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THE  
INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS  
OF  
NATIONAL SOCIALISM  
by

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NATIONAL SOCIALISM.

I.

INTRODUCTION: Definition of Aim and Method.

It is not merely a platitude to say that deeds, not words, are the proper factors of history; it is also a half-truth, for words convey ideas and ideas inspire deeds and give them both meaning and direction. It is fairly obvious that events of such complexity and world-wide significance as revolutions cannot be explained by any single cause, be it the ideas of any one man or the occurrence of any single event. In this respect National Socialism is no exception. It would be an absurd oversimplification to make either Adolf Hitler or the Versailles Treaty or the subsequent economic collapse responsible for the German Revolution. All these factors did, of course, contribute to its development, but National Socialism both as revolutionary movement and revolutionary ideology can only be understood in the light of the historical development of German life and thought. A closer examination of the origin of the revolution will show that it is the culmination of a process that has its roots deep in the social situation of Germany in the last century. The political

economic events between the two Great Wars were merely progressive stages within that process. Many other forces of a cultural and socio-psychological nature, played an important part.

It is not within the scope of this work to examine the multifarious historical forces, both political and economic, that have made National Socialism possible. Their essential importance can neither be denied nor scarcely overrated, wherefore occasional reference to them will be necessary in order to show the influence of ideas on subsequent events. The restricted aim of this study is to discover and analyse the ideological origins of the Nazi gospel - the social and political thinkers who have made some contribution to the new "Weltanschauung".

It is not for the moment suggested, however, that a similarity or even identity of ideas ipso facto implies that National Socialist ideology is directly derived from an earlier one. Analogy is not genealogy. Even where a direct affinity seems certain, it would be rash to assume that political ideas are the decisive historical factors. All political ideology is perhaps only a superficial phenomenon of deeper social forces that seek expression in the emotional as well as in the intellectual sphere. From this point of view National Socialism might be studied in the light of social psychology or even pathology rather than political philosophy, especially if it is assumed

that National Socialism is based not on consistent political theory but on the irrational factors of faith, fanaticism and force. However interesting and instructive such an analysis might be, it has no place in this work, which purports to deal only with the etiologial aspect of National Socialist ideology and its philosophic implications.

In a study of this kind several peculiar difficulties present themselves, difficulties which lie for the most part in the very nature of the ideology. National Socialism has no cut-and-dried theory, no clearly defined political philosophy as we find for example in Marxism or Leninism. As its very name, "National Socialist German Workers' Party", indicates, it is fundamentally a hybrid, eclectic philosophy, deriving its ideas from a great variety of sources and appealing to a large theatre of interests. As a consequence, Nationalism Socialism too, unlike Marxism, has no single outstanding philosopher who could be claimed as the 'father' of the movement. At best it may be said to have several spiritual godfathers, prophets and intellectual forerunners who have made some contribution to the "Weltanschauung".

A second, and by no means trivial difficulty, lies in the appraisal of National Socialism as a political philosophy. It seems to have no consistent theory of society for, as Neumann significantly remarks, "It con-

tains elements of every conceivable philosophy, - of idealism, positivism, pragmatism, vitalism, universalism, institutionalism." (1)

A third difficulty confronting the student is derived from the dynamic, revolutionary character of the Nazi philosophy. National Socialism, both as doctrine and as political movement, has undergone a continuous development and constant change owing to the need of repeated adaptation to newly emerging situations. Consequently its "Weltanschauung" is often vague and full of antinomies and unresolved contradictions. Its aims, moreover, are frequently ambivalent, giving rise to the modification of old beliefs and the absorption of new ones. The discrepancy therefore between ideals and real aims must be constantly kept in mind. Moreover, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that there exists a profound dichotomy between the esoteric doctrine of the élite and the romantic "Weltanschauung" for the masses.- All ideology, it must be remembered, is for the Nazi élite only a political expedient, the means to an end. The question of the truth or falsity of ideology no longer has any meaning for the revolutionaries of Nihilism. Both truth and falsehood are merely political weapons to ensure the victory of the revolution.

(1) Neumann, F., Behemoth, p.462

In view of the fact that the National Socialist "Weltanschauung" is so peculiarly German, so deeply embedded in German thought and feeling, I have considered it necessary to present a synoptic view of the intellectual, "geistesgeschichtliche" background, together with a resumé of the National Socialist philosophy, before attempting to analyse in detail the nationalistic and the socialistic aspects and to discover their respective ideological origins. In the three last chapters I have attempted to deal with the nature and etiology of three fundamental conceptions of National Socialism, - namely the principle of leadership, the doctrine of the élite and the nature and aims of the authoritarian state.

"The Germans, this nation of unconditioned feeling, are undoubtedly idealists."

Nietzsche.

## Chapter II.

### BACKGROUNDS AND ANTECEDENTS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM.

One of the most striking features in the history of German thought is its long deep-rooted antipathy to rationalism and its counterpart materialism. German philosophy is a philosophy of idealism par excellence. In a deep sense the German is an incurable romanticist, an eternal idealist. From Luther, who slandered Reason as a harlot down to Nietzsche, the Nihilist of Reason, and to Hitler, the mystagogue of fanaticism, the proverbial "land of poets and thinkers" has been strangely haunted by the irrational daemons of feeling, instinct and will. It was Rousseau, the father of Romantic Socialism, not Voltaire, the father of French rationalism, that exerted a powerful influence on Goethe in his attempt to create a synthesis between the two ways of life, the Classical and the Romantic, between the forces of reason and instinct.

In the early nineteenth century the Romantic movement was on its political side a revolt against the French ideals of Nation and Reason which grew out of the "Aufklärung" and the French Revolution. This reactionary Romantic feeling in politics as well as in poetry was destined to



exert a profound influence on German thought during the next century. Its predominant accent on instinct and feeling inevitably brought it into intimate association with racial nationalism as in the case of the Schlegels, Brentano, Fichte and Wagner.

Only in the beginning of the twentieth century and owing chiefly to the rise of naturalism and impressionism was the Romantic movement forced out of the picture. But only temporarily. After the World War it emerged as a powerful radical revolt against an existing moral order that had made the shallow materialism of the philistine masses and its "Kultur-bolschewismus" a reality. This radical neo-romantic movement became to a large extent the stimulus and inspiration of a post-war youth that rejected modernism with all its weaknesses and found new hope in a new order based on "blood and soil". A lost generation was seeking a brave new world, beautiful, noble, and heroic. The road to the new life was instinct not reason. Its battle-cry "Dionysos against Apollo!" Its weapon was "will to power" not "will to existence".

This growing spirit of romantic revolt against Western values, in particular against the rationalism and crass materialism of the era, was further strengthened by the contemporary political and economic crises that prevented the German spirit from finding its way back to a secure and normal order of life. On the political scene the Re-

public of Weimar, the "nightwatchman's state" with its inefficient pluralistic structure, its policy of compromise and political "Kuhhandel" (horse-trading), was the object of dissatisfaction and contempt of realist and romantic youth alike.(1) Its extreme liberalism of opinion and tolerance of subversive activities fostered the most extreme radicalism in the cultural as in the political life of the nation. The youth, conditioned to war, found themselves uprooted and disillusioned in the world of peace. The middle classes, having suffered a moral and material set-back, revolted against political democracy and its counterpart economic liberalism. Nationalists, Socialists, Democrats and Communists, all striving to solve the social problem, had not only revolutionized political thought but created a wide-spread revolutionary spirit.

It was in this German jungle of romanticism, radicalism and irrationalism that National Socialism took form, flourished and grew to a mighty revolution against the West to become a stupendous challenge to the world. Truly Western civilization had in Germany come to the crossroad of a momentous crisis, a crisis which implied the choice between the traditional cultural values based on the Greek ideal of intellectual aristocracy and the democratic ideal of human

(1) cf. Greenwood, the German Revolution, chap.III,  
also Neumann, S., Permanent Revolution, pp.23-27

liberty on the one hand and the anti-rationalist, anti-humanist ideals of blood and soil, work and war on the other. It was none other than Hitler who proclaimed both in "Mein Kampf" and in a speech on the eve of World War II that this was nothing less than a decisive "conflict between two opposing worlds"; (1) a no-quarter, no-compromise battle to the death of one or the other.

(1) My New Order (ed. by Raoul de Rousay de Sales: N.Y. 1941) p.874

"The Germans are a dangerous people: they are experts at inventing intoxicants."

Nietzsche.  
Peoples and Countries, § 7.

### Chapter III.

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM.

Adolf Hitler is not the spiritual father of National Socialism, but merely its master demagogue, its chief propagandist and perhaps its highest personification. His "Mein Kampf" does not play the role for Nazi ideology that Marx's "Das Kapital" played for Socialism, nor is it like Marx's classical work, a logical system of thought, but rather a politician's platform of aims and objectives, largely autobiographical and propagandist. It purports to be the Bible of the new racial "Weltanschauung", for National Socialism, according to its Führer, claims to be more than a political movement: "It is even more than a religion: it is the will to create mankind anew." (1) Consequently it has, strictly speaking, no theory of society as we understand it. It is not just a party program, not merely a political philosophy, it is a gospel, an apocalyptic vision of the rebirth of society on the bio-political foundations of race, leadership and élite. What Hitler attempted, and this is probably his original contribution,

(1) Rauschnig, H., "Hitler Speaks" (London, 1939) p.242

was to combine the political and social, the cultural and moral elements into a single dominant conception of a vast world change, into a totalitarian revolutionary ideology against the Western world.

Although National Socialism retains certain fundamental unalterable tenets, which are dogmatically fixed in the twenty-five Articles of the Nazi Creed, its ideology owing to the revolutionary character of the movement is "fluid, adjustable to a series of ever changing goals".(1) Its doctrine is not a part of the real motive force of the revolution. Its purpose is rather to serve as a political instrument for the control of the masses. Rauschning rightly points out that the Nazi élite, the leaders, "stand above the doctrine. National Socialism does not base its policy on a doctrine, but pursues it with the aid of a philosophy." (2)

Furthermore, National Socialist ideology, constituting as it does, the ideological basis for the counter-revolution against Marxian Socialism and liberal democracy, bears an essentially negativist even nihilist character. Philosophically speaking it is characterized by its bewildered flight from reason. Unlike the French Revolution with the goddess of Reason as its symbol in the sky, the

(1) Neumann, F.L., Behemoth, (N.Y. Oxford Univ. 1942) p.39

(2) Rauschning, Revolution of Nihilism, (London, 1939) p.19

German Revolution is peculiarly irrationalistic or voluntaristic. Its symbol is the whirling swastika, the revolution of nihilism on the background of intense nationalism. Ever since Luther's famous dictum, "Stat pro ratione voluntas" German thought has been moving away from Plato's primacy of the intellect to the acceptance of the superiority of will and instinct.(1) In modern philosophy Schopenhauer's metaphysics inaugurated the voluntaristic, irrational trend which was to dominate European thought for the next century. Nietzsche and Vaihinger emphasized the value of the "will to power" and of "untruth" as necessary conditions of life. Sorel finally interpreted Bergsonian intuition in terms of a faculty of political action. Faith and fanaticism, "thinking with one's blood" became the fashion among Fascist ideologists. Truth was relativized to racial and national interests, blind acceptance of "myths" was preferred to the value of open discussion and scientific objectivity. The universal values of Christianity were transvaluated into the autocratic values of race, will, instinct and force. "Der Wille ist Alles" became the favourite Nazi parole. "The will to power," said Hitler, "is for us literally the whole meaning of life."(2)

This overemphasis of the irrational factors in life

(1) cf. McGovern, W.M. From Luther to Hitler (Boston, Mifflin, 1941)

(2) Rauschning, Hitler Speaks, p.272

led directly to the separation of scientific thought from ethical conduct and logically to the divorce of politics from morality. In this respect National Socialism is simply a modern application of Machiavellianism on a totalitarian basis. Its fundamental nihilism is nowhere more evident than in its relativisation of morality to person, class and race. The conception of race, the fundamental pillar of the Nazi ideology, becomes the highest value, the ultimate criterion of right and wrong, true and false. This is the "myth" upon which National Socialism hoped to build the Third Reich which was to endure a thousand years.

Thus the National Socialist State, according to Hitler, intends to be "an order of domination and organization of the people's community, the racial Volk". It is therefore essentially an authoritarian, totalitarian Volksstaat, militaristic in spirit, bureaucratic in organization, a state dominated by an élite ruling by ruthless force and clever propaganda and aiming at a permanent revolution in the political and social spheres. In the next two chapters the nationalistic and the socialistic aspects of the Nazi Weltanschauung will be examined and an attempt made to discover the ideological origins of those conceptions.

"Tis morning: but no morning can  
 Restore what we have forfeited.  
 I see no sin; the wrong is mixed.  
 In tragic life, God wot,  
 No villain need be: Passions spin the plot;  
 We are betrayed by what is false within."

George Meredith.

#### Chapter IV.

##### GERMAN NATIONALISM AND ITS PROPHETS.

Nationalism is not a specifically German phenomenon. Its development in Germany was in point of fact later than in England or France. Moreover it was different in important respects. The French Revolution had conceived the nation as a political entity, composed of free and equal citizens. This conception never displaced the German conception of nationality which had a definite racial and biological bias rather than a political one. The reasons for this lie partly in the political situation of Germany, partly in the peculiar character of German thought. The political disunity of the nation before and after Bismarck's unification did not tend to foster the democratic concept of nationality. Moreover, as Neumann significantly remarks, "Nationalist sovereignty handicapped imperialist expansion," whereas "racial theories served as an aid to the conquest of colonial, semi-colonial, or very weak states." (1)

(1) Synder, Louis L. From Bismarck to Hitler (Bayard Press, Pa. 1935) p.103



In the First World War, which was a war of the nations of the world against Germany, its racial nationalism received an intensification that bordered on hysteria. Neither Versailles, nor the Weimar Republic succeeded in checking or diminishing national fervor. Instead, the fuel of hatred and resentment was added, giving it a dangerous explosive force. National Socialism made political capital out of the outraged feelings of the masses and utilized them as potent forces for the revolution. Thus to Hitler, National Socialism became "the exact counterpart of the French Revolution", (1) wherein the French concept of nation was being replaced by the racial conception as a more dynamic political expedient than that of democracy.

Another peculiarity which distinguishes German nationalism is its militant and militaristic aspect. It was always more aggressive, more raucous, more blatantly articulate than other nationalisms. It seemed as if Germany were suffering from a chronic national inferiority complex. Perhaps it was owing to the fact that she attained the status of nationhood comparatively late, for, as we know, youth has an inveterate habit of boasting and bravado.

Finally, owing to its predominant racial bias, German nationalism was, generally speaking, linked with anti-

(1) Rauschnig, H. Hitler Speaks, p.230

Semitism. Anti-Semitism is of course not a German, much less a National Socialist, invention. That it has its roots deep in German history is indisputable. Neumann goes so far as to assert that "nearly all the great poets and thinkers of Germany with the exception of Lessing, Goethe, Schelling, and Hegel, even if they were not outspoken anti-Semites, often unconsciously betrayed anti-Semitic tendencies." (1) German anti-Semitism in fact goes back to the Reformation. Martin Luther was not regarded only as a religious reformer, but also as a national saviour. He was undoubtedly one of the great forerunners of German nationalism and the first religious anti-Semitist. He has moreover the dubious honor of being the first articulate Jew-baiter. He not only proposed that the Jews be expelled from Germany, but also advocated a pogrom policy. His vicious anti-Semitic diatribes are comparable to Streicher's infamous publication "Der Stürmer", the Führer's favorite magazine.

The spirit of German nationalism and the idea of the "organic folk-state" can further be traced to the father of the German school of political thought, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803). He was the first to emphasize the "peculiar national characters and to eulogize the values of "folk-heritage, national soul and patriotic

(1) Neumann, F., Behemoth, Oxford Univ. Press, N.Y. 1942 p. 109

spirit".(1) His ideas had considerable influence among the romantic poets and philosophers of the nineteenth century.

A man of much greater influence on modern German thought was Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) who preached that the new "God-Ersatz", the Kingdom of Spirit and Reason could only be realized by an "Urvolk", a chosen race. The Germans were the initiated, the enthusiasts of the divine order, the Weltplan, and it was their "holy duty" to re-create humanity by laying the foundations of that Kingdom.(2) He also accurately predicted the qualifications necessary for the modern tyrant to attain absolute power. Like Luther, Fichte was an avowed anti-Semite, but he was too much of a philosopher to resort to vilification and slander.

Otto von Bismarck, the autocratic Realpolitiker, was the man who actually built the house for Herder's and Fichte's nationalism. A reactionary conservative patriot, he believed in Prussian leadership and rejected both social democracy and anti-Semitism whether in the guise of economics or of Christianity. Nationalism under his regime was, however, much more a sentimental than a political or economic affair.(3)

A true forerunner of modern German nationalism was

(1) National Socialism, (Dept. of State, Wash.D.C., 1943)  
pp.5 and 6

(2) cfr Fichte "Rede an die deutsche nation."

(3) Hayes, C.J.H. Evolution of Modern Nationalism, N.Y.  
p.278

Adolf Stocker, founder of the Christian-Socialist Workers' Party (1878) and the foremost anti-Semite of his time. His Socialism was really a brand of pseudo-Christian nationalism plus Prussian militarism. His anti-Semitism had a quasi-religious basis and exerted a tremendous influence in post-Bismarckian Germany. Stocker believed in a "national soul", a phrase which he borrowed from Carlyle, and applied to the Lutheran Reformation. The Jews, he maintained "are a nation within a nation, a state within a state, a race in the midst of another race." (1) Hitler acknowledged that Stocker's anti-Semitism was a step forward. He however found it politically a failure because it ignored the racial basis of nationality. Its solution of the Jewish problem by means of mass conversion of the Jews to Christianity was too naive and impractical.

A more formidable apostle of nationalism and anti-Semitism appeared in the able historian and political scientist, Heinrich von Treitschke (1834-1896). A glowing patriot and untiring exponent of militarism, he saw in the state a moral community whose highest purpose is power in the highest interests of the community. Against Hegel he maintained that the state, although the basis of all national life, is not the totality of the national life. Nation and state are not identical. (2) He also formulated

(1) Stocker, A. von Oertzen, p.151

(2) cfr. Synder, Louis L. From Bismarck to Hitler, (Bayard Press, Pa.) pp.29 and 30

the historical *raison d'être* of Prussian hegemony and the principle of autocracy in the state. Synder sums up the significance of Treitschke on German political thought as follows: "As an exponent of militarism Treitschke exerted a tremendous influence on General von Bernhardi and other militarists. As an intellectual anti-Semite he led other impetuous anti-Semites . . . . into open hostility to Judaism." (1) Numerous militant anti-Semites arose: Eugen Dühring, whom Engels attacked in his "anti-Dühring, Max Stirner, the anarchist, and Adolf Wagner, who identified Capitalism with Judaism. Karl Marx, himself, although a Jew by birth, became notorious for his anti-Semitic utterances.

The only predecessor, however, whom Adolf Hitler has ever condescended to recognize as such is Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Whether that is owing to some artistic affinity similar to Nietzsche's "stellar friendship" with the great composer is a moot and futile question. To Hitler Wagner represents not merely a musician and poet, but "the supreme prophetic figure among the Germans". (2) He claims "the most intimate familiarity with Wagner's mental processes. At every stage of my life he (Wagner) comes back to me." (3) Even the Führer's vegetarianism is a Wag-

- (1) Synder, op. cit., p.33
- (2) Rauschning, Hitler Speaks, p.226
- (3) Rauschning, op. cit., p.227

nerian inspiration. But to Hitler Richard Wagner is above all the first great racial nationalist, the Imperialist musician, the first anti-Semite who developed an anti-Semitism based on artistic feeling. It should be recalled that Hitler's anti-Semitism, too, is based on instinct and feeling, not on reason. Wagner's influence on German thought and feeling has been greater than is generally believed. An outstanding protagonist of the "German Spirit" in art and politics, he warned his fellow-countrymen to think of glory in national terms. In his "Judaism in Music" (1850) he asserted that the Jew was incapable of giving artistic expression to his feelings. Jewish musicians were mere "tone-setters", their music a "motley chaos of all music forms".(1)

Wagner's anti-Semitism was not so much an original work as an artist's version of the great central theme provided by his son-in-law, the ex-Englishman, H. S. Chamberlain (1855-1926). This man had written his influential pseudo-scientific masterpiece "Foundations of the Nineteenth Century" wherein he extolled the Aryan, in particular the German, race, and warned of the Jewish conspiracy to dominate the higher races. But even Chamberlain's ideas were not original. His book was in essence only an academic re-working of Gobineau's "Essai sur l'inegalité des

(1) Wagner, Judaism in Music, (see Ellis, R. Wagner's Prose works, 111, 79 ff.)

racres humaines" which at great length championed the theory of Aryan superiority. In the hands of Wagner and Chamberlain racial nationalism and anti-Semitism received a powerful intellectual stimulus. Chamberlain's book especially was widely read and discussed and had tremendous influence on German minds many years before Hitler. Hitler himself refers to it in "Mein Kampf and Alfred Rosenberg, official philosopher of Nazidom, regards Wagner and Chamberlain as two of the genuine forerunners of National Socialism.

This is true particularly as regards the raciologi- cal aspect of their philosophy, for the theory of racial supremacy as developed by Chamberlain and Wagner was incorporated in National Socialist doctrine by none other than Alfred Rosenberg himself in his "Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts." Here the "myth" of the twentieth century is proclaimed as consisting in "the faith that the Nordic blood represents that "mysterium" which has replaced and overcome the old sacraments"(1) of Christianity. Furthermore "Folk and race are higher than the state and its forms."(2) Blood-feeling and instinct of blood is considered the source of all virtue and wisdom. Rosenberg in fact invests race with a mystic, religious significance, and elevates it to the supreme criterion of moral and es-

(1) Rosenberg, Alfred, "Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts" (Munich, 1935) p.174

(2) Rosenberg, ibid. p.479

thetic valuation. Walter Darré, Minister of Agriculture, applied the raciological myth to the peasantry, whom he regards as "the new nobility of Blood and Soil". Hans Günther went so far as to essay a scientific anthropology of race as a basis for National Socialist politics. Even though Hitler himself denies the claim of scientific validity to these race theories, he insists on their importance as a political expedient. True to his maxim that "every world-moving Idea has not only the right but also the duty to avail itself of whatever means will make possible the realization of its purpose", (1) Hitler has made the conception of race the first fundamental principle of National Socialist ideology.

The position of Friederich Nietzsche, who is frequently associated with German nationalism and sometimes even held responsible for National Socialism, is quite ambiguous and needs some clarification. In the First World War allied propagandists were fond of blaming the war on the Teutonic triumvirate of Nietzsche, Treitschke and Bernhardi, but to an unbiased student the prophet of Sils Maria was no more of a war-inspirer than Theordore Roosevelt, Maurice Barrés or even G. B. Shaw. In our time, too, it has become fashionable to associate Nietzsche's "blond beast of prey" with the Nazi master race. As regards

(1) Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Reynold and Hitchcock, N.Y. 1939) p.371



Nietzsche's alleged affinity to National Socialism, I would like to "break a lance" for the philosopher and poet. It is true that the Nazi ideologists have intimately linked the Nihilist of Reason with their own Revolution of Nihilism. That need not cause much surprise. Nietzsche's philosophy, like anti-Semitism, admirably served as a political expedient, and was shamefully exploited for that purpose. Even if it can be argued that Nietzsche was an unconscious Socialist, it is certain that he was no Nationalist, much less a National Socialist.

Nietzsche, the last anti-political German, was not a good Nationalist. Like Goethe he claimed to be "a good European". He strongly repudiated the "neurosis of Nationalism from which Europe suffered", and predicted the "overcoming of nations" and the final "synthesis of Europe".(1) It was even part of his ambition to be considered as "a despiser of Germans par excellence".(2) He scorned both Prussian militarism and Treitschkean court-history, and never forgave his friend Wagner for becoming a German Imperialist. "To be a good German," he once exclaimed, "it is necessary to de-Germanize oneself." The German, he maintained, digests events badly, he never gets done with them. "He has a day before yesterday, and a day after to-

(1) Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, (Philosophy of N., N.Y. Modern Library) p.127

(2) Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, pp.129-130

morrow, he has still no today." "The German himself does not exist, he is becoming, he is developing himself." In Nietzsche's view the German lacked the aristocratic "pathos of distance", the "feeling of nuance". "He is too good-natured, la canaille." (1)

As for the "mendacious race swindle" (2) he would have nothing to do with it. His anti-Semitism, if it can be so called, was neither racial, nor political. It was rather the consequence of his aristocratic ethics which rejected the "Jewish slave-insurrection of morals" masquerading in the guise of Christianity. For the Jewish race, the "race aere perennis", he professed sincerest admiration and prophesied for it intellectual dominance in the future. "We artists among the spectators and philosophers are grateful to the Jews. We owe to them the grand style in morality." (3)

From the lofty vantage-point of his aristocratic ethics he attacked both democracy and Marxian Socialism because both protected and fostered the slave-morality of the masses. His attitude toward the state, the "coldest of all cold monsters", (4) was as cynical as his attack on Christianity. In any case it was more anarchist than nationalistic.

(1) Ibid., p.130

(2) Nietzsche, Peoples and Countries, Sec.21

(3) Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, Part II § 250

(4) Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra, I, p.64

In his Zarathustra Nietzsche strikes a genuine humanitarian note devoid of all nationalistic aspirations: "Let him come to Zarathustra who has unlearned the love of his people because he has learned to love many peoples." (1) "Exiles shall you be from all fatherlands and forefatherlands! Your children's land shall you love! Let this be your new nobility!" (2)

That the writings of Nietzsche have had an enormous influence on the German mind, in particular that of the youth, is undeniable. In the First World War it was said that for every soldier who carried the Bible in his knapsack, one carried his Zarathustra. To the rebellious and revolutionary youth of Nazidom in particular, the writings of Nietzsche, always poetical, forceful and exalted, were like an intoxicating wine, a sweet poison. His noble maxims, "Be bold!", "Live dangerously!", "Hold sacred the hero in your heart!" fell on the all too-willing ears of a generation that was eager to justify the glory of militarism. His ideas of force and strength, his "pathos of distance" became the siren song which captivated the hearts and minds of the disillusioned and the discontented. It was therefore almost inevitable that the great Yea-sayer, the mystic transvaluator of values, should become both

(1) Nietzsche, Notes on Zarathustra, p.277

(2) Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra, II, p.130

prophet and torch-bearer of the Revolution. Nor was it difficult for the propaganda technicians to present Nietzsche as a genuine forerunner of National Socialism, no matter whether his individualist ethics fitted into the authoritarian structure. With remarkable insight Nietzsche himself predicted his fate among Germans, when he wrote, "The Germans are undoubtedly idealists. They have compromised themselves with me up to the present and I doubt whether things will get better in the future." (1) As to the fate that has befallen him among Nazis, he might, if he were alive today, apply the cynical words he once used to describe Wagner's fate: "Poor Wagner! To what pass he has come! If only he had fallen among swine! But among Germans! My kingdom for one intelligent word!" (2)

Though German Nationalism has had many prophets and German anti-Semitism many exponents, Nietzsche can not be justly numbered among them. (3) National Socialism (through Hitler and the other ideologists) cleverly combined, or, to use National Socialist terminology, "co-ordinated", the various forms of nationalism and anti-Semitism into a total political strategy. "Anti-Semitism" says Hitler, "is a useful revolutionary expedient, the most important weapon

(1) Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, pp.124 and 128

(2) Nietzsche, *op.cit.*, p.81

(3) Brinton, Crane, Nietzsche (Cambridge, Mass. 1941) esp. pp.172-243

in the propaganda arsenal."(1) Racism became not only a substitute for the class struggles of Marxism, but the cornerstone of the whole National Social philosophy. Upon this substructure were built the charisma of the leader, the rule of the élite, the policy of brute force and the totalitarian state. The ideological origins of these four essentials of National Socialist philosophy will be examined in greater detail elsewhere in this study.

(1) Rauschning, Hitler Speaks, p.233

"He who devotes himself wholly to the people and the fatherland . . . is a Socialist. That was and is the Socialism of the soldier of the Front . . ." Minister Seldte in Der Ring, 1933. No.30

## Chapter V.

### THE SOCIALISM OF THE THIRD REICH.

#### I. Ideology.

Gottfried Neese, a foremost legal interpreter of National Socialism, defines its two aspects as follows: "Nationalism is nothing more than the outwardly directed striving to maintain the inner unity of people and state, and Socialism is the inwardly directed striving for the same end." (1) It is with this inner aspect of Nazi ideology that we propose to deal in this chapter.

As already pointed out in a preceding chapter, National Socialism, unlike its Marxian counterpart, has no cut-and-dried economic theory, no fixed principles. Consequently it cannot be defined in terms of an economic program any more than it can in terms of its political program. Economics, according to National Socialist doctrine, is subordinate to and dependent on political considerations. The main purpose of the revolution is the unending struggle

(1) Neese, Die nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Stuttgart, 1935) pp.65-66 quoted in "National Socialism" publ. by Dept. of State, U.S.A. p.25

for a new political order, for a new society. Or, as Neumann puts it, more concretely; "National Socialism is not prompted by economic principles but by the doctrine for war preparation." (1)

A second difficulty in attempting to define the Socialism of the Third Reich lies in the vague and ambiguous use of the term "socialism". In Germany the term socialism was widely synonymous with social progress. With the rise of Marxian Socialism, however, it assumed both political and economic implications. National Socialism, although historically and ideologically, a reactionary movement against Marxian Socialism, emphasized the political rather than the economic character of socialism. It definitely rejected the primacy of economics over politics, the abolition of private property, the Marxist policy of class-warfare and the internationalism of its ideology. What it did learn from Marxism was its revolutionary technique. Hitler himself admitted that the Nazi methods were essentially Marxist. Consequently, from a Marxian point of view, National Socialism can justly be called a spurious socialism, a socialism of fiction, not of reality. The socialization of property was repudiated, but only conditionally. "Property," Hitler declared, "must not be socialized, but may be socialized when and if it is in the

(1) Neumann, Sigmund, Permanent Revolution (N.Y.1942) p.166

national interest."(1) By substituting the myth of race, National Socialism succeeded in abolishing class-warfare, but this victory was only won at the cost of the destruction of the organizations of the workers and their subsequent "co-ordination" into the political machine. "My socialism," Hitler boasted, "is not a class-war, but order."(2)

Essentially National Socialism is an ethical socialism, a socialism of the spirit. The ethical tenor of this brand of socialism is exemplified by its moral maxims, such as: "Honour work and respect the worker," "Labor has duties rather than rights." Instead of labor unions National Socialism has a militant "Arbeits-front" where every worker is a soldier on duty. Instead of economic equality Nazism speaks of "the democracy of work, of sacrifice, of duty." Hitler himself concisely described the ethical character of National Socialism when he said, "We socialize human beings, not external conditions."(3) A more complete description of it was given by A. Pieper in the early years of the movement: "Socialism," he writes, "is the bearer of a new sense of life and a new will to live. It is the idea of a new, a higher, a more complete community of life and common destiny, which grows out of an unselfish loyalty and devo-

(1) Rauschning, Hitler Speaks, p.134

(2) Rauschning, op. cit. p.175

(3) Rauschning, op. cit. p.190



tion of man to man, than has hitherto been realized."(1)

Thus National Socialism has the character of a community-urge, an intellectual-emotional attitude, a moral duty. "Every true national thought is in its last analysis social."

But National Socialism is not merely a socialism of attitude; it is a socialism of action. It is not merely patriotic, but militaristic. It is the synthesis of the spirit of collectivism and the principle of achievement, or as Gregor Strasser poetically defined it: "Socialism is the old officers' corps, - is the Cologne Cathedral. It is intensive Prussian service for all."(2) Actually National Socialism as a revolutionary movement is a product of war, not of peace. It is a development of the "Schützengraben-Sozialismus" - the "Socialism of the trenches", the heroic "socialism of brothers-in-arms" of which Hitler frequently speaks. Neumann in his 'Permanent Revolution' makes the significant observation that "fully militarized social relationships had been basically experienced on the battle-field", (3) and it is remarkable in this connection that the original fighting comrades of the Nazi party were, with few exceptions, war veterans belonging to the younger generation.

(1) Pieper, A. Kapitalismus und Sozialismus als seelische Problem. (2nd ed. 1925) p. 59

(2) Strasser, Gregor, quoted in Edgar Schmidt-Pauli, Die Maenner um Hitler, (Berlin, 1932)

(3) Neumann, Permanent Revolution, p. 244

The First World War had created the political radicals who became the core of a movement, which was inherently destructive and nihilistic. Its dominant note was fanatical militancy, its structure strictly authoritarian, its basic command: "Gleichschaltung" - co-ordination, its economics was the "planned economy" of the garrison state. "War," said the famous Nazi law-maker, Carl Schmitt, "is the essence of everything; the nature of the total war determines the nature and form of the totalitarian state." (1) Goebbels, not to be outdone, boasted: "Our socialism is the legacy of the Prussian army. It is that kind of socialism which enabled Frederick the Great to carry on a war for seven years." (2)

The real nature of the Nazi brand of Socialism can perhaps best be understood by viewing it in relation to Marxism, Capitalism and the Corporate State. National Socialism parades a spurious radicalism. Except for the impotent Left-Wing radicals of the party the socialization of economy in the Marxian sense was never seriously contemplated. Consequently, when Hitler announced in 1933 that the revolution was at an end, Gregor Strasser, leader of the radical faction, accused him of having betrayed the movement and branded his national socialist revolution as

(1) Quoted in Neumann, Permanent Revolution, p.231

(2) Goebbels, J.P., in Berliner Börsenzeitung, Jan.4, 1934  
quoted in Schumann, Nazi Dictatorship, p.393

"unsocialist". The attempt of the Jacobins to bring about the social phase of the revolution was ruthlessly suppressed by Hitler's infamous "Blood Purge" in 1934.

National Socialism remained in a sense capitalistic, though to call it State Capitalism is a misnomer. Perhaps the term State Socialism or Prussian Socialism are much nearer the mark. National Socialism is not, as is often assumed, a kind of State Capitalism, for the Nazi principle of the primacy of politics over economics did not imply the organization, but the control of economy. It was considered the task of the state to be the pathfinder, not the entrepreneur of business. The obvious aim of National Socialist policy was the bureaucratization rather than the socialization of the economic life. In accordance with this aim private organizations were transformed into authoritarian bodies under the principle of industrial leadership responsible to the political leadership of the Nazi party. Thus a vast and complicated hierarchy of economic and political interests was developed, a monster totalitarian bureaucracy that finally dominated business and labor, the peasantry and the army; in a word, every phase of social and political life.

Finally, National Socialism is not a Corporate State. Its goal is, of course, the classless state, but with an organic division of society into estates which are to be essentially equal. Consequently the Nazis allegedly

aim to create an equality of opportunity for all estates and to raise the status of the lower estates by preaching "the dignity of work". National Socialism, however, never intended to introduce the Corporate State; its real aim was the control, not the organization of economy. Whenever theorists did advocate the Corporate "structure of graded classes" it was merely for the sake of gaining control of the middle and upper classes — just another political expedient. Any Corporate State theorist who thought otherwise was repudiated in no uncertain terms. This was notably the fate of Othmar Spann, who saw his theories rejected in 1933, and himself put into concentration camp.(1)

cf. Neumann, Behemoth, pp.230-32

## II. Ideological Origins.

The ideological origins of the socialism of the Third Reich can be traced with a fair amount of plausibility to half a dozen political theorists who anticipated or propounded a brand of socialism similar to National Socialism. As has already been pointed out, the ethical socialism of the German Revolution is partly characterized by its Prussian ideal of order, domination and comradeship. In this respect the old Prussian state can fairly be regarded as a prototype of German Socialism.

But there are several other ideological forerunners of National Socialism. Fichte, the philosopher-patriot, had advocated a comparable conception of the ideal socialistic state.

Ferdinand Lasalle's socialism, too, was distinctively national and definitely opposed to Marxism.

But it was Paul de Lagarde, Professor of Theology in Göttingen, who early in the eighties propounded a pan-German authoritarian social state remarkably similar to the Nazi ideal. It is not without reason that Alfred Rosenberg numbers this man among the genuine forerunners of National Socialism.

Another of the earlier proponents of a Nationalistic Socialism was Friederich Naumann, who in 1896 established his "Nationalsoziale Verein". He remained, however,

a voice of one crying in the wilderness. The time was not yet.

Possibly the first full-fledged National Socialist, certainly one of the spiritual progenitors of the movement, was Friederich List, who in his "National System of Political Economy" urged the establishment of a state-controlled capitalism. List was also the first political thinker who clearly defined one of the real aims of National Socialism - viz. the redivision of the earth between England and Germany on the basis of the racial doctrine of Aryan supremacy. With List National Socialism is raised to the plane of grand geopolitics. His ideas were to fall on fertile ideological soil in the philosophy of Rosenberg and the geopolitics of Haushofer.

In 1922, when National Socialism was still in its infancy, Moeller van den Bruck published a remarkable, rather romantic book, "Das dritte Reich"(1), wherein the idea of a German anti-liberal, anti-Marxian Socialism was clearly set forth. One of the most articulate and cultured exponents of social imperialism and proletarian racism, Van den Bruck, must, in my opinion, be considered as a true forerunner of National Socialism. Feder's catechism of the movement, "Der deutsche Staat" is in fact a popularized, expanded presentation of the theme tentatively set forth in

(1) Moeller van den Bruck, Germany's Third Empire (London, 1934)

Van den Bruck's work.

Gottfried Feder, one of the original founders of the party exercised considerable influence on Hitler.(1) The latter's economic ideas were largely moulded by Feder in the early period of the movement. This economic theorist made a distinction between creative Aryan capitalism and the international exploitive capitalism of Jewry—a distinction which was later to become embodied in the Nazi policy of always attacking money capital, but never the entrepreneur. Feder's second theme, the "breaking of the thralldom of interest" likewise became a favorite Nazi expedient, worthy of being incorporated into the "Twenty-Five Point" Party Program.(2) The Nazi party, however, soon abandoned Feder's original economic program. It had served its purpose of gaining the support of the masses. Now that, by the grace and providence of industry and finance-capital, National Socialism held the reins of power; Feder's anti-capitalist ideas, along with his Corporate state ideal, and his inflationary "Federgeld" (a social credit scheme), were relegated to the limbo of practical impossibilities.

A philosophical basis for nationalistic socialism

(1) cf. Schumann, The Nazi Dictatorship, (N.Y. 1935)  
pp.117-119

(2) Feder, Gottfried, Das Program der N.S.D.A.P. (Munich, Eher, 1933) pp.134-136

quite unconnected with the romantic radicalism of the foregoing theorists was created by the erudite Oswald Spengler. In his famous 'magnum opus' "The Decline of the West" (1) he gave a sensationally fatalistic and pessimistic view of world history. He himself, however, remained a defiant believer in the militant mission of Prussianism, in which he envisaged the true model for a German Socialism. (2) Contemptuous of both democracy and radicalism, Spengler predicted that western civilization would end in Caesarism. He was an outstanding proponent of the Corporate State based on Prussian aristocratic rule and a rigid hierarchy. In spite of the fact that many of his ideas have much in common with National Socialist ideology, Spengler was never a National Socialist. His social idealism soon found itself in conflict with the nihilistic radicalism and romantic racialism of Nazidom and he became, as Greenwood remarks, "one of the most scathing opponents of National Socialism". (3) Spengler saw only too clearly that National Socialism was not the Prussian Socialism which he had held up as the ideal of the Germany of the future.

Whether Friederich Nietzsche can justly be associated with National Socialism is extremely disputable. Rosen-

- (1) Spengler, Der Untergang des Abendlandes (Munich, 1922)
- (2) Spengler, Preussentum und Sozialismus (Munich, 1934)
- (3) Greenwood, The German Revolution, (London, 1934) p.235  
cf. Spengler, The Hour of Decision (N.Y. Knopf, 1934)



berg, it is true, makes the claim that Nietzsche was one of its "genuine forerunners", but it is more plausible to consider him only a prophet, not a predecessor, of the movement. Spengler, himself a Nietzschean, contends that Nietzsche was a Socialist without knowing it, that his instincts were socialistic, practical . . . . directed to the welfare of mankind. There is admittedly some measure of truth in this contention if we accept Spengler's definition of ethical Socialism as "the Faustian world-feeling become irreligious", the "system of will to power", the "sentiment of action at a distance", and "the root-feeling of Care for the future".(1) On the other hand, Nietzsche from his lofty aristocratic viewpoint felt only the deepest aversion to Marxian Socialism with its egalitarian ideals born of envy and resentment. Perhaps he was a Socialist in spite of himself, but he was hardly a National Socialist, for it appears quite impossible to fit his individualist ethics into an authoritarian scheme. His repudiation of racialism and nationalism precludes the possibility of making him responsible for a "Völkische Weltanschauung" (a nationalistic philosophy). If he foresaw the Corporative State of Capitalist society and the coming of the Cyclopaens, as Spengler maintains, he was not even a good prophet, at least as

(1) Spengler, *Decline of the West*, (transl. by C.F. Atkinson, N.Y. 1939) Vol. II, pp. 347, 359, 362, 370

far as National Socialism is concerned. The Corporate State was never realized in the Third Reich, and as for the Nazi Cyclopaens, it seems that they are merely idols with clay feet.

It is obvious that in such a lengthy list of near and distant relatives of National Socialism, many will be genuine fore-runners. Among the latter I would include Friederich List, Moeller van den Bruck, Paul de Lagarde and Gottfried Feder. The others, particularly Nietzsche and Spengler, contributed to some aspects of National Socialist ideology, but on the whole their philosophy in its fundamental issues does not correspond to the racial philosophy of Nazidom.

"Neither necessity nor decree -  
nay, the love of power is the  
demon of mankind."

Neitzsche  
Dawn of Day, Bk.III No.206

## Chapter VI.

### THE CHARISMA OF LEADERSHIP.

The central political principle of National Socialism is that of leadership. This principle is the direct result of the belief that in politics human nature is fundamentally instinctive and irrational and therefore in need of personal authority and coercive sanction. The justification of the leadership principle cannot therefore be derived from any rational constitutional right expressive of the people. It is based wholly on racial and charismatic rather than on legal or political presumptions. According to Nazi ideology, the right of the highest race implies that the highest racial elements within the nation are destined to rule. Superhuman powers and qualities constitute the right to leadership and it is the duty of the organized national community to help the highest, the most creative men to victory. Though National Socialist ideology is anxious to deny it, it is obvious that the Leader is in reality an absolute dictator, a true demagogue in the classical as well as in the modern sense. He is the political link between state, people and party élite. In him the three functions of government are united: he is supreme

legislator, supreme administrator and supreme infallible judge.

It would be an oversimplification to characterize the National Socialist principle of leadership as Prussian, although it must be admitted that it reveals some typical Prussian traits. Greenwood points out that in a large measure German Fascism is a movement of non-Prussian Germans against the domination of Prussianism. The Prussian idea of leadership is in essence the Hegelian subordination of individual interests to the idea of one moral authority. The individual remains unpolitical. National Socialism, however, goes beyond this Hegelian or Prussian conception. Hitler wants more than mere obedience to constituted authority; he demands active co-operation. In his totalitarian state there is no place for the unpolitical person. The National Socialist aim is to establish a hierarchy of political leadership analogous to the hierarchic military organization of the Prussian army. Thus the hierarchical structure of National Socialism is the political embodiment of the Prussian principle of "authority from the top down and responsibility from the bottom up".

Hitler however is not merely the political "leader of the people" but also the chief engineer of the political machine with its dogmas, its rituals, its bureaucratic organization. He is not merely a modern autocrat; he is the revolutionary condottiere of the armed band, the charis-

matic saviour of the nation, the demi-god of militant theocracy. According to Hitler the role of the Fuhrer is basic to National Socialism. In opposition to the democratic principle of the anonymous "majority of stupidity", he proposes to set up the principle of personal responsibility and leadership by the "best heads". These "best heads" constitute not so much an aristocracy of the intellect as an aristocracy of will. Plato would have called this type of government the "timocratic state", the rule of the "spirited" rather than the rule of the wise. "Ruthless will to power" - that is the dominant characteristic of the modern tyrant and the secret of his success.

We have seen that the leadership principle cannot be explained on legal or constitutional grounds. Its nature is best described as charismatic, founded on racial myth and religious belief. The belief in the charisma of divine kingship is as old as history itself. It underlies the charismatic character of the Messiah in the Old Testament, as well as that of the divus Augustus of Imperial Rome. Both Barbarossa and Friederich II of Hohenstaufen were regarded as personified gods. It survived until comparatively recent times in the charismatic construction of the "divine right of kings". But the closest analogues to the National Socialist idea of leadership are the Lutheran, and more particularly the Calvinist, doctrines which offered an irrational justification for the unlimited sovereign authority of the state. Luther's charismatic doctrine however

involved a dualism between freedom of conscience and outward subservience. It was Calvin's doctrine of the pre-election of man to grace, with its outward criterion of success, that implied that the successful man must be obeyed. The established order is ipso facto of divine right. The state is necessarily a coercive institution and sanctity extends to all persons in the hierarchy of the state. There are other remarkable points of similarity between the Calvinist theocratic state and Hitler's totalitarian one. Calvin's ethics were essentially an ethics of action comparable to National Socialist dynamics. His theory of predestination involved a belief in a cosmic system of quasi-militancy discipline. His doctrine of fore-ordination was the mandate to rule for the clerical oligarchy, whose power was hardly representative and practically unlimited. In National Socialism charismatic leadership and organization became a conscious device to abolish equality and substitute a hierarchical order, wherein faith and obedience, not reason and true responsibility were the real motive forces. In view of these striking similarities(1) we are, I believe, justified in regarding Calvin's theocracy in Geneva as the embryo of the totalitarian state of today.

A genuine forerunner of the charismatic conception of National Socialist leadership was the philosopher Fichte.

(1) cfr. Neumann, Behemoth, pp.93-96

He predicted the coming of "the constraining lord installed by God, only formally a tyrant and usurper . . . a lord constraining to Germandom . . . constraining all beneath the dominion of a higher insight."(1)

One of the most erudite exponents of modern dictatorship was the post-war German philosopher, Oswald Spengler (1880-1936). He advocated a return to "Caesarism" because this form of government was most suited to the German character and because a strong Prussianized state was impossible without it. He described this Caesarism as "the way of government which despite all constitutional formulation is once more wholly formless in its inner being . . . a return into the primitive. The powers of the blood, the primeval, growing, germinating forces of life . . . enter once more into their ancient mastery. Race breaks forth pure and irresistible: the success of the strongest and the rest as prey. It seizes the governance of the world, and the realm of books and problems becomes torpid or sinks into oblivion."(2)

Like the National Socialist principle of leadership, the related doctrine of the *élite* is based on mythical and biological presumptions. In the following chapter we shall briefly analyze the Nazi conception and attempt to discover some of the principle forerunners of the doctrine.

(1) Quoted in Rauschnig, *The Revolution of Nihilism*, p. 163

(2) Spengler, O., *The Decline of the West*, vol. II pp. 541-542

"Nothing commits the élite - no philosophy, no ethical standard. The revolutionary dictatorship is a new type in its cynical, unprincipled policy of violence."

Rauschnig,  
Revol. of Nihilism, p.20

## Chapter VII.

### THE NAZI ELITE - APOSTLES OF VIOLENCE.

As has been pointed out in a previous chapter, the leaders of the totalitarian state, the party élite, were recruited for the most part from the radical group of war veterans, who had become fanatical "trench-socialists" eager to destroy the existing order of things. This militia of "irregulars" had been unable to be reinstated into a normal civilian life and had decided to become political condottieri with one objective — total permanent revolution. Essentially a "Kampfbund", a fighting league, the Nazi élite from the start was characterized by its military discipline, its ruthless will to power, its amoral, inhuman policy of vilification and violence. Inspired by a rabid fanaticism and a blind faith in their historic mission, the élite aimed at the complete revolutionizing of the technique of government and the continuous dominance of the masses by force, terror and propaganda.

Basic to the élite ideology is the doctrine of violence, of direct action. This constitutes the dynamic of the National Socialist revolution, the secret of its



strength. It is Nietzsche's "will to power" on a truly Machiavellian basis. The Nazi élite is definitely characterized by the essential immoralism of its methods. In principle the leaders are bound by no philosophy, by no social ethics. Philosophy and ethics are for the élite merely an indispensable effective means of achieving domination over the masses and retaining that domination.

There is a formidable list of thinkers who have in greater or lesser degree contributed to the doctrine of the élite and the doctrine of violence. Several of these, particularly Machiavelli, Sorel, and Pareto are intimately connected with Italian Fascism. Except for Machiavelli, their connection with National Socialism is more elusive, though it is by no means improbable that they have indirectly exerted some influence on Nazi ideology. For that reason they will receive cursory attention in this study.

Adolf Hitler once claimed that he not only read but studied Machiavelli's "Prince" and considered it a book that is "simply indispensable for every politician." "I have," he boasted, "no objection to describing myself as a disciple of Machiavelli." (1) This political theorist had been the first thinker to advocate force as a means of social cohesion and to teach the political value of appeal to the lower instincts of man. Certainly Hitler has proved

(1) Rauschnig, Hitler Speaks, pp.267 and 271

a most faithful disciple. Who in history has ever utilized the baser instincts of man with such diabolical cleverness? Who so consistently employed deception as an instrument of national policy, reserving the whip, the dagger, the sword to terrorize, subdue and annihilate? It was with Hitler that Machiavelli's political counsel "to combine the hypocrisy of the fox with the courage of the lion" was to assume the proportions of grand political strategy.

Another political theorist, probably unknown to Hitler but not to Mussolini, is Alfred Pareto, whose basic contention was that values are not amenable to science, or to politics. He therefore championed an irrationlist and relativist ethics, discarded both objectivity and universality of morals. A more original contribution was his conception of the "circulation of the élite", a cycle in which political cunning and violence constantly alternated in the battle of power. Contemptuous of both democracy and humanitarianism, Pareto laid special emphasis on the value of violence and deceit as political expedients.

It is Georges Sorel, however, the great French syndicalist, who has merited the title of "philosopher of violence par excellence".(1) A militant anti-intellectualist, Sorel interpreted Bergsonian intuition in terms of a

(1) cf. Neumann, S., *Permanent Revolution*, pp.163-164;  
also 138,238

faculty of political action and maintained that only irrational forces could control society. Only by means of a biological élite employing both myth and violence could a virile civilization be inaugurated.

Whether the doctrine of Sorel and Pareto had a direct bearing on Nazi élite ideology remains problematical. So much is certain that the Nazis had a demonstration ad oculos of the gospel of violence in the practices of the of the Faschist Revolution. In any case the theory of the apostles of violence admirably fitted the Nazi pattern. But there is no necessity for seeking foreign writers to explain the origin of Nazi ideology. Several well-known German thinkers have exalted the use of force and deceit as political expediciencies.

Nietzsche, in particular, has been intimately linked with the Nazi ideology of élite, violence and war. At first glance it seems fairly obvious that Hitler's apotheosis of "the eternal privilege of force and strength"<sup>(1)</sup> has a remarkable affinity to Nietzsche's "Will-to-Power", the idea of the superman and the concept of a master-morality. Moreover, National Socialism has declared itself vitally and directly bound to the post-philosopher of Sils-Maria. But it must not be forgotten that for National Socialism Nietzsche's Nihilism and Immoralism served, like

(1) Hitler, Mein Kampf, p.458

numerous other isms, as useful political devices to ensure the victory of the revolution. To that end his doctrines were exploited with typical German thoroughness, and with no less typical Nazi unscrupulousness. Nietzsche's great fame and popularity lent the needed prestige to the National Socialist "Weltanschauung" which sadly lacked a proper philosopher. His forceful style and revolutionary pathos lent the intellectual and emotional dynamite needed by the revolution of nihilism. What German philosopher was better suited than the man who boasted that he "philosophized with the hammer"? Needless to say, however, the Nazis carefully censored the new popular edition, suppressing all statements not in accord with their beliefs. Nietzsche, like every one else, was "gleichgeschaltet", made to toe the line.

The plain truth, however, is that Nietzsche was anything but a National Socialist. If he was a Socialist, he certainly was not a nationalistic, imperialistic one. There is a world of difference between his philosophizing with a hammer and the Nazi ideal of "thinking with one's blood". Nietzsche was first and foremost an aristocrat of thought. His philosophy was too highly individualistic to fit into any totalitarian or authoritarian pattern. His philosophy was not a philosophy for the masses. He never desired a general adoption of his beliefs. Moreover, and I think this is a decisive point, Nietzsche's philosophy was

essentially an artist's philosophy, (1) the tragic philosophy of the Dionysian, not the political philosophy of the revolutionary. True, it did contain a nihilistic, anarchistic aspect. He himself considered it "a terrible explosive imperiling all things". (2) But again its purpose was essentially ethical - to clear the path for the philosophers of the future, the creators of new values. For all his nihilism of reason, he prided himself on being the conqueror of nihilism, the great yea-sayer, the great affirmer of the heroic ideal. He glorified the will-to-power, but it is extremely doubtful whether he ever advised brute force. Moreover, his will-to-power is a philosophic, not a political, much less a military concept. Analogous to Bergson's "élan vital", it represents a generalization synonymous with life, the urge to mould society, to determine the conditions of life on earth. Sometimes, too, it is equivalent to the "Will to Truth" in the Nietzschean sense. Similarly his heroic ideal of the "Superman", and of Zarathustra, the prophet and forerunner of that ideal, are creators of values, artists and law-givers, not revolutionary tyrants and imperialistic conquistadores.

It is true that some elements of his works, especially the doctrine of the subjugation of the herd by the masters, the relativity of morals, the role of the élite

(1) cf. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.149

(2) Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, § 3

and the outward value of untruth, bear an outward resemblance to their Nazi counterparts. The Nazis have made much political capital out of this. It is, however, a naive assumption to see in the Nazi revolutionary or the Aryan race the realization of Nietzsche's "Superman". Spengler rightly points out that his theory of the Superman is "pure escatology - a castle in the air".(1) Nietzsche himself describes the Superman as merely his ideal of "the most thoroughly well-constituted type"(2), supreme as thinker, creator of values, and religious genius. What had this ideal in common with a Storm-Trooper or a Black Shirt?

Nietzsche's élite, on the contrary, was an aristocracy of the intellect, not of blood. His future philosophers, "the bridges to the superman", were not political blackguards acting with ruthless lust for conquest and unscrupulous tyranny. Their task, as he envisaged it, was "to fix the hierarchy of values which were to constrain milleniums to take new paths"<sup>(3)</sup> toward a higher humanity. This ideal he placed over and against the decadent ideals of the Christian saint and the Schopenhauerian pessimist. For this reason he was uncompromisingly opposed to the "herd-morality" of both Christianity and democracy as well

(1) Spengler, *Decline of the West*, Vol.II, p.362

(2) Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 28

(3) Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, ¶17, cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, V.sec.203

as to the "autonomous herd" of proletarian socialism. In all these forms he saw the great obstacle to the rearing of a higher, nobler type. In all of them he saw a dangerous slave-insurrection of morals, inspired by hatred, resentment and the denial of the will to live, — in a word, the triumph of Nihilism. In both democracy and socialism he foresaw the possible degeneration of mankind into pigmies of equal rights, and "an involuntary arrangement for the rearing of tyrants".(1) "The herd," he predicted, "will require a master . . . as they require their daily bread."

The great "Yea-Sayer" is, I believe, also unjustly associated with the Nazi theory of violence and warfare. True, for Nietzsche, the dynamic moralist, life is a battle, grim, pitiless, without quarter. His is no conventionally Darwinian struggle for survival, but the battle-cry for power and the extension of power in its most sublime sense. He confesses that he is essentially a warrior, a "man who needs to be an enemy". War to him, however, was an intellectual, moral affair. He is no glorifier of nationalistic, imperialistic wars of aggression and conquest. "Your war shall you wage, and for the sake of your thoughts"(2) is the admonition Zarathustra gives to his disciples. "Not

(1) Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, V.sec.203 of sec.174

(2) Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Part I, ch.10

forcible new distributions, but gradual transformations of opinion are necessary, justice in all matters must become greater, the instinct for violence less." (1) This was Nietzsche's noble conception of "grand politics, raised to the realm of spiritual warfare". It has little in common with the ruthless power politics of National Socialism. His conception of a great statesman is diametrically opposed to the ideal of a modern dictator. In an illuminating dialogue on the great statesman, (2) Nietzsche's anti-national-socialist ideal is revealed: "Supposing," he writes, "a statesman were to bring his people into the position of being obliged to practise 'high politics' for which they were by nature badly endowed and prepared, so that they would have to sacrifice their old and reliable virtues, out of love to a new and doubtful mediocrity . . . supposing such a statesman were to stimulate the slumbering passions and avidities of this people, were to subvert their conscience, make their minds narrow, and their tastes 'national' - what! would such a statesman be great?" "Strong and mad! not great!" That has been, and still is, the considered verdict of many unbiased critics of the National Socialist élite, and it may well become the damning verdict of the deluded German people themselves.

(1) Nietzsche, *Twilight of Idols*, p.76 et passim

(2) Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §241, p.172



Yes, Nietzsche knew that he was a fatality, but he could scarcely have foreseen that it was to be his fate to be associated with a national-socialist revolution of Nihilism. Indeed, The Germans are incurable idealists.

One of the most influential poets of modern Germany and a thinker frequently associated with National Socialism is Stefan George. As high priest of the famous "George Circle" he romanticized the idea of the Nietzschean superman, the Georgean hero who puts his trust in faith, not reason, in blood, not intellect. But neither his mystical conception of a cultured élite, nor his irrationalist ethics suffice to make him a precursor of National Socialist ideology. His ideas were in harmony with the spirit of the age but lacked the revolutionary fire characteristic of the movement. Like Spengler he was never a National Socialist.

The Nazi doctrine of the élite and the use of force have a remarkable affinity to Spengler's conception of man as "a beast of prey". In his booklet "Man and Technics", (1) Spengler attempts to justify his view that man is fundamentally a brute who considers the world as his prey. "Ideals are cowardice", the unprincipled use of force is the secret of success. Spengler's contempt of the laboring class, whom he calls "the human vermin", his depreciation of intellect and his exaltation of action, finally his insis-

(1) Spengler, Man and Technics, p.19

tence on leadership, hierarchic organization and Prussian discipline, have much in common with National Socialist ideals. That he was never a full-fledged National Socialist is due partly to his rejection of the racial ideology of Nazism, partly to his Prussian aristocracy of spirit which had only the utmost contempt for the barbarian radicalism of the revolution. Nevertheless, his profound pessimism and his pagan positivism had considerable influence in shaping the ideological presumptions of the National Socialist Weltanschauung. He appears as a spiritual godfather of Nazism rather than as one of its intellectual progenitors, as a kind of late Prussian "Knight of the woe-ful countenance", a Cassandra of the impending doom of European civilization.

"The total state implies continuous dynamics . . . the permanent revolution."

Neumann, S.  
Permanent Revolution, p.viii.

## Chapter VIII.

### THE NATURE AND AIMS OF THE NAZI STATE.

As already suggested in a previous chapter, the National Socialist conception of the state is an outgrowth of the racial Weltanschauung which postulates unlimited power over the nation and the complete subordination of the individual to the ruling élite. The Nazi state is authoritarian and totalitarian, but not above its creator and guardian, the party. The party itself is sovereign and merely uses the state to pursue its own ends; it is the Leviathan of the political machinery of the state, dominating the life of the nation, mobilizing it for its supreme objectives, war and the total reorganization of society. The total state is a product of total war; conversely the nature of total war determines the nature of the totalitarian state. From an economic point of view the total state is neither a corporate state nor State Capitalism. National Socialist economics is best described as a bureaucratic capitalism, the political control of a planned economy in accordance with political and military necessities.

The relationship between party and state is not easily defined. The party, though sovereign, did not ab-

sorb the state, but existed as a state within the state. In this dual state both party machinery and state bureaucracy were retained, the one the protagonist of the revolutionary aims, the other the executor of traditional governmental functions, the "bearer of the spiritual goods of the Volk"(1) as Hitler expressed it. Except for a brief interlude in 1934 when Hitler attempted to end the revolution, the state never in Nazi ideology received the glorification characteristic of Hegelian and Prussian political thought. It is true that for some theorists Hegel's idea of the state was held up as the model for the National Socialist state. Other political thinkers even proposed that the Nazi State was merely a further development of the "Rechtsstaat" (the legal state) of Frederick II of Prussia. But these well-meant attempts were soon repudiated. As Neumann points out, "the most influential political theorists reject the Hegelian political philosophy because it glorifies the state." (2) Alfred Rosenberg, the philosopher of National Socialism, is outspokenly anti-Hegelian.(3) Nor does it seem possible to fit Hegel's philosophy into the Nazi ideology. Not only did he absolutize the state as the highest embodiment of reason within the historical process and apotheosize it as the "March

(1) Hitler, *Mein Kampf*.

(2) Neumann, F., *Behemoth*, p.234

(3) Rosenberg, *Mythus*, pp.525-527

of God through the world", he furthermore maintained that the state has a life, a will, a personality of its own, that it is absolutely sovereign, compared to which all individuals are related. What had the Hegelian state, this "hieroglyph of reason"(1) and "realization of freedom"(2) and morality to do with the Nazi state reduced to a slave of the Nazi party? Finally Hegel's State rests on Religion, its form and constitution is determined by religion.(3) The Nazi state, however, is based on the myth of race and the gospel of violence. Not Hegel's "idea of spirit" or divine reason, but Rosenberg's idea of blood and brute force are the basic pillars of the total state.

Hitler likewise rejected the state and reduced it to the servant of the racial people. "The state is not our master, we (the political elite) are the masters of the state," Hitler declared.(4) Thus the state is reduced to a means to an end; it no longer is a moral concept or the realization of an absolute idea. Neumann sums up Hegel's relationship to Nazism by asserting that "Hegel cannot be held responsible for the political theory of National Socialism. Efforts of Hegelians to adjust their master's theory to Nazi ideology have failed."(5)

(1) Hegel, Philosophy of History (Selections, Lowenberg) p.450

(2) Ibid., p.388

(3) Ibid., pp.404-405

(4) Hitler, Speech at Nurnberg, 8th Sept., 1934

(5) Neumann, F., Behemoth, p.78

The National Socialist conception of the state is more justly traced back to the nationalistic philosopher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte. It is he who proclaimed that the state exists essentially for the sake of the nation as conceived in racial terms. Fichte likewise anticipated the Nazis in advocating national economic autarchy and the subordination of science to racial considerations.

Other forerunners of the National Socialist conception of the state were discussed in the chapter on Nationalistic Socialism.

An analysis of National Socialist state ideology would be incomplete without at least a cursory mention of its political aims. It has truly been said that the Nazi totalitarian state implies imperialist expansion and the means thereto ~~for~~ total war. A new military science, known as Geopolitics, was grafted into the Nazi ideology to rationalize its foreign political aims. The leading exponent of this school of thought was General Karl Haushofer, who raised the science of Geopolitics to the status of a "Weltanschauung". Rosenberg seized upon this science and tied it in with his basic concepts of a master race, which was destined to establish the rule of the warrior caste throughout Europe. But the true "father of geopolitics" was not Haushofer, but the geographer Friederich Ratzel, (1)

(1) Ratzel, Fr., Anthropogeographie, 1899

who originated the concepts of "Lebensraum" and the laws of the growth of spaces and the "inrooting" of the people in the soil. It was Rudolf Kjellen, however, who revamped Ratzel's "anthropogeography" and provided the bridge to National Socialism.(1) Other geopoliticians like Sir Halford MacKinder and Friederich Naumann(2), who both formulated and developed the notion of a Central Europe, contributed to the Nazi policy of "Drang nach Osten". Haushofer thus had a line of intellectual forerunners. In his "Welt-politik von Heute"(3) he merely gave all these strains their ultimate formulation. Subsequently another disciple of the geopolitical school, Ewald Banse, in his popular "Wehrwissenschaft" raised the science of geopolitics to the rank of a "national philosophy" of imperialist expansion. That geopolitical ideas seeped down to the lower strata of the nation is evidenced by the immense popularity of such novels as Hans Grimm's best-seller "Volk ohne Raum" (People without Living Space). But the Russians probably learned more from Haushofer than Hitler and his generals, who seemed to have overlooked Haushofer's prophetic article, "Space as a Weapon". Whatever the scientific value of geopolitics, it seems certain that the ideas of Haushofer

(1) Kjellen, R., The State as Living Space.

(2) Naumann, F., "Mitteleuropa" 1915

(3) Haushofer, Karl, Weltpolitik von Heute, Berlin, 1935  
and Wehr-Geopolitik, Berlin, 1932

and his school have had considerable influence in shaping Nazi political thought on foreign affairs. For this reason both Kjellen and Haushofer should be included in the rank of the ideological forerunners of National Socialism.

Whether Rosenberg's projects for a Nordic-central European Nazi empire and the conquest of Western Russia derive from the geopolitical school is uncertain. That his conceptions are in harmony with the geopolitical ideology is fairly obvious in spite of some disagreement regarding strategy and foreign "politics".

The forerunners of National Socialism are, as we have seen, quite numerous, as we could have expected from such an eclectic, revolutionary ideology. Not all of them are genuine ideological progenitors; some are only prophets, some merely spiritual godfathers. In the list of genuine forerunners I would include Wagner and H. S. Chamberlain for their contribution of the doctrine of race; List, Lagarde, Moeller van den Bruck and perhaps Fichte and Treitschke, who advanced the nationalist conception of the state; Haushofer and Kjellen who are responsible for the geopolitical ideology of Nazism; last, not least, Machiavelli and the Marxists for the revolutionary methods of violence and deceit. Spengler, George, and especially Nietzsche, were prophets rather than progenitors of Nazi ideology. Some of their philosophical ideas were politi-



cally exploited by the Nazis, but it remains extremely doubtful whether their doctrines were in any sense or intent National Socialist. The conclusion can therefore be drawn that no single philosophy can be made responsible for National Socialist ideology. This revolutionary "Weltanschauung" is essentially eclectic, and the only philosopher it has so far claimed as its own is the eclectic philosopher Alfred Rosenberg, an erudite disciple of several schools. But even his philosophy, consistent as it appears to be, does not constitute the sum and substance of National Socialism. Although his ideas carried considerable influence in the "period of struggle" they were later found too rigid to keep up with the revolutionary dynamics of the movement and the march of events. Some of his conceptions too were found inadequate and discarded — they no longer carried the day.

THE END.

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