

Ideological Derivations of Nazism and Its Subsequent Rise- An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The Article in hand is synoptic view of Nazism. Much has been written about the origin and various dimensions of this German movement as well as regarding its consolidation and decline.

Methodology: It is very ironic that the most significant aspect relating to Nazism i.e. the basic factors and ideologies by which on one side Nazism gained popularity among masses but on the other hand these dry factors also caused its decline hardly attract any attention of historians. **Results:** Here an effort has been made to estimate and highlight these very factors which were both ingredients and components of Nazi Ideology which, in turn, gave way a unique ideology to the German as well as European political literature.. **Conclusion:** Discussion in the preceding pages shows that Nazism was based on strong ideological perceptions. Darwinism was the main component of the Nazi Ideology. It provided justification for the future Nazi aggression

1. Introduction

An ideology is a set of doctrines which any society follows to achieve specific aims and goals. These doctrines or a set of ideas is often presented by a dominant group of society and it affects the other all common people of that society. There is always an ideology behind any nation, society, organization or a party. Organizations achieve power by hitting and influencing the ideology of the current society. By spreading their own ideas and dogmas, different groups and lobbyists forced people to think alike. A state of hegemony prevails when almost all people of the society begin to think alike and when they forget that there is something alternative to that situation.

In case of Nazism, there was also a dominant ideology worked by big Nazis to establish their hegemony in German society. Nazis drew the basic concepts of their ideology from the racist ideas presented by Arthur de Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Comte (Ramm, 1984) Nationalistic ideas of Heinrich von Treitschke and hero-cult concepts of Friedrich Nietzsche also influenced the Nazi ideology. Alfred Rosenberg further explained this ideology enunciated by Adolf Hitler in his autobiography *Mein Kampf*.

The central points of this ideology were the ideas of racial inequality, faithful obedience to the leader and nationalist expansion. According to the Nazi ideology, races can be classified scientifically. Some races are superior and some are inferior. Aryan race belongs to Germans is on the top while Jews and Blacks are in the bottom of racial hierarchy. Big Nazis proclaimed that Jews were making the superior Aryan race impure by intermarriages. Hitler said that Jews were polluting the German pure blood by seduction and prostitution. So, Jews were a parasitic nation (Grant, 1969).

Nazi ideology emphasized that Germans should govern the inferior Jews to delimit them. On the other side by scientific method of breeding, Germans should extend their master race. Nazis considered the Marxism and Freemasonry as the Jewish policies to rule the world. They criticized the Christianity, International and even German Jewry. They proclaimed that Christianity was a creation of Jews; International Jewry humiliated Germans in Treaty of Versailles (1919) and German Jewry betrayed them during First World War. Karl Haushofer's geopolitical theories linked the Nazi expansionism with the German race. So, to seize and to occupy the adequate living space (*Lebensraum*) was become the main task of Nazi ideology (Calleo, 1978).

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2. Materials and methods

2.1 Basic Elements of the Nazi Ideology

Key elements (Key Elements of Nazi Ideology, 2015) of Nazi Ideology mainly include anti-Marxism; anti-Communism; anti-Bolshevism; anti-Semitism; anti-Slavism; anti-Democraticism; Racial Hygienic Programs; Creation of Master Race (Herrenrasse); Faith in Superiority of Aryan (German) Race; Belief in the Leader; National Socialism; Social Darwinism; Pomp and Show of Local Culture; Protection of Land and Blood; Occupation of more Living Space (Lebensraum) and Connections with Fascism.

2.2 Adolf Hitler: Mainspring behind the Evolution of Ideological Theories

Adolf Hitler carefully observed the Austro-Hungarian policies. He believed that democracy made ethnic minorities powerful while linguistic as well as ethnic diversity was a big factor involved in destabilization of the Empire. He had a militaristic view that powerful nations always evolve from great military might. After the humiliated defeat of Germany and Austria, Germans wanted the unification of Germany. They blamed their leaders for their wrong policies and ideologies. And they perceived Communists and Jews were behind this plan of their defeat. Hitler properly used that popular German blame upon Communists and Jews and established belief of Aryan Master Race in the minds of Germans. He proclaimed that by their blood, naturally, Aryans were chosen to govern the world (Dawidowicz, 1975; Snyder, 2000). He explained that great nations evolved by great races. Intelligence, good health, aggression and courage were essential characteristics for a great nation. According to Hitler, weakest nations had weak cultures and impure blood. He expressed that Nazi goal must be to defend the Aryan master race, culture, language, blood and borders. Hitler considered Jews as parasites and elimination of these parasites was essential to make a powerful master race (Calleo, 1978; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). He then attached this theory with religious thoughts by expressing that those religions were masters who were agreed to his theory. And those religions were slaves who adopted the policies of love and tolerance about parasites. And a leader was who recognized this truth and who denied this truth was a natural slave. As said by Ian Kershaw (a biographer), Hitler was a passionate and enthusiastic reader and he borrowed almost all Nazi ideas from traceable fringe groups' publications.

3. Discussion and results

3.1 Ideological Conception of Nazism

3.1.1 Race and Nazism

The central idea of Nazism was racism. According to Hitler, races can be divided into following categories:

1. Culture Creators
2. Culture Bearers
3. Culture Destroyers

Only Aryan race was culture creator. He was obscure about culture bearers but he was definite about Jews and Blacks as culture destroyers. Nazis considered the Aryans' claim to acquire vast homeland as scientifically genuine and rightful because Aryans race had the ability to rule the world. Some expressions of Nazi racial theory are as under:

1. Holocaust was the culmination of Anti-Semitism
2. Germans' status as the master race (Herrenvolk) and superman (Übermensch) was a manifestation of ethnic nationalism.
3. Purifying the German race by eugenics was culminated in euthanasia and forced sterilization programs (Ergang and Rohr, 1961).

3.1.2 Anti-Semitism

Shem was the eldest son of Prophet Noah. The word "Semitic" refers the descendants of Shem. As Jews are the descendants of Shem so anti-Semitic refers to all the activities executed against Jews. This term was coined in 1879. Hostility against Jews was justified in Germany where Aryans were considered physically and character wise superior to the Semitic people. Under Nazi rule, anti-Semitic was the governmental policy which was culminated in the form of Holocaust.

3.1.2.1 Euthanasia

Mentally retarded adults and deformed children were systematically killed under the T-4 program. These killings to end the sufferings are termed as Euthanasia.

3.1.2.2 Eugenics

Hundreds of thousands of mentally sick and disabled people were compulsory sterilized under eugenics programs during 1930 and 1940. Cruel experiments were conducted to test the genetic theories.

3.2 Nazi Ideology: Competing with the Communism

After First World War, Nazism and Communism were competitors for power in Germany. Bolshevism led by Jews was considered a serious threat by Nazis. Nazis understood that by communism, Jews would achieve financial domination (Calleo, 1978). Resistance against communism started after WWI.

A paramilitary group named Freikorps was used against the uprisings of Communism in Berlin and many leaders of this group like Ernst Rohm were later became Nazi leaders. Capitalists also saw nationalist movements as a bulwark and threat against communism. In 1922 Mussolini took power in Italy. After that numerous fascist parties began to grow in various European countries. Nazism was one of these nationalist and fascist movements contented for power against communist movement. Nazism used nationalist rhetoric to appeal the growing unemployed and impoverished classes and presented an economic and political model which was fatal to capitalism & communism.

3.2.1 Fuhrerprinzip

The extreme loyalty to the leader or the leadership principal was the main characteristic of the Nazi Party. It was a big source of national integration (Strong, 1945). There was not any cabinet or counsel to deliberate upon matters but only the decision of Adolf Hitler was most important. One who held opinions different to Hitler was either told to be silent or was purged silently. This principle of Fuhrerprinzip was the key element by which the leader was all in all to guide the whole nation. The decrees and thoughts of Adolf Hitler mattered most.

3.3 Significant Linkages with Nazi Ideology

3.3.1 Religion and Nazi Ideology

There is very controversy and complexity found in relationship of Nazism with Christianity. Nazi leaders used some symbols of Christianity. But some Christians claimed that Hitler was not a Christian. They believed that he was an occultist, an atheist or a Satanist. There was a bad relation of Nazi Party with Catholic Church. Many priests of Catholic Church like Pope Pius XI opposed Nazism due to its incompatibility with their religion on moral grounds. As a result of their opposition, Nazis sent many priests in concentration camps. This was a popular feature of German Science to oppose the religion. According to many people; Nazism became a kind of religion itself due to its prolonged strict rule.

3.3.2 Fascism and Nazi Ideology

Fascism and Nazism are often considered as interchangeable terms. Fascism was in Italy but Nazism was in Germany. There were many similarities in both. They both had same style of propaganda techniques with uniform and military parades. Nationalism was the essential element in both ideologies and after achieving power both established totalitarian governments. Their governments' waged wars for expansionism. There were also some differences in them. Nazism stressed upon racism but Fascism gave little importance to it. Nazism adopted anti-Semitism policies in vigor but Fascism did not adopt such policy until forced to adopt by Adolf Hitler.

3.3.3 Socialism and Nazi Ideology

As the word "Nazism" derived from National Socialism, so many people considered that there are many similarities between Nazism and Socialism. Nazi leaders on one side gave their views in favor of socialism but on the other hand they strongly opposed the idea of class conflict. So, pure socialists called Nazis as disguised reactionaries. An alliance with traditional conservatives brought Nazis to power. Franz von Papen supported Hitler to get the rank of Chancellor. Papen was a former German Chancellor. He also remained a member of Catholic Centre Party and later got the status of a big Nazi official. Social Democrats even opposed the Enabling Act but it was passed due to the support of Conservatives. As a result, Nazis achieved dictatorial powers. We can say that anti-Marxism was the central idea of Nazi ideology but not the workers' rights or need for socialism. So, many capitalists and conservatives gave funds to Nazis against communism. Hitler proclaimed that Judaism and communism should be resisted jointly because they were both united and dangerous (Grant, 1969). Hitler considered the Jewish influence and Marxism as a big cause of the downfall of his nation.

3.3.3.1 National Socialist Programs

When came in power, Nazis practically discarded all socialist programs. They began to work with large business and discarded the working class and small business. Trade unions were banned. Some steps were taken to get the support of workers such as, in 1933, May Day was announced as a national holiday. Private holdings of Jews were sold to those businessmen who were satisfied with the Nazi racial policies and so provided support to Nazism. Film industry and Military goods producing factories were remained private. During the Nazi reign a lot of private companies were flourished. Nazi government spent huge amount on housing, harbors and autobahn (Ergang and Rohr, 1961). Nazism moved Germany towards a war economy. The highways were constructed to facilitate the military transports. So, all policies were made to satisfy the needs of the state.

3.3.4 Social Darwinism

Racial policies of Nazism were much influenced by the Darwin's theory "Survival to the Fittest". And this fact was revealed by some Nazis and German biologists. Haeckel and Spencer elaborated that Nazis relied upon Darwinism in their racial policies. Hitler had a belief that by selective breeding, genetic characteristics of humans could be improved and so superior race could be protected. In order to achieve this, policies were formulated to avoid the mixing of inferior races with superiors so that the risk of contamination of blood could be prevented. This was culminated in final solution. As Jews were judged inferior races by German scientists so, almost six million Jews and approximately four million other people were exterminated.

3.3.4.1 Racial Importance in Darwinism

According to the theory of evolution, individuals having unique and better traits can be survived in bitter conditions and can acquire new healthy traits as compared to those who do not have those unique traits. Individuals having strong traits are more likely to survive and transfer these traits to their new generations but individuals having weak traits are more likely to perish. As the result of natural selection, new superior individuals come into existence and so an evolved and master race having advantageous features achieves dominance.

3.3.4.2 Influence of Darwinism upon Nazi Ideology

Many documents, artifacts and writings of Nazi era proved the influence of Darwinism upon Nazi ideology. For example, Keith threw light upon the Nazi belief on Darwinism and the adoption of this theory for political and social purposes to strengthen the belief of German superior race (Ramm, 1984; Vader, 2006). Nazism considered the Darwin theory as a tool of selection. Hitler said that it was necessary to cooperate with science in order to produce strong society. To achieve his goal, Hitler stressed that first inferior races like Jews should be isolated and then they should be destroyed so that further contamination of Aryan's blood could be saved.

3.4 Hidden Origins of Nazi Ideology

During First World War, Turkey supported Germany but was defeated. German propaganda ministry advised Turkey to wage Jihad in 1922. Natives of Middle East agitated against the imperial rule of Turkey. When Mustafa Kemal Pasha Atatürk established new state of Turkey, he officially banned the Ottoman Movement. But some zealous groups continued jihad to revive Ottoman Turkey. So, various agents covertly went to Germany and there they adopted false Aryan identities. Sebottendorff was one of them who emerged there. He established Thule Society. It was a right-wing party. He purchased a weekly newspaper Munchener Beobachter. This was become the society's official publication. It represented the anti-Semitic ideas (The Hidden Origins of Nazism, 2015).

3.4.1 Sebottendorff and his Thule Society

Baron R. F. von Sebottendorff was a citizen of Turkey. He was aware of Islam and Sufism. He remained anti-communist and in Turkey, he introduced Eastern mysteries. When he was in Istanbul, he controlled a secret society. That society was a mixture of different ideologies like alchemy, Sufi mysticism, anti-Bolshevik and masonry. His Thule society was a society of assassins, as Dr. W. J. Stein described it, and acted like Ismailian fedayeen [assassins]. Thule society had secret courts. Many members of this society were later becoming Nazis like a member of internal circle of Thule and Munich Police President, Franz Gurtner was later appointed in Third Reich as Minister of Justice. Sebottendorff described that he was entrusted, by the secret Muslim Masters, the mission to illuminate German society by the revelation of mysteries and ancient secrets (The Hidden Origins of Nazism, 2015).

3.4.2 Thulistic Origin of Nazis

Big Nazis like Hess and Rosenberg were Thulists. In Munich, Gottfried Fader, Anton Draxler and Dietrich Eckart established German Worker's Party. Adolf Hitler was sent by Army to watch the activities of the party. Hitler was then an education officer. When Hitler observed that the party had connections with Thules and their ideas were same as his own, then he became member and agent of that party. When the party was known as National Socialist German Worker's Party in 1920, Hitler was its leader. Eckart, who was earlier a member of Thule Party, influenced Hitler greatly. Hitler dedicated his work *Mein Kampf* to Eckart. At that time, a secret society named *Astrem Argentem* (AA) or order of Silver Star (SS) was initiated. Himmler established new police force which was death head units. General Hushofar became the second esoteric mentor of Adolf Hitler. Hushofar also co-operated Himmler to install the Aryans in police force to exterminate Jews.

3.5 Tracing Hitler's Connections with Turkish Muslims

Sebottendorff achieved popularity as German's well-known astrologer. He was imprisoned and then expelled to Turkey on the charges of publishing the secrets of Hitler's links with Turkish Muslims.

3.5.1 Evidences of connections

John Tolland, in Hitler's biography, wrote that when Berlin was about to defeat then at that crucial time Hitler consulted the commercial firms of Turkey for arranging an escape instead of meeting German officials. Kheruddin Barbroza was a well-known Turkish pirate. The operation of invading Russia was originally named "Otto" but Hitler changed that name in 1940 as Operation Barbroza (The Hidden Origins of Nazism, 2015). Sebottendorff published a study of the practices of Islamic Alchemy in Turkey. After the end of Nazism in 1945, he jumped in Bosphorus and committed suicide.

4. Conclusion

Discussion in the preceding pages shows that Nazism was based on strong ideological perceptions. Darwinism was the main component of the Nazi Ideology. It provided justification for the future Nazi aggression. In the struggle for existence, German fitness and military success was essential for its survival. Hitler's war policies extermination was greatly relied upon the Darwinian thoughts. He wanted to produce a superior race. He knew that war was essential to eliminate the weaker races and extermination was necessary to weed out the weaker members of the master race. So, Nazism always openly glorified war. On 22nd of June 1944, Hitler said in a speech that competition and hard struggle was the essence of existence. He presented his principles about peace and war. In his view point, nature was the mere struggler between strong and weak. Without war, the whole nature would fall into decay. One who had desire to live must fight. If he did avoid war then misery, disease and distress would become his fate. Nazis considered that evolution would only be possible through lethal conflicts. Hitler's new justification glorified intolerance, bloodshed and war as the brilliant demonstrations of Nordic heroism. It resulted in holocaust and Second World War. Evolutionary theory was the central plank of Nazi doctrine. They had the view that less developed should be eliminated. Therefore, eradication of blacks and Jews was necessary for natural selection as they were considered as underdeveloped. The Second World War was actually the Hitler's war because he took the German Nation towards the aggression. He used to say that they, Nazis, were barbarians and they wanted to be barbarians. There was no time to lose and war must come in his time.

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