

History 342: Modern Germany (McCole)

Reading and discussion questions for Heinrich Claß, "If I were Kaiser..." (1912)

1. What are the driving forces of history and society for Claß? How do these compare to the driving forces envisioned by his contemporary socialists?
2. If Claß can be seen as exemplifying the most strident form of German nationalism in the pre-WWI era, what would you describe as the main points of its program? (Make a list.)
3. Who should be excluded from the German nation, and why? What explains his hostility to the Jews? to Poles? to Socialists?
4. What is Claß's attitude toward political democracy? What are his concerns about the interests of the propertied and educated classes?
5. Notice how Claß discusses the various branches of capitalism and industry. How might one make sense of his attitudes?