



Martin Heidegger
Political Texts, 1933-1934

Labor Service and the University*
(June 20, 1933)

In the future, the *school* will no longer enjoy its exclusive position in education. With the *Labor Service*, there has arisen a new and decisive force for education [*Erziehungsmacht*]. The *work camp* is now taking its place alongside home, youth league, military service, and school.

A new institution for the direct revelation of the *Volksgemeinschaft* is being realized in the work camp. In the future, young Germans will be governed by the knowledge of *labor*, in which the Volk concentrates its strength in order to experience the hardness of its existence, to preserve the momentum of its will, and to learn anew the value of its manifold abilities. The work camp is at the same time a camp for training leaders in all social groups [*Stände*] and professions. For what counts in the camp is exemplary acting and working together, but not standing by and supervising. And least of all capable of grasping the new reality of the work camp are those who visit such a camp one time as "sightseers."

Not only does the work camp awaken and educate to the knowledge of the laboring community of all social groups [*die arbeitende Gemeinschaft aller Stände*], but in the future, this knowledge, rooted in the souls of young Germans, will also have a purifying effect on the *school* and will legislate what it can and cannot, and should and should not, do.

At the same time, the work camp is, as an educational institution in its own right, becoming a new source of those energies through which all other educational institutions-especially the school-are being forced to decide where they stand [*zur Entscheidung gezwungen*] and are being transformed.

Our university is surrounded in the immediate vicinity by work camps that are co-supervised by teachers from this school.

A new reality is present in the work camp. This reality serves as a symbol for the fact that our university is opening itself to the new force for education embodied in the Labor Service. Camp and school are resolved to bring together, in reciprocal give and take, the educational forces of our Volk into that new rooted unity from which the Volk in its State will commit itself to act in accordance with its destiny.

[* Appeared in the *Freiburger Studentenzeitung*. This organ, in which many of Heidegger's political tracts and speeches from the early 1930s appeared, was published by the Freiburg Student Association, which had become the official Nazi student organization.

In his May 27, 1927 Rectoral Address, Heidegger refers to three types of "service" that should be rendered by students to the state: "labor service," "military service," and "service in knowledge." In order to understand the significance of Heidegger's repeated emphasis on the virtues of "labor service," it is important to realize that in the early stages of the Nazi regime, "labor camps" were deemed important vehicles of National Socialist indoctrination, in which the differences among various social classes would be leveled, resulting in the creation of a homogeneous and seamless *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community).]

The University in the New Reich* (June 30, 1933)

We have the new Reich and the university that is to receive its tasks from the Reich's will to existence. There is revolution in Germany, and we must ask ourselves: Is *there revolution at the university as well?* No. The battle still consists of skirmishes. So far, only on one front has a breakthrough been achieved: because the education of young people is now occurring [*durch die Bildung neuen Lebens*] in the work camp and educational association [*Erziehungsverband*] as well as at the university, the latter *has been relieved of educational tasks* to which it *has till now believed it had an exclusive right*.

The possibility could exist that the university will suffer death through oblivion and forfeit the last vestige of its educational power. It must, however, be *integrated again into the Volksgemeinschaft* and *be joined together with the State*. The university must again become an educational force that draws on knowledge to educate the State's leaders to knowledge. This goal demands three things: 1) knowledge of today's university; 2) knowledge of the dangers today holds for the future; 3) new courage.

Up to now, *research* and *teaching* have been carried on at the universities as they were carried out for decades. Teaching was supposed to develop out of research, and one sought to find a pleasant balance between the two. It was always only the point of view of the teacher that spoke out of this notion. No one had concerned himself with the university as community. Research *got out of hand* and concealed its uncertainty behind the idea of international scientific and scholarly progress. Teaching that had become aimless hid behind examination requirements.

A fierce battle must be fought against this situation in the National Socialist spirit, and this spirit cannot be allowed to be suffocated by humanizing, Christian ideas that suppress its unconditionality. Nor is it enough if one wishes to take the new situation [*dem Neuen*] into account by painting everything with a touch of political color. Of great *danger* are the *noncommittal plans and slogans* that are turning up everywhere; and so, too, is the "*new*" *concept of Wissenschaft*, which is nothing more than the old one with a slight anthropological underpinning. All of the talk about "politics" is nonsense as well, for it does nothing to put an end to the old routine way of doing and thinking about things [*demalten Schlendrian*]. What the real gravity of the new situation [*des Neuen*] calls for is the experience of affliction [*Not*], *is the active engagement with real conditions* [*die zugreifende Auseinandersetzung mit den wirklichen Zuständen*]. Only *that activity is justified* that is *performed with full inner commitment to the future*. The warning cry has already been sounded: "Wissenschaft is endangered by the amount of time lost in martial sports and other such activities." But what does that mean, to lose time, when it is a question of fighting for the State! *Danger* comes not from *work for the State*. It comes only from indifference and resistance. For that reason, only true strength should have access to the right path, but not halfheartedness.

New courage allows these dangers to be seen clearly. Only it alone opens our eyes to that which is to come and which is now emerging. It forces each teacher and pupil to *make up his mind about the fundamental questions of Wissenschaft*, and this decision is of epochal importance, for on it depends whether we Germans shall remain a people that is, in the highest sense of the word, knowing. The new teaching which is at issue here does not mean

conveying knowledge, but allowing students to learn and inducing them to learn. This means allowing oneself to be beset by the unknown and then becoming master of it in comprehending knowing; it means becoming secure in one's sense for what is essential. It is from such teaching that true research emerges, interlocked with the whole through its rootedness in the Volk and its bond to the State. The student is forced out into the uncertainty of all things, in which the necessity of engagement [*Einsatz*] is grounded. *University study must again become a risk [Wagnis]*, not a refuge for the cowardly. Whoever does not survive the battle, lies where he falls. The new courage must accustom itself to steadfastness, for the battle for the institutions where our leaders are educated will continue for a long time. It will be fought out of the strengths of the new Reich that Chancellor Hitler will bring to reality. A hard race [*Geschlecht*] with no thought of self must fight this battle, a race that lives from constant testing and that remains directed towards the goal to which it has committed itself. It is a battle to determine who shall be the *teachers* and *leaders* at the university [*ein Kampf f um die Gestalt des Lehrers and des Führers an der Universitiit*].

[* A speech given by Heidegger as part of a series of political lectures organized by the Heidelberg Student Association, which appeared in the *Heidelberger Neuste Nachrichten*, July 1, 1933. It is of interest to note that In Heidegger's two post festum justifications of his activities as rector, *Das Rektorat 1933-34: Tatsachen and Gedanken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983) and *Der Spiegel's* interview, "Only a God Can Save Us," Heidegger claims that he accepted the position only in order to prevent the rampant politicization of university life. Yet in "The University in the New Reich," as well as other speeches, it is clear that Heidegger set little store by "academic freedom" in the traditional sense. Instead, as we see, his program held that the university must be "integrated again into the *Volksgemeinschaft* and be joined together with the State ... in the National Socialist spirit."]

German Students* (November 3, 1933)

The National Socialist revolution is bringing about the total transformation of our German existence [*Dasein*].

In these events, it is up to you to remain the ones who always urge on and who are always ready, the ones who never yield and who always grow.

Your will to know seeks to experience what is essential, simple, and great.

You crave to be exposed to that which besets you most directly and to that which imposes upon you the most wide-ranging obligations.

Be hard and genuine in your demands.

Remain clear and sure in your rejection.

Do not pervert the knowledge you have struggled for into a vain, selfish possession. Preserve it as the necessary primal possession of the leader [*führerischen Menschen*] in the *volkisch* professions of the State. You can no longer be those who merely attend lectures [*die nur "Hörenden"*]. You are obligated to know and act together in the creation of the future university [*hohe Schule*] of the German spirit. Every one of you must first prove and justify each talent and privilege. That will occur through the force of your aggressive involvement [*Einsatz*] in the struggle of the entire Volk for itself.

Let your loyalty and your will to follow [*Gefolgschaftswille*] be daily and

hourly strengthened. Let your courage grow without ceasing so that you will be able to make the sacrifices necessary to save the essence of our Volk and to elevate its innermost strength in the State.

Let not propositions and "ideas" be the rules of your Being [*Sein*].

The Führer alone is the present and future German reality and its law. Learn to know ever more deeply: from now on every single thing demands decision, and every action responsibility.

Heil Hitler!

Martin Heidegger, Rector

[* An appeal launched by Heidegger on the occasion of the plebiscite of November 12, 1933 called by Hitler to sanction (ex post facto) Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations. Joachim Fest has referred to this plebiscite as "one of [Hitler's] most effective chess moves in the process of consolidating his power within Germany" (see Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler*, translated by Richard and Clara Winston [New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1974], p. 439). Fest continues: "Since Hitler had intertwined his policies as a whole with the resolution to withdraw from the League by framing his plebiscite question in general terms, there was no way for the voter to express approval of his position on the League of Nations and at the same time condemn his domestic policies." That in his speech Heidegger accepted the Nazi Party line as suggested by Fest is illustrated by his remark in the following speech, "German Men and Women," that "there are not separate foreign and domestic policies." In other words, one should not quibble over individual aspects of the Nazi program. Either one accepts it as a whole, or one does not accept it at all. And thus, the November 12 plebiscite, though nominally concerned with a question of foreign policy, must be treated as a general confirmation of the National Revolution.]

German Men and Women!* (November 10 1933)

The German people has been summoned by the Führer to vote; the Führer, however, is asking nothing from the people. Rather, he is *giving* the people the possibility of making, directly, the highest free decision of all: whether it - the entire people - wants its own existence [*Dasein*] or whether it does *not* want it.

This election simply cannot be compared to all other previous elections. What is unique about this election is the simple greatness of the decision that is to be executed. The inexorability of what is simple and ultimate [*des Einfachen and Letzten*], however, tolerates no vacillation and no hesitation. This ultimate decision reaches to the outermost limit of our people's existence. And what is this limit? It consists in the most basic demand of all Being [*Sein*], that it preserve and save its own essence. A barrier is thereby erected between what can be reasonably expected of a people and what cannot. It is by virtue of this basic law of honor that a people preserves the dignity and resoluteness of its essence.

It is not ambition, not desire for glory, not blind obstinacy, and not hunger for power that demands from the Führer that Germany withdraw from the League of Nations. It is only the clear will to unconditional self-responsibility in enduring and mastering the fate of our people.

That is *not* a turning away from the community of nations. On the contrary - with this step, our people is submitting to that essential law of human existence to which every people must first give allegiance if it is still to be a people. It is only out of the parallel observance by all peoples of this unconditional demand of self-responsibility that there emerges the possibility of taking one another

seriously so that a community can be affirmed.

The will to a true community of nations [*Völkergemeinschaft*] is equally far removed both from an unrestrained, vague desire for world brotherhood and from blind tyranny. Existing beyond this opposition, this will allows peoples and states to stand by one another in an open and manly fashion as self-reliant entities [*das offene and mannhafte Aufsich- und Zueinanderstehen der Völker and Staaten*].

The choice that the German people will now make is simply as an event in itself, and independent of the outcome—the strongest evidence of the new German reality embodied in the National Socialist State.

Our will to national [*volkisch*] self-responsibility desires that each people find and preserve the greatness and truth of its destiny [*Bestimmung*]. This will is the highest guarantee of security among peoples; for it binds itself to the basic law of manly respect and unconditional honor.

On November 12, the German people as a whole will choose *its* future. This future is bound to the Führer. In choosing this future, the people cannot, on the basis of so-called foreign policy considerations, vote *Yes* without also including in this *Yes* the Führer and the political movement that has pledged itself unconditionally to him. There are not separate foreign and domestic policies. There is only the one will to the full existence [*Dasein*] of the State.

The Führer has awakened this will in the entire people and has welded it into a single resolve.

No one can remain away from the polls on the day when this will is manifested.

Heidegger Rector

[* Another appeal to support the upcoming plebiscite, published by Heidegger in the *Freiburger Studentenzeitung*.]

Declaration of Support for Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist State (November 11, 1933)*

German teachers and comrades!

German Volksgenossen and Volksgenossinnen!

The German people has been summoned by the Führer to vote; the Führer, however, is asking nothing from the people. Rather, he is giving the people the possibility of making, directly, the highest free decision of all: whether the entire people wants its own existence [*Dasein*] or whether it does *not* want it.

Tomorrow the people will choose nothing less than its future.

This election remains absolutely incomparable with all previous elections. What is unique about this election is the simple greatness of the decision that is to be executed. The inexorability of what is simple and ultimate [*des Einfrachen und Letzten*] tolerates no vacillation and no hesitation. This ultimate decision reaches to the outermost limit of our people's existence. And

what is this limit? It consists in the most basic demand of all Being [*Sein*], that it keep and save its own essence. A barrier is thereby erected between what can be reasonably expected of a people and what cannot. It is by virtue of this basic law of honor that the German people retains the dignity and resoluteness of its life. However, the will to self-responsibility is not only the basic law of the people's existence; it is also the fundamental event in the bringing about of the people's National Socialist State. From this will to self-responsibility, every effort, be it humble or grand, of each social and occupational group [*Stand*] assumes its necessary and predestined place in the social order [*in den Standort and Rang ihrer gleich notwendigen Bestimmung*]. The labor of the various groups [*Stände*] supports and strengthens the living framework of the State; labor reconquers for the people its rootedness; labor places the State, as the reality of the people, into the field of action of all essential forces of human Being.

It is not ambition, not desire for glory, not blind obstinacy, and not hunger for power that demands from the Führer that Germany withdraw from the League of Nations. It is only the clear will to unconditional self-responsibility in suffering and mastering the fate of our people. That is *not* a turning away from the community of peoples. On the contrary: with this step, our people is submitting to that essential law of human Being to which every people must first give allegiance if it is still to be a people.

It is only out of the parallel observance by all peoples of this unconditional demand of self-responsibility that there emerges the possibility of taking each other seriously so that a community can also be affirmed. The will to a true national community [*Volksgemeinschaft*] is equally far removed both from an unrestrained, vague desire for world brotherhood and from blind tyranny. Existing beyond this opposition, this will allows peoples and states to stand by one another in an open and manly fashion as self-reliant entities [*das offene and mannhafte Aufsich- and Zueinanderstehen der Völker and Staaten*]. What is it that such a will brings about? Is it reversion into barbarism? No! It is the averting of all empty negotiation and hidden deal-making through the simple, great demand of self-responsible action. Is it the irruption of lawlessness? No! It is the clear acknowledgment of each people's inviolable independence. Is it the denial of the creative genius of a spiritual [*geistig*] people and the smashing of its historical traditions? No! It is the awakening of the young who have been purified and are growing back to their roots. Their will to the

So State will make this people hard towards itself and reverent towards each genuine deed.

What sort of event is this then? The nation is winning back the *truth* of its will to existence, for truth is the revelation of that which makes a people confident, lucid, and strong in its actions and knowledge. The genuine will to know arises from such truth. And this will to know circumscribes the right to know. And from there, finally, the limits are measured out within which genuine questioning and research must legitimize and prove themselves. Such is the origin of *Wissenschaft*, which is constrained by the necessity of self-responsible *völkisch* existence. *Wissenschaft* is thus the passion to educate that has been restrained by this necessity, the passion to want to know in order to make knowing. To *be* knowing, however, means to be master of things in clarity and to be resolved to action.

We have declared our independence from the idol of thought that is without foundation and power. We see the end of the philosophy that serves such

thought. We are certain that the clear hardness and the sure, steady competency [*werkgerechte Sicherheit*] of unyielding, simple questioning about the essence of Being are returning. For a *volkische* Wissenschaft, the courage either to grow or to be destroyed in confrontation with Being [*dem Seienden*], which is the first form of courage, is the innermost motive for questioning. For courage lures one forward; courage frees itself from what has been up to now; courage risks the unaccustomed and the incalculable. For us, questioning is not the unconstrained play of curiosity. Nor is questioning the stubborn insistence on doubt at any price. For us, questioning means: exposing oneself to the sublimity of things and their laws; it means: not closing oneself off to the terror of the untamed and to the confusion of darkness. To be sure, it is for the sake of this questioning that we question, and *not* to serve those who have grown tired and their complacent yearning for comfortable answers. We know: the courage to question, to experience the abysses of existence and to endure the abysses of existence, is in itself already a *higher* answer than any of the all-too-cheap answers afforded by artificial systems of thought.

And so we, to whom the preservation of our people's will to know shall in the future be entrusted, declare: the National Socialist revolution is not merely the assumption of power as it exists presently in the State by another party, a party grown sufficiently large in numbers to be able to do so. Rather, this revolution is bringing about *the total transformation of our German existence* [*Dasein*]. From now on, each and every thing demands decision, and every deed demands responsibility. Of this we are certain: if the will to self-responsibility becomes the law that governs the coexistence of nations, then each people can and must be the master who instructs every other people in the richness and strength of all the great deeds and works of human Being [*Sein*].

The choice that the German people must now make is, *simply as an event in itself*, quite independently of the outcome, the strongest expression of the new German reality embodied in the National Socialist State. Our will to national [*völkisch*] self-responsibility desires that each people find and preserve the greatness and truth of its destiny [*Bestimmung*]. This will is the highest guarantee of peace among nations, for it binds itself to the basic law of manly respect and unconditional honor. The Führer has awakened this will in the entire people and has welded it into *one* single resolve. No one can remain away from the polls on the day when this will is manifested. Heil Hitler!

[* Address presented by Heidegger at an election rally held by German university professors in Leipzig in support of the upcoming plebiscite.]

A Word from the University* (January 6, 1934)

This retrospective look at its own history obligates the *Freiburger Zeitung* to commit itself to the future. The more directly the individual states that existed previously are absorbed by the new National Socialist State, the more resolutely the ethnic-cultural character [*das Volkstum*] of each Gau must be awakened and preserved in its original form; for only then will the entire Volk be able to develop its manifold strengths for creating a state. It was in order to realize this task that German education brought its work in line with the National Socialist political will [*Staatswille*]. The university is becoming the highest political school for the people of the region where it is located. This newspaper, however, which is limited to and bound to the concerns and traditions of the Alemannic people, must not merely print the occasional report on school celebrations or faculty appointments. It must transform the

educational work of the school into public state-mindedness in the village and, in the city, into a political existence that remains bound to the rural areas.

Heidegger

Rector of the University of Freiburg

* An article written by Heidegger on the occasion of the sesquicentennial of the *Freiburger Zeitung*.

The Call to the Labor Service* (January 23, 1934)

The new path that is being followed by the education of our German young men [*Jungmannschaft*] leads through the Labor Service.

Such service provides the basic experience of hardness, of closeness to the soil and to the implements of labor, of the rigorous law that governs the simplest physical - and thus essential - labor in a group.

Such service provides the basic experience of daily existence in a camp community, an existence that is strictly ordered according to the requirements of the tasks that the group has undertaken.

Such service provides the basic experience of having put daily to the test [*auf die Probe and in die Entscheidung gestellt*], and thus clarified and reinforced, one's sense of social origin [*der ständischen Herkunft*] and of the responsibility that derives for the individual from the fact that all belong together in an ethnic-cultural [*volkhaft*] unity.

Such service provides the basic experience of the origin of true comradeship. True comradeship only arises under the pressure of a great common danger or from the ever-growing commitment to a clearly perceived task; it has nothing to do with the effusive exchange of psychological [*seelisch*] inhibitions by individuals who have agreed to sleep, eat, and sing under one roof.

Such service provides the basic experience of those things which will allow the individual to be able to truly take stock of himself, and it takes the final decision in the choice of a profession out of the realm of the private bourgeois calculation of prospects according to the principle of "appropriateness to one's social standing."

We must think beyond the immediate effects of Labor Service, which are already apparent, and learn to comprehend the fact that here, with the German young people who are now taking their place in society, a complete transformation of German existence [*Dasein*] is being made ready. Within the German university, a new basic attitude towards scholarly and scientific work [*wissenschaftliche Arbeit*] will slowly develop. And as this happens, that notion of the "intellect" [*Geist*] and of "intellectual work" [*geistige Arbeit*] will completely disappear in terms of which the "educated" person has up to now defined his life and which even now his envoys want to salvage for a separate estate [*Stand*] of "intellectual producers." Only then will we learn that, *as work*, all work is *spiritual* [*geistig*]. Animals and all beings that merely exist cannot work. They lack the basic experience that work requires: the decisive commitment to a task, the capacity for resoluteness and steadfastness in an assignment they have accepted. In short, they lack *freedom*, that is: *spirit*

[*Geist*].

So-called "intellectual work" [*"geistige Arbeit"*] is not spiritual [*geistig*] because it relates to "higher spiritual things" [*"hohere geistige Dinge"*]. It is spiritual [*geistig*] because, *as work*, it reaches back more deeply into the afflictions [*Not*] that are part of a people's historical existence [*Dasein*] and because it is more directly - because more knowingly - beset by the hardness and danger of human existence [*Dasein*].

There is only *one single* German "estate" [*"Lebensstand"*]. That is the *estate of labor* [*Arbeitsstand*] which is rooted in and borne by the Volk and which has freely submitted to the historical will of the State. The character of this estate is being pre-formed in the National Socialist *Workers' Party* movement.

A call to the Labor Service is being sounded.

Those who are lame, comfortable, and effete will "go" into the Labor Service because it will perhaps jeopardize their degree and employment prospects to stay away. Those who are strong and unbroken are proud that extreme demands are being made of them: for that is the moment when they rise up to the hardest tasks, those for which there is neither pay nor praise, but only the "reward" of sacrifice and service in the area of the innermost necessities of German Being [*deutschen Seins*].

* An article written by Heidegger for the *Freiburger Studentenzeitung*.

National Socialist Education* (January 22, 1934)

German Volksgenossen! German Workers!

As Rector of the University, I cordially welcome you to our institution. This welcome will at the same time be the beginning of our work together. Let us start by understanding clearly the significance of the fact that you, for whom the City of Freiburg has created jobs by emergency decree, are coming together with us in the largest lecture hall of the University.

What does this fact mean?

Because of novel and comprehensive measures on the part of the City of Freiburg you have been given work and bread has been put on your tables. You thereby enjoy a privileged position among the rest of the City's unemployed. But this preferential treatment means at the same time an obligation.

And your duty is to understand the creation of jobs, and to accept the work for which you are paid, in the way that the Führer of our new State demands. For the creation of jobs means not only the alleviation of external need, not only the elimination of inner discouragement or, indeed, despair; the creation of jobs means not only the *warding off* of that which burdens. The creation of jobs is at the same time, and in its essence, an act of *building up* and construction [*Aufbau und Bau*] in the new future of our Volk.

The creation of work must, first of all, make the unemployed and jobless *Volksgenosse* again *capable of existing* [*daseinsfähig*] in the State and for the State and thereby capable of existing for the Volk as a whole. The *Volksgenosse* who has found work should learn thereby that he has not been

cast aside and abandoned, that he has an ordered place in the Volk, and that every service and every accomplishment possesses its own value that is fungible by other services and accomplishments. Having experienced this, he should win back proper dignity and self-confidence in his own eyes and acquire proper self-assurance and resoluteness in the eyes of his *Volksgenossen*.

The goal is: to become strong for a fully valid existence as a *Volksgenosse* in the German *Volksgemeinschaft*.

For this, however, it is necessary:

- to know where one's place in the Volk is,
- to know how the Volk is organized and how it renews itself in this organization,
- to know what is happening with the German Volk in the National Socialist State,
- to know in what a bitter struggle this new reality was won and created,
- to know what the future recovery of the body of the Volk [*Volkskorper*] means and what it demands of each individual,
- to know to what point urbanization has brought the Germans, how they would be returned to the soil and the country through resettlement,
- to know what is entailed in the fact that 18 million Germans belong to the Volk but, because they are living outside the borders of the Reich, do not yet belong to the Reich.

Everyone of our Volk who is employed must *know for what reason* and *to what purpose* he is where he is. It is only through this living and ever-present *knowledge* that his life will be rooted in the Volk as a whole, and in its destiny. *Providing this knowledge is thus a necessary part of the creation of work*; and it is your right, but therefore also your obligation, to demand this knowledge and to endeavor to acquire it.

And now, your younger comrades from the *university* stand ready to help you acquire this knowledge. They are resolved to help that knowledge to become alive in you, to help it develop and grow strong and never again to slumber. They stand ready, not as "intellekshuals" [*"Gschudierten"*] from the class of your "betters," but as *Volksgenossen'* who have recognized their duty.

They stand ready, not as the "educated" vis-à-vis a class - indeed, a "lower class" - of *uneducated* individuals, but as comrades. They are prepared to listen to your questions, your problems, your difficulties, and your doubts, to think through them with you, and, in shared effort, to bring them to a clear and decisive resolution. What, therefore, is the significance of the fact that you are assembled here in the auditorium of the University with us?

This fact is a sign that a new, common will exists, the will to build *a living bridge* between the worker of the "hand" and the worker of the "head." Today, the will to bridge this gap is no longer a project that is doomed to failure. And why not? Because the whole of our German reality has been changed by the National Socialist State, with the result that our whole past way of understanding and thinking must also become different.

What we thought up to now when we used the words "knowledge" and "Wissenschaft" has taken on another significance.

What we meant up to now with the words "worker" and "work" has acquired another meaning.

"Wissenschaft" is not the possession of a privileged class of citizens, to be used as a weapon in the exploitation of the working people. Rather, Wissenschaft is merely the *more rigorous* and hence *more responsible* form of that knowledge which the entire German Volk must seek and demand for its own historical existence as a state [*sein eigenes geschichtlich-staatliches Dasein*] if it still wants to secure its continued existence and greatness and to preserve them in the future. In its essence, the knowledge of true Wissenschaft does not differ at all from the knowledge of the farmer, woodcutter, the miner, the artisan. For knowledge means: to know one's way around in the world into which we are placed, as a community and as individuals.

Knowledge means: in our decisions and actions to be up to the task that is assigned us, whether this task be to till the soil or to fell a tree or to dig a ditch or to inquire into the laws of Nature or to illumine the fate-like force of History.

Knowledge means: to be master of the situation into which we are placed.

What is decisive is not so much how varied our knowledge is and what quantity of things we know, but whether our knowledge has grown naturally out of and is directed towards our circle of existence [*ein ursprünglich gewachsenes und auf unseren Daseinskreis aussgerichtetes*] and whether, through our deeds and in our behavior, we take responsibility for what we know. We no longer distinguish between the "educated" and the "uneducated." And not because these are both the same, but because we no longer tie our estimation of a person to this distinction. We do, on the other hand, differentiate between genuine knowledge and pseudo-knowledge. Genuine knowledge is something that both the farmer and the manual laborer have, each in his own way and in his own field of work, just as the scholar has it in his field. And, on the other hand, for all his learning, the scholar can in fact simply be wasting his time in the idle pursuit of pseudo-knowledge.

If you are to become ones who know here, then that does not mean that you will be served up scraps of some "general education," as a charitable afterthought. Rather, that knowledge shall be awakened in you by means of which you - each in his respective class and work group - can be clear and resolute Germans.

Knowledge and the possession of knowledge, as National Socialism understands these words, does not divide into classes, but binds and unites *Volksgenossen* and social and occupational groups [*Stände*] in the one great will of the State.

Like these words "knowledge" and "Wissenschaft," the words "worker" and "work," too, have a transformed meaning and a new sound. The "worker" is not, as Marxism claimed, a mere object of exploitation. The workers [*Arbeiterstand*] are not the class of the disinherited who are rallying for the general class struggle. But labor is also not simply the production of goods for others. Nor is labor simply the occasion and the means to earn a living. Rather:

For us, "work" is the title of every well-ordered action that is borne by the responsibility of the individual, the group, and the State and which is thus of

service to the Volk.

Work only exists where man's determination and perseverance are freely engaged in the assertion of will and the accomplishment of a task; *but there it exists everywhere*. Therefore, all work is, *as work*, something spiritual [*Geistiges*], for it is founded in the free exercise of expert knowledge and in the competent understanding of one's task; that is: it is founded in authentic knowledge [*eigentliches Wissen*]. The accomplishment of a miner is basically no less spiritual [*geistig*] than the activity of a scholar.

Worker and work, as National Socialism understands these words, does not divide into classes, but binds and unites *Volksgenossen* and the social and occupational groups into the one great will of the State.

The "workers" and "academics" [*die "wissenschaftlich Wissenden"*] are not opposites. Every worker is, in his own way, one who knows; and only as one who knows is he able to work at all. The privilege of work is denied the animal. And conversely: every person who acts knowingly and who makes decisions in and on the basis of *Wissenschaft* [*wissenschaftlich Entscheidender*] is a worker.

For this reason, neither for you nor for us can the will to build a living bridge remain any longer an empty, hopeless wish. This will, *to consummate the creation of jobs by providing the right kind of knowledge*, this will must be our innermost certainty and never-faltering faith. For in what this will wills, we are only following the towering will of our Führer. To be his loyal followers means: to will that the German people shall again find, as a people of labor, its organic unity, its simple dignity, and its true strength; and that, as a state of labor, it shall secure for itself permanence and greatness.

To the man of this unprecedented will, to our Führer Adolf Hitler - a threefold "Sieg Heil!"

* An address given by Heidegger at Freiburg University to 600 beneficiaries of the National Socialist "labor service" (*Arbeitsdienst*) program (see note, p. 42). Published in *Der Alemann: Kampfblatt der Nationalsozialisten Oberbadens*, February 1, 1934.

Translated by William S. Lewis

These texts were scanned from Richard Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, Chapter 2, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993, pp. 42-60. The footnotes are all from Wolin's text.