelm von Schroeder: Beitrag zur Geschichte der Staatswissenschaften (1910); *Studien zur Geschichte des österreichischen Salzwesens* (1917).

7. Bauer, *Nachruf,* 335-336.

8. Srbik, "Die Bismarck-Kontroverse," *Wort und Wahrheit* 5 (1950), 929; *Geist und Geschichte,* II, 91.

9. See Srbik, *Metternich: Der Staatsmann und der Mensch,* 2 vols. (Munich, 1925), II, 568; also his "Die Wiener Revolution des Jahres 1848 in sozialpolitischer Beleuchtung," *Schmollers Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft* 43 (1919).

examination. On the other hand, in choosing a political theme, in focusing on a political figure of large proportions, and above all in isolating those aspects of the theme which seemed relevant to the history of political ideas, he was moving along lines which henceforth were to characterize his work. He had, in fact, chosen the high road of orthodox German historiography.

Srbik was not one to talk down to his readers. He generally presupposed that he was addressing an audience of scholars or of historically sophisticated laymen. Thus, in *Wallensteins Ende,* he plunged characteristically into the midst of things, beginning abruptly with the immediate background of Emperor Ferdinand II's command of January 24, 1634, that Wallenstein be taken prisoner or, failing that, be killed as a person convicted of crime.

Wallensteins Ende is not a tidy book. The narrative is interrupted for an analysis of the legal theory behind Ferdinand's command, there are digressions for critical appraisal of the sources, and the book tails off in a somewhat anticlimactical discussion of the polemical literature to which Wallenstein's execution immediately gave rise. Nevertheless, it succeeds in fixing the reader's attention while admitting him into the historian's workshop.

We have the *Wallenstein* in two versions, the original of 1920 and the new edition of 1952. Taken simply as a work of critical scholarship, the version of 1920 has not stood up well. Srbik implicitly recognized this by adding much new material to the 1952 edition, by rewriting whole sections, acknowledging his errors on substantial questions of fact, and modifying to some extent his interpretation of events.

The 1920 edition had two major flaws, which by 1950 had become conspicuously evident. The first arose from the fact that in 1920 Srbik had been unfamiliar with the most important recent work on Wallenstein, that of the Czech historian, Josef Pekař, who had published his history of the conspiracy of Wallenstein in the Czech language in 1895. It was one of the ironies of conditions prevailing in the Habsburg Empire in its last phase that a leading Austrian historian would address himself to a scholarly study of Wallenstein without being familiar with what his neighboring colleagues in Bohemia were doing in the same field. To be sure, Srbik later bestirred himself to see to it that Pekař's work was made available to a larger public, and with his encouragement a German edition was published in 1937. Srbik acknowledged in the new edition of his own *Wallenstein* that he had modified his views on certain substantial points as a result of studying Pekař, although he remained convinced until the end that Pekař, with his "positivistic methodology," had failed to come to grips with the psychological puzzle of Wallenstein's character.

The second deficiency concerns one of the main theses of Srbik's first edition, that Emperor Ferdinand II was the tool of Jesuit intrigues, and was greatly influenced in his attitude toward Wallenstein by the court preacher,

Johannes Weingartner. "It seems to me certain," Srbik concluded (1st edition, 270-271), that Weingartner was the author of three venomous tracts against Wallenstein, one of which, the *Perduellionis Chaos,* a hate-filled account of Wallenstein's "treasonable activities," had exercised a greater influence than any other source on the historiography of Wallenstein. The author was "clearly" a member of the Catholic clergy, "undeniably" a Jesuit. But in 1934 J. Bergl demonstrated conclusively that the author of the *Perduellionis Chaos* was not Josef Weingartner, not a Jesuit, not a Catholic priest, but an official of the Austrian crown, Johann Putz von Adlersthurn.

IV. *METTERNICH*

In 1922 Srbik was called to the University of Vienna. That same year his essay on Metternich in the collaborative volume *Meister der Politik* heralded a new focus of his attention. He had decided to write a fundamental study of the famous statesman; three years later two huge, fully annotated volumes were presented to the public.

That Srbik could have produced a work of such magnitude so quickly is astonishing, for he was performing his professorial duties at the same time. The achievement was possible partly because he made no attempt to go much beyond the printed sources. He dipped into the archives here and there, but not in a thorough way. In the introductory essay, monographic in length, he discusses the literature on Metternich in relentless detail, but there is not a word on the manuscript sources.[10]

In the circumstances prevailing during these years, the era of Metternich had acquired a new immediacy for Central Europeans. The times were congenial to revised historical appraisals. Political horizons had narrowed. The constricted European world which Ranke had analyzed in his "Great Powers" seemed singularly relevant once more, now that *Weltpolitik* and the Habsburg Empire had collapsed and Central Europe was turned in upon its own problems. Ludwig Dehio, contemplating this scene, has referred to "a renaissance of the old form of Rankeism" in the early 'twenties.[11] Srbik's *Metternich* reflected this atmosphere, but Srbik himself was not as comfortable in the world of Metternich as Ranke had been. In theory he could pay his respects to the supra-national values which he attributed to Metternich, but at heart Srbik was a nationalist and he knew it. This introduced an element of unease in the relation of author to subject.

10. See now G. de Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich and his Times* (London, 1962), 307-309; Arthur G. Haas, *Metternich, Reorganization and Nationality, 1813-1818* (Wiesbaden, 1963).

11. *Germany and World Politics in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1967), 67.

Metternich's primary appeal to Srbik was intellectual, and reflected a fairly newly acquired interest in intellectual history and the methods of the "cultural sciences" — an interest which he acknowledged had been inspired above all by Friedrich Meinecke. For Srbik the attraction of Metternich lay in the orderly coherence of his "principles" and his doctrinaire approach to politics. The core of the book is the section, over a hundred pages in length, where, after seeing Metternich through the settlement of 1815, he interrupts the narrative for an analysis of the essence of his "system," which he categorizes as "rationalistic naturalism." But there were, further, the lessons Metternich had drawn from his own experience. The deepest imprint on him had been made by the France of Napoleon: in many respects, the Napoleonic system of government was the prototype for the Metternich system (I, 342).

Although Metternich never became emotionally attached to Austria, the Austrian interest, according to Srbik, became the leitmotiv of his thoughts and actions as a statesman. But he pursued the Austrian interest in no exclusive sense. He saw Austria in its Central European setting, and he did not forget that Austria's true interests should somehow serve Europe as a whole.

Metternich's lack of feeling for the nation, any nation, was in Srbik's view his greatest weakness as a statesman. Indeed, in taking up the cudgels for him, Srbik feared that doubts might be cast on his own "deeply felt loyalty to the German people" (I, 49). Why, therefore, he became so emotionally engaged in defending Metternich's reputation remains something of a puzzle even after one has taken into account his conservative convictions, his Austrian loyalties, his high-minded resolve to understand Metternich in terms of the era that produced him, and his belief that *kleindeutsche* and liberal historians had given a distorted and unfair picture of his "hero."

Srbik has been criticized for not paying more attention to the details of Metternich's actions and methods as a working diplomat. Also, historians of differing points of view, but excellent stylists themselves, have disputed the literary quality of the work, describing it as "formless and wearisome," "shapeless," "weighed down with undigested material," and so on.[12] Few would deny, probably, that its final section, the more than 250 pages on Metternich after 1848, deserves these latter strictures. Taken as a whole, however, the *Metternich* is by no means unreadable, though the publisher, by giving it the format of a metropolitan telephone book and massing the print on the page, seemed bent on placing obstacles in the way.

It has a strong but convoluted design. There is a baroque architectural

12. Golo Mann, "Metternich," *Geschichte und Geschichten* (Frankfurt a. M., 1961), 488; A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918* (London, 1948), 270; Peter Viereck, *Conservatism Revisited* (New York, 1962), 159.

quality about it. The themes in the main are fully developed. One reads it as a long, a very long, essay. To have satisfied those who want a fully documented account of Metternich's diplomacy would have required a different kind of book — one on the order, possibly, of C.K. Webster's *Castlereagh*. Such was not Srbik's intention, but rather to produce a work of a different genre — a biography oriented toward the history of ideas. In developing his themes, however, Srbik relied heavily on abstractions which sometimes seem to serve as substitutes for rigorous analysis. (This, indeed, is a characteristic of his later work as a whole.) Thus, despite his emphasis on the importance of "Europe" in Metternich's thought and action, one learns more about the shadings of what Metternich understood by "Europe" from a brief chapter in Bertier de Sauvigny's *Metternich* than from Srbik's large tomes.

To examine in detail the reception of Srbik's *Metternich* would far exceed the scope of this paper.[13] The important point, as has often been remarked, is that since 1925 research and discussion concerning the "Metternich problem" have started off from Srbik and his theses.

The biography of Metternich put Srbik immediately in the front rank of German historians. It also made him a public figure in Austria during a time of ever greater domestic turmoil and economic trouble. To his countrymen, disturbed by the strife and gloomy about the outlook, Srbik had a message of hope and reconciliation. For all his loyalty to the old Austria of the Habsburgs, he viewed the future in terms of the community of German-speaking people. He could understand the attitude of the young academic "idealists" who were caught up in the enthusiasm of the "Movement" to rally the *Volksgemeinschaft* for a larger destiny. His own position was that of conservative with German-national overtones. In 1929, when the Police President of Vienna, Johannes Schober, who was popularly imagined to be a strong man for the critical hour, put together a government largely of non-parliamentary experts, Srbik was chosen minister of education, serving one eventful year.

V. ALL-GERMAN HISTORY

By Srbik's standard, the late 'twenties were years of relatively slight historical production.[14] In terms of the future, however, it was a period of much sig-

13. Srbik himself has given the subject minute and somewhat embarrassingly self-centered attention in the bibliographical supplement published posthumously as Volume III of the Metternich biography: *Quellenveröffentlichungen und Literatur: Eine Auswahlübersicht von 1925-1952* (Munich, 1954). See also Paul W. Schroeder, "Metternich Studies since 1925," *Journal of Modern History* 33 (1961).

14. His chief publication was a small book, *Das Österreichische Kaisertum und das Ende des Heiligen Römischen Reiches, 1804-1806* (Berlin, 1927).

nificance, for he was mapping out the course he was to follow as an historian during the next fifteen years. In September 1929 this was given programmatic formulation in an address entitled "Gesamtdeutsche Geschichtsauffassung,"[15] the "All-German Historical Conception." Although the address is brief, it deserves fairly detailed examination.

The point of departure was the continuing polemics over the older "small-German," "great-German" interpretations of German history. Two years before, at a congress in Graz, Srbik had distanced himself from the controversial tone of discussion, and had expressed the opinion that "a real *German* history" was needed which would give due respect to the historical development of both Prussia and Austria.[16]

In the address at Salzburg, he adopted the view that the German *Volk* provided the unifying theme for German history. He noted that young people, particularly, felt a strong urge to identify themselves with the entire German people, without regard to the states or geographic region where Germans were living. He described such a unifying history as an "existential need" of the German people, and called upon historians to approach it with a "consciousness of moral responsibility."

Did not such a conception mean the "politicizing" of history, making history the "servant of politics"? Not at all, said Srbik, for at all events, the scholarly or "scientific" aspect of the historian's activity must take precedence over the national-political aspect. Here Ranke remained the guide. The striving after exact knowledge for its own sake, cool detachment, freedom from moralizing judgments: these must remain the historian's watchwords. Ideas, Srbik continued, still echoing Ranke, are the dynamic forces in history. Although, to be sure, history is inseparable from the individual and the unique, there is nevertheless a "spirit of an epoch" which raises history beyond being a mere aggregate of facts. Remembering that men are driven along "the stream of time," are propelled by "Ideen" and that therefore it is more appropriate to speak of historical "fate" than of "guilt," it should be possible, said Srbik (now striking out on his own), to achieve a single history of the German *Volk,* which is a community united by "blood, speech, and culture, by space and fate." Such a history involved broadening the conventional geographic frame of German history. Thereby, Srbik said, we will achieve a more harmonious relation to the great ideas of the German past, to the universal, to the Central European and to the national-state ideas. Present circumstances, he concluded, have awakened the feeling of community among the German people everywhere. Our vision is sharpened again for the unifying elements in our German history, for Central Europe,

15. Published in the *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 8 (1930), 1-12.

16. *Historische Zeitschrift* 137 (1928), 416-417.

as well as for the "community of blood" (*Blutverbundenheit*) of *Deutschtum* throughout the world.

Reading this speech even forty years later, one is struck by its skillful blending of elements certain to appeal to the particular audience he was addressing. Stylistically it was Srbik at the top of his form — the famous biographer of Metternich expressing himself with urbane elegance. There was also the high moral tone and inspirational quality: the vision that to think in "all-German terms" was not merely to think about the past, but about a better future, elevated above party strife. And one could have this, one could be politically engaged, without losing one's scholarly virtue. For the tradition of German idealism, as exemplified in Leopold von Ranke, was still valid for historians. Indeed, Srbik seems to say, to approach *gesamtdeutsche* history in the spirit of Ranke is to give highest ethical expression to the vocation of historian.

The address was not lacking, however, in turns of phrase which the young men who had already put on brown shirts, or were about to do so, must have heard with approval — the "community of blood," *Volksgemeinschaft,* and so forth. Implicit in the address was the belief which was to become Srbik's tragic delusion — namely, that by invoking the spirit of Ranke, he could exorcize all ill effects of commitment to the "community of blood."

The monument to Srbik's all-German historical conception is his four-volume work, *German Unity*. Its subtitle, "The Idea and the Reality from the Holy Roman Empire to Königgrätz,"[17] proclaimed that the national theme was to be treated within the frame of the German idealist tradition. The first two volumes, breaking off at 1859, appeared in 1935, just when Austria was nearing the critical phase that was to culminate in *Anschluss* with Germany. The last two volumes, ending with the "German upheaval of 1866," were published in 1942.

The work has an imposing design. First, the main themes are introduced in a panoramic "book" of more than two hundred pages dealing with the old Reich from its beginnings in the early Middle Ages until its demise in the Napoleonic era. This book is entitled "The Thousand-year Reich." Then comes a second "book" of a hundred pages in which Srbik cast his eye once more over the "age of Metternich." Beginning with 1848 the work becomes monographic in character, the style more dense, the pace more pedestrian. The last two volumes particularly are the result of immense research. During the years Srbik was working on them, he was also editing the great documentary publication on Austria's German policy, 1859-1866,[18] which pro-

17. *Deutsche Einheit: Idee und Wirklichkeit vom Heiligen Reich bis Königgrätz,* 4 vols. (Munich, 1935-42).

18. *Quellen zur deutschen Politik Österreichs, 1859-66,* 5 vols. (1934-1938). Srbik

vided substantial underpinning for his effort to achieve comprehension of all aspects of *gesamtdeutsche* policy in the period. In the last chapter, he picked up the themes elaborated at the beginning, but gave them heavier accents and related them to the triumph of the Third Reich which he assumed was in the process of occurring.

Deutsche Einheit is *völkische* history as Srbik had outlined the concept in his Salzburg lecture in 1929 with the three main themes: the German national, the Central European, the universal. Ideally, in Srbik's view, these would be parts of a harmonious whole, with the *Volk* politically united, exercising its "great supra-national responsibility" to organize Central Europe (IV, 483), and actively aware of its universal mission. The reality, which Srbik explored with special intensity during the years 1859-1866, was something else again, but he believed the "idea" was about to reach a new stage of fulfillment in the Third Reich. In concluding his work he wrote: "Germany has [now in 1942] carried her thousand-year mission and role of leadership to the very frontiers of the Western World. . . . Not as imperialism, and not on the basis of a humanitarian ideal (*Menschheitsidee*), but grounded rather in a new idea, that of *Volkstum,* which recognizes the personalities of nations and organically attaches the small nations to the leadership of the great *Volk*" (IV, 483-484).

It would be no compliment to Srbik to ascribe these sentiments merely to a desire to ingratiate himself with the leaders of the Third Reich. To be sure, the cavalier way in which he kissed goodbye to the *Menschheitsidee* comes as something of a surprise. But most of what is in the last chapter was implicit, and much of it explicit, in the chapter written in the early 'thirties with which he had launched the work.

It is customary to refer to Srbik's "Central European point of view," but the "universalist" strain is just as characteristic, and is in some ways more interesting because it is harder to tie down. In the *Metternich* it appears as a favorite, but imprecise abstraction, sometimes apparently synonymous with "European." At other times it means supra-national, or is connected with general principles of political morality. In *Deutsche Einheit* its historical origins are more closely described: its Christian content, the heritage of Rome, the medieval emperor as perpetuator of Roman universalism, its strong power-political imperial element (I, 22), and so on. First and last it is a *German* universalism which Srbik is talking about, the consciousness of Germans over many centuries that they had a unique mission to fulfill for the entire Western world. For Srbik, this universalism — which in his usage had elements of romantic questing — was a major strain in German history.

Geographically, as well as in its intellectual origins, his universalism is that

had also been one of the editors of the eight-volume *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik von der bosnischen Krise 1908 bis zum Kriegsausbruch 1914* (1930).

of the Middle Ages: it is the world as known to medieval popes and emperors. It was the world also of Leopold von Ranke, concerning whom Srbik was to write:[19] "His universal-historical sphere of vision was limited from the outset to civilized mankind in the European-Near Eastern area. His world was the cultural world to which he felt himself belonging. The Slavs, the Far East, the ancient cultures of Peru and Mexico were far from him." Srbik might have been writing this about himself, even as to the Slavs.

Near the end of his life he still considered the *Deutsche Einheit* the high point of his creative efforts as an historian. He would have preferred *not* to be thought of primarily as the biographer of Metternich.[20] This is understandable, for the volumes on the years 1848-1866 are more solidly grounded than the *Metternich.* But in addition, the *Deutsche Einheit* was the work in which he achieved best the kind of synthesis he was striving for, in which the tradition of German idealism in his sense merged into a comprehensive conception of German, Central European, and universal history. On his own "objective" view he evidently saw his own place in German historiography in first instance in terms of the *Deutsche Einheit.*

Looking back from a certain distance, it does appear that the *Deutsche Einheit* was Srbik's most representative work, but his synthesis interests us not so much for its intrinsic validity — which is dubious — but rather because it expresses a significant point of view from an important period of German history.

Apart from the contrived character of its synthesis, the *Deutsche Einheit* has a further weakness which most works regarded as historical classics do not have: much of it is heavy going. Upon reading the last two volumes, Friedrich Meinecke wrote to S.A. Kaehler: "What a far cry from Sybel and Treitschke!" Much as one must admire Srbik's "enormous unrivaled knowledge," Meinecke continued, "what an agony" it was to read him. Kaehler agreed. Reading these volumes with their "fatiguing monotony of style, the heaping up of details" had been an agony for him too.[21] Most persons who have attempted to peruse the *Deutsche Einheit* will probably agree that the reactions of Meinecke and Kaehler are not unjust.

The last two volumes did not become much known until after the war, although, as we have seen, German scholars like Meinecke and Kaehler were conscientiously reading them as soon as they were published. The first two volumes, however, became at once widely known, also among specialists in the United States where, generally speaking, they were well received.[22]

19. *Geist und Geschichte* I, 288.

20. Adam Wandruszka, "Der Kutscher Europas," *Wort und Wahrheit* 14 (1959), 459.

21. Friedrich Meinecke, *Ausgewählter Briefwechsel,* ed. L. Dehio and Peter Classen (Stuttgart, 1962), 406-407, 430.

22. For some details see my "Recent German Literature on *Mitteleuropa," Journal of Central European Affairs* 3 (1943), 15-16.

In Germany itself, the political overtones were apparent at once. Two historians, conservatives in the *kleindeutsche* tradition — Fritz Hartung and Erich Brandenburg — took public issue with the implications of what Srbik had to say on "universalism" and *Mitteleuropa,* Hartung mildly, Brandenburg vigorously. Both of them interpreted his views as a veiled assertion of Germany's imperial mission, particularly to the East. Hartung felt it appropriate to note that "every attempt to achieve universal domination had shattered because of the opposition of the other nations."[23]

The *Historische Zeitschrift* gave its columns to Srbik for a reply of more than thirty pages. He charged Brandenburg with deficient national consciousness. He had forgotten "the millions of Germans who, in isolated groups and fragments, lived, and had to live, enmeshed and cramped with foreigners." He had forgotten "the precious blood of the millions in the Sudeten area, on the extremities and outposts in Hungary, Rumania, in Bessarabia and on the Volga, in the Baltic lands, in Jugoslavia and Tirol." "It is not my task to specify the future form of *Mitteleuropa,*" Srbik wrote. But these Germans must be brought into some sort of union with the Reich, while the rights of the other nationalities to statehood would also be respected. Such a union would be expressive of the universalism associated with the Austrian tradition. It would not be imperialistic.[24]

At the end of his life Srbik was at some pains to describe the differences between his *gesamtdeutsche* conception and the ideas of the National Socialists. The "all-German" conception, he said, "sought to achieve the greatest possible objectivity, it sought to combine Ranke's universalism and western consciousness with the *Mitteleuropa* and nation-state ideas; . . . it always asserted the primacy of 'knowing' over politics, it advocated as a matter of principle that historical judgment should be kept free from wishful thinking, and advocated the strictest intellectual and moral discipline in judging any party ideology."[25] It was a great injustice, he said, to lump the "all-German" historians with the National Socialists.

Be that as it may, the publication of the first two volumes of *Deutsche Einheit* coincided with a showering of friendly attention upon Srbik by well placed National Socialists. Most conspicuous among these was Walter Frank, the young activist who was just getting his "Reich Institute for the History of the New Germany" on its feet. The story of Frank and his Institute has

23. Fritz Hartung, "Preussen und die deutsche Einheit," *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* 49 (1937); Erich Brandenburg, "Deutsche Einheit," *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* 30 (1936).

24. H. v. Srbik, "Zur gesamtdeutschen Geschichtsauffassung," *Historische Zeitschrift* 156 (1937), 233-237.

25. *Geist und Geschichte* II, 346-348. The entire passage should be read.

now been told in exhaustive detail by Helmut Heiber.[26] Suffice it to say here that, among all German historians, Srbik is one of those who appears most frequently in Heiber's account.[27] Along with Karl Alexander von Müller and Erich Marcks, Srbik became a member of the honorary advisory council of the Reich Institute, thereby "enabling Frank to claim continuity with the great tradition of German historiography."[28] After Frank, in one of his many vendettas, had achieved Hermann Oncken's ouster as professor at Berlin University, he sought to bring Srbik there as Oncken's successor. This was the most prestigious professorship of history in Germany, and Srbik was tempted; but he finally decided to remain in Vienna. At this period, Adam Wandruszka reports,[29] there was a veritable competition between Berlin and Vienna to claim Srbik as their own. His standing was at its height. In 1936 Chancellor Schuschnigg discussed bringing him into his government, possibly as vice-chancellor.[30]

He was in much demand as a lecturer in Germany.[31] In one of these addresses, choosing as his theme, "*Mitteleuropa,* the Problem and the Attempts to Solve It,"[32] he summoned history to demonstrate that the quadrilateral Danzig-Trieste-Odessa-Riga ought to have become German, but did not. Therefore it "rightfully" belonged to Germany. Germany must acquire it by reasserting her "universalistic" drive and rule it by applying "universalistic" principles of political organization.

Following the *Anschluss,* honors continued to heap up. He was elected President of the Academy of Sciences in Vienna (1938) and was presented a sumptuous *Festschrift*[33] supported "in magnanimous fashion" by the new *Reich Statthalter* of Austria, Seyss-Inquart. Also, at Seyss-Inquart's nomination, he was chosen as a member of the German *Reichstag.* In May, 1938, he became a member of the NSDAP, explaining that he could thereby better represent the interests of the Academy of Sciences.[34]

26. *Walter Frank und sein Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands* (Stuttgart, 1966).

27. There are some 80 entries to his name in the index.

28. The words are those of Klaus Epstein in an extensive review of Heiber's book in *History and Theory* 7 (1968), 123-124.

29. *Geschichte der Republik Österreich,* ed. H. Benedikt (Vienna, 1954), 343-344.

30. Benedikt, *op. cit.,* 248; Bauer, *Nachruf,* 353.

31. *Österreich in der deutschen Geschichte* (Munich, 1936) consists of three addresses delivered at the University of Berlin in the winter of 1935/36. He also edited with Josef Nadler a volume on a similar theme: *Österreich: Erbe und Sendung im deutschem Raum* (Salzburg and Leipzig, 1936), to which he contributed a chapter "Austria in the Holy Roman Empire and in the German Confederation, 1521-1866."

32. *Mitteleuropa: Das Problem und die Versuche seiner Lösung in der deutschen Geschichte* (Weimar, 1938).

33. *Gesamtdeutsche Vergangenheit: Festgabe für Heinrich Ritter von Srbik* (Munich, 1938).

34. Bauer, *Nachruf,* 354.

Nevertheless, as Heiber's study makes clear, a cooling between Srbik and Frank set in not long after *Anschluss,* while feelings of solidarity with old friends like Meinecke and Oncken, whose scalps dangled from Frank's belt,[35] became stronger again. Before this happened, however, Srbik had borne with unedifying patience embroilment in Frank's many feuds. In 1937 he had gone so far as to write to Hitler supporting Frank, who at the time was battling to prevent appointment of a rival National Socialist as director of the Prussian State Archives.

After the *Anschluss* Srbik became a dubious asset to Frank. He was suspected of Habsburg, Catholic, and conservative prejudices, although actually, as Heiber remarks,[36] his views had not changed. He quarreled in 1940 with Frank in a petty case of academic patronage, and came publicly to Meinecke's defense when a protégé of Frank attacked Meinecke as a typical representative of a sterile generation. "For many years," Srbik wrote, "I have stood on entirely different political ground from Meinecke. I have not gone along with him in his change from conservative to democrat and as advocate of the Weimar republic, nor have I shared his views on the racial question. . . . But moral obligation bids me to express publicly my deepest respect for this gentlemanly character and strong thinker. . . . The name of Meinecke will have a place of honor in German historiography."[37] This was somewhat backhanded. Nevertheless, it was indicative of a drawing together of the ranks among older members of the guild.

Srbik's relations to National Socialism and National Socialists will doubtless receive detailed study sooner or later, and his growing disillusionment after 1938 will presumably be more fully documented. As we have seen, however, the broad lines of the external record are fairly clear. If there had been any instinctive revulsion against National Socialism's character, it was not manifest. The historian who had worried about the legal aspects of Ferdinand's order to eliminate Wallenstein in the seventeenth century was not, it would appear, significantly disturbed by the summary execution in 1934 of some estimable Catholics when the *S.A.* leader Roehm gave Hitler a pretext. Anti-semitism presented no great problem either. Srbik remained a pillar of the *Historische Zeitschrift* after a section on the Jewish question, presided over by the anti-semite Wilhelm Grau, had become a regular feature of that journal. To a noteworthy extent, however, those who knew Srbik on terms of friendship, whatever their personal destinies under the National Socialists, remained loyal to him. They were wont to say one should not be

35. Frank had forced Meinecke out of the editorship of the *Historische Zeitschrift* in 1935.

36. *Op. cit.,* 536.

37. *Historische Zeitschrift* 162 (1940), 338-339.

too hard on him; he was a scholar of exceptional capacity, but there was a softness in him, a vanity.

VI. *GEIST UND GESCHICHTE*

However strong the inner tensions may have been in the disillusioning years, especially after 1942, the amount of work he continued to do remained prodigious.[38] Even in his "exile" in Tirol, bitterly resentful at being deprived of his pension, in difficult financial circumstances, removed from libraries and facilities for research, he launched and brought to conclusion another major work, the history of German historiography to which he gave the title, *Geist und Geschichte vom Deutschen Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart.* It was made possible by the loyalty of friends who brought him quantities of books from Vienna. At Srbik's death in February 1951, the manuscript of Volume II was in the hands of Taras von Borodajkewycz, a former student closely associated with him in these years, and was quickly published.[39]

Geist und Geschichte, as Srbik described it, is an account of the "striving of the German mind after historical knowledge" (II, 366). It is historiography on the grand scale, as a part of the history of ideas, but not abstracted from the political environment. The canvas is large. German historiography, particularly through the eighteenth century, is portrayed against the background of the great European intellectual currents. Machiavelli and Guicciardini, Voltaire and Rousseau, Hume and Burke, Erasmus and Vico are as much a part of the story as are Leibniz, Pufendorf, and Herder. With the early nineteenth century, to be sure, the focus becomes more narrowly fixed on historical writing in the German language, and the account takes on increasingly the stamp of Srbik's great learning and command over a vast literature. He did not conceive of the work as for specialists only. It was designed also for the general reader with a serious interest in history. Despite its encyclopedic character, it rarely becomes a mere catalogue of names.

Classical scholarship, the history of art, medieval history, cultural history, church history, the history of legal institutions, economic and social history,

38. I shall not attempt to list the numerous writings of a special historical character published by Srbik during the war years. The principal work was a diplomatic study, *Wien und Versailles 1692-1697: Zur Geschichte von Strassburg Elsass und Lothringen* (Munich, 1944).

39. Borodajkewycz also assisted in the publication of the revised edition of Srbik's *Wallenstein* in 1952, as well as of the volume of Srbik's historical studies, *Aus Österreichs Vergangenheit: Von Prinz Eugen zu Franz Joseph* (Salzburg, 1949); this latter volume contained one new essay, "Vom politischen Denken des Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen."

the philosophy of history, the methodology of history, positivism, Marxism: the list merely suggests some of the large topics to which Srbik gives substantial space. Spengler receives the attention due a major figure, but Freud does not appear in the index. Significant historical writing with a liberal-democratic bias is conspicuous for its absence. Naturally, the idealist tradition in German historical writing to which Srbik himself gave allegiance is fully and sympathetically treated in its various manifestations. The work is dedicated to Friedrich Meinecke, whose influence is not only explicitly acknowledged, but evident in the work itself. As his own standpoint Srbik affirmed a "limited historicism" which rejected the relativity of values. "I do not doubt," he said, "their absoluteness" (I, 22). From what he subsequently said about his position on this perplexing problem[40] it would appear that it was similar to that of Meinecke in his later years when, in the words of Stuart Hughes, he had finally "gone back behind Troeltsch, behind Dilthey to the spiritual world . . . of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century idealism," and professed his belief in absolute values as an act of faith.[41]

The chapter on Ranke, nearly fifty pages in length, is Srbik at his magisterial best. Despite the familiarity of the subject, Srbik brought freshness as well as authority to it; his undeviating affinity to the Rankean historical vision made for an eminently sympathetic portrayal. Unlike Meinecke, whose experience of the German catastrophe had drawn him to Burckhardt's pessimistic outlook, Srbik continued to find congenial Ranke's optimism about the course of human affairs. To be sure, Burckhardt also received admiring treatment and almost a chapter of his own. Srbik thought the often-alleged contrast between Ranke and Burckhardt had been over-worked and that they were not so far apart in fundamentals.[42]

As for Meinecke himself, despite the homage, Srbik maintained certain reservations reflecting their differing political positions in years past. The "bloodlessness" of Meinecke's writings disturbed him. Was it not a grave deficiency that Meinecke did not properly appreciate "the elemental forces, the power of mass movements in history"?[43] Walther Hofer has expressed justified outrage that precisely Srbik should make this comment.[44]

In retrospect, it is at those moments when Meinecke reluctantly deferred to Srbik's gifts of prophecy that one feels a little sad for him, as for example when he wrote to Srbik in July 1940: "In these days you must be thinking often of your own ideas of the *Reich*. Sometimes one thought of them merely as romantic, but they were the premonition of what was coming. You see

40. Cf. *Geist und Geschichte* II, 369-372.
41. H. S. Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (New York, 1958), 244.
42. *Geist und Geschichte* II, 170.
43. Cf. *Geist und Geschichte* II, 292-293.
44. W. Hofer, "H. von Srbiks letztes Werk," *Historische Zeitschrift* 175 (1953), 63.

that I am ready to unlearn a good deal — but not everything, and in any case not what lies deepest."[45]

Another historian judged by Srbik to be deficient in understanding the elemental forces was Erich Brandenburg who, as we have seen, not only perceived what the *Deutsche Einheit* was about, but subjected it to forthright criticism when it took courage to do so. Srbik brushed Brandenburg off with the comment that, all his life, he showed himself incapable of appreciating historical idealism and the influence on history of *völkische* movements.[46] This does not mean that Srbik dealt harshly in principle with historians of the *kleindeutsche* persuasion. Most of them received generous appraisal. Indeed, Erich Marcks, who described Weimar as "enslavement" and "bestowed love and devotion on the Third Reich," was prized as "the last of the great political historians; he shared the spirit of Treitschke, and fused it entirely with the spirit of Goethe and Ranke."[47]

As might be expected, Srbik gave appreciative and extensive treatment to historians who wrote from a Catholic, Great German, or Austrian point of view. This does not mean, as is sometimes intimated, that Srbik's own historical outlook was pronouncedly Catholic.[48] While nominally Catholic, he rarely participated, it is said, in formal religious observance, though in his last years he did draw closer to the Church. During World War II his university fraternity, the Gothia, reportedly demanded that he leave the Church; he refused and resigned from the fraternity.[49] Actually a Catholic bias is scarcely to be detected in his works.

There is, however, a strong personal element in *Geist und Geschichte*. The last chapter, containing Srbik's profession of faith as an historian, is at once a reassertion of his idealist position and a rejection of the emphasis on national values in his earlier "all-German" pronouncements. He stressed once more his belief in the historian's high moral responsibility, which carried with it the imperative for "courage in acknowledging one's own errors in one's own past" (II, 369). While this is as close as he came to a *pater peccavi,* the entire chapter is a reassessment of what he had been writing since 1929. Overarching the nation and the state, he affirmed, is "the supra-national order of values whose purest origins are in Christian universalism and idealistic humanism" (II, 371). He called for a saving return to the transcendent as an expression of the deep need of the human soul for the metaphysical. There were, he was convinced, "higher forces" (*Kräfte*), unknowable to reason, which we can only divine, can only sense (*ahnen*)

45. Meinecke, *Ausgewählter Briefwechsel,* 194.
46. *Geist und Geschichte* II, 14.
47. *Geist und Geschichte* II, 18-20.
48. Cf. W. Hofer, "H. von Srbiks letztes Werk," 56, 60.
49. Based on a conversation with Taras von Borodajkewycz, December 29, 1959.

(II, 373). He believed in an ultimate harmony which justified the historian in regarding "ideas of humanity and morality, of fatherland, of the nation, the West, Europe, and Christian brotherhood" as parts of a whole. The encounter with the National Socialist "reality" had strengthened his belief that Goethe and Ranke had been on the right track. His final word to the new generation was to take up the torch in their spirit.

From what has already been said, however, it must be evident that *Geist und Geschichte* was not permeated throughout with the spirit of its last chapter. Indeed, that the Srbik of the all-German historical view would vanish without a trace — he who so recently had seen in National Socialism the fulfillment of the "idea" — would be too much to expect. The all-German Srbik is much present, as is also the "objective" Srbik. Already in his address of 1929, as we have noted, he had called for an objectivity deriving from the view that there is "more fate than guilt in history." His discussion of the National Socialists was infused with this "understanding" spirit which Meinecke, upon reading *Deutsche Einheit,* had impatiently labeled "soft magnanimity."[50] As we have seen, this did not mean that Srbik believed historians should avoid value judgments. "It is not only permissible for us to make them," he said; "it is necessary."[51] But it was not in his heart to be harsh with those who had erred by misguided devotion to the *Volk.*

Srbik faced quite openly his own "all-German conception" as a phase in German historical thinking. In a chapter to which he gave no general title he lumped the all-German view with *Volkskunde,* racial theories, and National Socialist historical ideas, thereby placing his own position in German historiography, or at least one important phase of his work, in close proximity to the more extreme exponents of nationalist attitudes in the first half of the twentieth century.

VII. IDEALISM AND NATIONALISM

The question arises: how did he get in such company? How did it happen that an historian who never ceased to think of himself as in the German idealist tradition should land where he did? Was there something intrinsic in German idealism which eased the passage?

For Srbik, certainly, historical idealism presented no substantial obstacle to his pan-German nationalism. With his conservative, bureaucratic, *bürgerliche* attitudes, with his skepticism toward Western-style democracy, he was in accord with most German academic historians of his generation. He

50. Meinecke, *Ausgewählter Briefwechsel,* 406-407.
51. *Geist und Geschichte* II, 369-370.

shared with them a common historiographical allegiance.[52] Of course, the most eminent — the Meineckes, the Gerhard Ritters — rejected National Socialism. Nevertheless, Srbik felt no great gulf had opened between him and them when he espoused the cause of the NSDAP. Out of his Austrian experience and with his predilection since early manhood for the German-national cause, it apparently seemed a natural step to take.

But that Srbik also was seduced by the "cunning" of his own idealist version of historical truth likewise seems plausible. For while he had great respect for the results of research, neither research nor reason, he was convinced, would of themselves bring knowledge of the "higher forces" which move mankind. One might, however, with the buttressing of scholarly research, "divine" these forces, "sense" them.[53]

A corollary of this conviction, that the power to sense the elemental forces in history is the highest attribute of the historian, is the belief that some acquire this capacity to an exceptional degree. "What marvel," Ranke had exclaimed, "when gradually you advance to a point where with *justified self-confidence* [italics mine] you can divine . . . which turn mankind took in each age, what it aimed for, what it acquired and what it truly gained."[54] The internal evidence of Srbik's writings, and this is certainly no less apparent in those of his later years, suggests that he too had acquired substantial confidence in his powers of historical divination.[55] He thought he had "sensed" the higher forces and that this was historical reality.

In one of his best-known essays, published in 1929, Meinecke had warned against excessive reliance on divination "without traveling the wearisome detours of detailed inquiry."[56] He had in mind the influence which the poet Stefan George at the time was exercising on a number of German historians. Those who employed the methods of the George circle, he asserted, were almost bound to end up by "embracing a self-created fantasy."

52. Cf. now Georg G. Iggers, *The German Idea of History* (Middletown, Conn., 1968). I have only been able to consult this important book during the final revision of this paper.

53. See *Geist und Geschichte* I, 183-184, 261; II, 263, for the concept of historical divination among various writers with whom Srbik felt intellectual kinship. Cf. also T. v. Laue, *Ranke,* 43.

54. Inaugural address of 1836, quoted by v. Laue, *Ranke,* 41. Cf. Ralf Dahrendorf's critical discussion of the "elite theory of manifest truth" in *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York, 1967), 149-163.

55. In the newly written portions of the revised *Wallenstein* these accents are strong, as well as in his essay on Prince Eugene (footnote 39 above). Cf. my "Prince Eugene of Savoy and Central Europe," *American Historical Review* 57 (1951), and "Prince Eugene of Savoy: Two New Biographies," *Journal of Modern History* 38 (1966).

56. "Kausalitäten und Werte in der Geschichte," translated in *Varieties of History,* ed. Fritz Stern (New York, 1956), 276.

Srbik, too, had misgivings about some aspects of George's influence on historians. Rejection of the striving after objectivity and lack of respect for "rational research" were attitudes to which he could not subscribe. Yet there was much in the outlook of George and his disciples which was congenial to Srbik — the antipathy to positivism, the concern to discover creative forces in history, the belief in the "transcendence of perception," and so forth. While he did not share their predilection for pessimistic prophesy, he too reached for an "intuitive grasp of essences and totalities." Perhaps he was too confident that conscientious scholarship and vast learning, combined with a striving for objectivity, would ward off self-created fantasies.[57]

On October 16, 1935, in a letter to Walter Frank expressing regret that he could not be present at the opening ceremonies of the Reich Institute, Srbik had written: "I am certain that the Institute will unite the valuable inheritance of German scholarship . . . with the ardent drive for the formation of national (*volkhaften*) thinking and willing, and that it will strive for . . . a harmony of fighting (*kämpfender*) scholarship with that which acknowledges Ranke for its inspiration."[58] Taking the record as we have it, there is little reason to doubt that Srbik meant this sincerely. He truly hoped for the synthesis of Ranke and *kämpfende Wissenschaft,* of Goethe and the all-German conception of history. His own most ambitious historical work sought to achieve it. That this brought him in close proximity to the National Socialists, he was quite "objective" enough to admit. His significance in contemporary historiography is primarily connected with this linkage which he sought to bring about between the tradition of German idealism and a dynamic all-German nationalism. By the end of his life, he felt the failure. His confidence in national values was shaken. By an ironic twist of fate, the supra-national values he had ascribed to Metternich, but which he himself had only half-heartedly believed in, seemed to have acquired validation. He never, however, lost faith in the idealist version of history.[59]

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57. See *Geist und Geschichte* II, 317-318. For a discussion by a member of the George circle: Friedrich Wolters, *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst* (Berlin, 1930), 478-493.

58. The letter is published in the *Historische Zeitschrift* 153 (1936), 221-222, together with Frank's reply, Frank's telegram to Hitler, and Hitler's reply.

59. For an appraisal of the idealist tradition in post-1945 German historiography, see G. Iggers, *German Idea of History,* Chap. VIII; also Walther Hofer, "Der geistige Kampf um des Historischen Idealismus," *Geschichte zwischen Philosophie und Politik* (Stuttgart, 1956).