

# Intellectual Roots of National Socialism

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**Abstract**—The paper is concerned with the main intellectual sources of National Socialism in Germany. In his paper, the author showed that National Socialism remains our present ruthless reality. It is concluded that it is not just a rebellion against the mind, an irrational movement of the masses, but a totalitarian revolution directed against the existing liberal-bourgeois system.

**Keywords**—*racial inequalities; national socialism; Aryan; Nietzsche; superman; will to power; war*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Today, attempts to revise the outcome of the Second World War and the glorification of Nazism are widespread in the West. In addition, not all this almost meets any conviction. The efforts of Karl Popper, Hannah Arendt, Ernst Nolte, and the same were not in vain. The point of view began to prevail that National Socialism, along with communism, was one of the main varieties of totalitarianism of the 20th century [1]. Nazism is considered as a mirror image of Bolshevism. According to this view, the history of humanity develops between the two poles. One pole represents an individualistic society, ranging from ancient democracies to modern liberal capitalism; the other pole is a collectivist society. The latter includes both forms of radical collectivist socialism: National Socialism and communism. Both promise people to build an ideal society, but they differ in methods for achieving the promised goal. International socialism or communism wants to create a “paradise on earth” for all of humanity, and national socialism or national socialism only for the chosen race at the expense of everyone else [2].

Many authoritarian theorists, following Friedrich Augustus von Hayek, deliberately diminish the intellectual roots of National Socialism [3]. They believe that National Socialism is simply a rebellion against the mind, an irrational movement of the masses, which has no particular intellectual sources. According to Hannah Arendt, its main feature is the creation of a cult of hatred for an internal or external enemy, a powerful propaganda apparatus that uses any lie to achieve the desired result [4].

In addition, the tendency of the psychological and psychophysiological interpretation of National Socialism has become widespread. It is understood as a pathological deviation in the mass and individual consciousness. Freud's pupil, Austrian psychologist Wilhelm Reich argued,

“Fascism arises on the basis of racial hatred and serves as its politically organized expression” [5].

## II. WESTERN CIVILIZATION OF GENERATION NATIONAL SOCIALISM

We would call such a point of view very naive. I considered it in detail in the article “The Phenomenon of National Socialism” [6]. Here I will emphasize that the doctrine of National Socialism is the culmination of a long process of the development of ideas, in which outstanding European thinkers participated. At its origins were such brilliant minds as Hegel, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Düring, Nietzsche, Klages, Carlyle, and Chamberlain. Their ideas were widely used by the direct creators of National Socialism: Spengler, Jünger, van den Broek, and Rosenberg.

For example, the main theorist of fascism, Alfred Rosenberg, in the book *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (1930), directly stated that Germany should be recreated not based on Christianity, but on the ideas of Nietzsche. She will be a state of superman. Christianity must be eradicated, for it is a Jewish contagion. The Germans and their inherent “German spirit” must end with the “Christian rot”, that is, the concepts of guilt, sin and morality. It will be replaced by “new Christianity.” There will be no room for the former Christ and the Apostle Paul. New Christ Rosenberg - Aryan, in whose veins flows the blood of pagans, the Syrian mother and the Roman father. Thus, the foundations of a new myth about mystical Aryan blood were created.

It is believed that National Socialism has six main intellectual sources. Briefly consider them.

### A. *The First Source Is German Nationalism*

It included the idea of the superiority of the German nation over the rest of the nations and peoples, and was thoroughly imbued with anti-Semitism. The causes of anti-Semitism lie in the primitive worldview of an undeveloped person, in the primitive understanding that the “alien” is always the enemy and always worse than “his” [7]. Jews for historical reasons were “alien” throughout Europe. In the Middle Ages, they were persecuted not as a “inferior race” (there were no such concepts yet), but as followers of the Jewish religion. Paul Holbach was one of the first to try to investigate the causes of persecutions against Jews. He came to believe that the root of their troubles is in their religion. By proclaiming themselves, “God's chosen people” and

preaching intolerance to other beliefs, they fell victim to their own religious dogmas successfully adopted by Christians. Hence in conclusion, the spirit of humanism, of the need to eradicate religious dogmas, brings people only evil and suffering. Thus, Holbach did not leave the slightest justification for persecuting the Jews, as well as any other nation. However, it could not arrange pathological nationalists.

In the 19th century, due to the fall of the authority of religion, it became somehow not serious to justify one's hatred of "alien" religious beliefs. There was a need for scientific arguments, and they soon, of course, appeared. Heinrich von Treitschke, a professor of history at the University of Berlin, "attacked" Jews for refusing to assimilate with German society and its culture, for their desire to create a "hybrid culture", for a continuous influx of Jewish immigrants from Poland [8]. It was he who first put forward the slogan "Jews are our misfortune," which became Hitler's motto of the Nazis.

At the same time, a number of publications appeared that viewed Jews from a racist point of view. The most dramatic of these was the book of Eugene Dühring, the famous opponent of Marx and Engels. He not only condemned the various features of the Jewish race, but also tried to give a scientific explanation for the use of Christian blood by Jews, the beginning of which he elevated to human sacrifices accepted by the ancient Jews. The preservation of this custom, according to Dühring, is explained by the desire of the Jewish leaders to bind every Jew in a round-robin manner by participating in a nationwide crime.

However, the work of Joseph Arthur de Gobino and Houston Stewart Chamberlain had the strongest influence on the German worldview. Chamberlain connected Germanism with the concept of the original inequality of the races, their division into "full-fledged" and "inferior." The struggle of "noble" races against "inferior" and is the content of world history [9].

*B. The Second Source of National Socialist Views Is the Tradition of Anti-liberalism, Which Has Long Existed in Germany*

The liberal trend in politics and ideological life there was subjected to continuous attacks throughout the XIX century. At first, they came from the feudal critics of capitalism, and then representatives of right-wing conservative circles of the German bourgeoisie continued them. They did not like the transformation of a loyal citizen into an independent person who has all the necessary rights and freedoms and therefore is no longer an obedient puppet in the hands of the state. For them, a free person, besides having reliable legal guarantees of his freedom, seemed to be a real disaster of Germany.

*C. The Third Intellectual Source of National Socialism Was the Entire Homegrown Doctrine of National Socialism*

It is important to note that the most significant predecessors of National Socialism (Fichte, Lassalle, Rodbertus) were at the same time recognized as the fathers of socialism. While socialism in its Marxist version was used

in the German labor movement, authoritarian and nationalist concepts were in the shadow. However, this did not last long. Since 1914, theorists have been promoted from the ranks of the Marxists, turning to the National Socialist faith no longer conservatives and revolutionaries, but workers and idealistic-minded youth. Only after that, the wave of National Socialism reached its apogee.

The first representative of this direction was Werner Sombart. He devoted most of his life to the struggle for the ideas of Karl Marx. However, in 1915 he wrote the sensational book "Traders and Heroes." Sombart argued that the state was not founded and formed by individuals, is not a collection of individuals, and its goal is not to serve the interests of the individual. The state (Volksgemeinschaft) is a "national community" where a person has no rights, but there are duties. Any pretensions of the individual are only a manifestation of the mercantile spirit. Sombart welcomed the war, which reminded the Germans that they were a nation of warriors. All the activities of the German people are ultimately linked to military objectives. Therefore, war cannot be considered an inhuman and senseless affair. There is life higher than the life of the individual, and this is the life of the nation and the state. In addition, the purpose of man is to sacrifice himself to the highest values. Thus, war is the embodiment of a heroic life, and war against England is a war with a hated commercial ideal, an ideal of personal freedom and comfort [10].

The views of Sombart, no less authoritative Marxist Johann Plenge, etc., paved the way for the direct creators of National Socialism, such as Oswald Spengler and Arthur Moller van den Broek. It is possible to argue the extent to which Spengler was a socialist, but it is clear that his work Prussian and Socialism, published in 1919, expresses the sentiments that then owned the minds of German socialists.

Distinctive features of the German "Prussian socialism" - a hatred of liberalism and the triumph of the principle of bureaucracy, according to which literally every member of the German national community, regardless of the type of his occupation, acquires and realizes the status of an official in the service of the state. Private property remains unchanged, but production and circulation are organized by the state. It reigns order, based on the barracks discipline and strict hierarchical subordination. Spengler did not portray German socialism as an anti-capitalist system. Business and competition, any capital, any (at least three times private) property, if they are productive, "work" for the nation, are acceptable to him. The goal of German socialism is to eliminate the class struggle, to establish the accord between Capital and Labor. In order to achieve it, it is necessary to eliminate the defects in the existing economic system and eradicate the class worldview in the minds of the workers. [11].

Developing in many respects similar to Spengler's views, Moller van den Broek declared World War I a war between liberalism and socialism. True, he did not try to identify Prussianism with socialism. For him, Prussian spirit embodied German nationalism — the healthy and vigorous spirit of a young people who opposed the decrepit West. The

main mission of the German people is to liquidate a liberal-democratic society and to revive the mighty state of the master race. The Third Reich will bring socialism to the Germans, fully consistent with their character. Therefore, it actually happened.

#### *D. The Fourth Source of National Socialism Is Geopolitics*

One of the founding fathers of German geopolitics was the geographer Friedrich Ratzel. In *Political Geography*, published in 1897, he advanced the position that the state is a biological organism rooted in the earth like a tree and developing in accordance with biological laws [12]. Therefore, the most important characteristics of a state are determined by its territory and location, and its success depends on how well it adapts to environmental conditions. The main method of increasing the power of the state Ratzel considered territorial expansion, or the expansion of living space. Using this concept, he tried to substantiate the idea that the main economic and political problems of Germany are caused by unfair, too close boundaries that impede its dynamic development. Ratzel also pointed out the direction of German expansion: first, the expansion of the territory within Europe; secondly, the redistribution of the colonial periphery. Germany should create in Europe, under its leadership, a political complex based in the territories located between the Alps, the North and Baltic Seas, the Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea. The vast central Europe will become the "German Empire", embodying the tendencies of the German people to expand their territory and create a viable, powerful state.

The ideas of Ratzel were developed and improved by other sociologists, economists and geographers. Chief among these scholars was General and Professor Karl Haushofer. Following the founders of geopolitics Mackinder, Chellen and Ratzel, Haushofer believed that the location and territorial characteristics of the state are the main determinants of its political and historical fate. In 1924, he played a key role in the founding of the Institute of Geopolitics in Munich. Haushofer and his colleagues focused on the issue of the "German situation", that is, the position of Germany in the system of European and world powers. This was because for Germany the issue of borders and, accordingly, living space was always relevant. Haushofer was convinced that the preservation and expansion of living space is the main task of the state. By expanding its living space, a dynamic state ensures greater independence from its neighbors. He considered the conquest of such freedom as an indicator of the true greatness of the state. An important method of territorial expansion of power was considered the absorption of smaller states [13]. According to Haushofer, the period of domination of the sea powers ends, so the future belongs to the land powers. The decline of the UK is just around the corner. This creates favorable conditions for the formation of a new European order, in which Germany will dominate.

#### *E. The Fifth Source of National Socialism Is the Work of Composer Richard Wagner*

Not without reason, Hitler liked to repeat that in order to understand National Socialism; it is first necessary to grasp Wagner's work. Wagner was well acquainted with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and was strongly influenced by their ideas. He hated the Jews for seeking to rule the world with the help of their capitals; he treated with contempt parliaments, democracy, materialism and the dullness of the bourgeoisie. Yet he hoped that the Germans, given their special gift, would "not rule the world, but glorify him".

However, it was not Wagner's political views, but his romantic operas that had a tremendous impact on the nation. Although Hitler considered the opera "Tristan and Isolde" to be Wagner's masterpiece, nevertheless, it was the unsurpassed tetralogy "Ring of the Nibelung", created on the basis of the great Germanic epic "Song of the Nibelungs", returned to the country almost forgotten ancient legends. Folk legends often express the spiritual and cultural essence of a nation and, possibly, its fate. This is especially true of Germany. Schelling even claimed that the nation begins to exist simultaneously with its legends. Siegfried and Crimhild, Brunhilda and Hagen became the idols of the German youth.

#### *F. The Sixth Source of National Socialism Was the Occult*

Many historians underestimate the importance and importance of occultism in the development of the fascist movement. Nevertheless, the esoteric element is quite palpable in National Socialism. Some ideas were borrowed from the writings of such mystics and occultists as Blavatsky, Liszt, Libenfels. The very same Nazi party spawned a Masonic-type organization, the Thule Society. As for Hitler, he, having passed through a mystical experience still in Vienna, completed his spiritual formation under the guidance of the dedicated occultist Dietrich Eckhart. In the 1920s, as noted by a number of researchers, the harmonious alliance between occultism and politics was observed in the Nazi movement [14].

### III. CONCLUSION

November 9 is the annual International Day against Fascism, Racism and Anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, these phenomena did not go down in history with the surrender of fascist Germany in 1945. The ideology cannot be defeated only by military means. Neo-Nazism, extremism and xenophobia have become a shameful business card of the XXI century and again find their supporters in Europe, particularly in Ukraine and in the Baltic States. The main features of the ideology of National Socialism are still anti-communism, traditionalism, nationalism, anti-liberalism, statism, corporatism, populism, militarism, leaderism.

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