

## THE EPOCH OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM

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In two by-elections in the spring of 1996, the *Front National* (FN), the party of the radical right in France, helped several candidates of the left gain victory. In Sète, a southern seaport, a communist therefore was able to become mayor. It was in this manner that the leader of the FN, Jean-Marie Le Pen, responded to the rejection of his coalition offers by the Gaullists and the Liberals. At the same time, Le Pen tried to prove his slogan “neither right nor left, but French.” His calculation appeared to work. Contrary to widespread expectations, the FN, which was founded in 1981, has not remained a short-lived protest movement, but has stabilized and even expanded its support in recent years. Its voters no longer come only from the lower-middle class and the bourgeoisie, but also from the working class. During the local elections in June 1995, 30 percent of the workers and 25 percent of the unemployed voted for Le Pen’s party. Almost 20 percent of his supporters consider themselves “left.”<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing new about political movements which are nationalist in their goals, and hence right, but whose clientele largely comes from the political left and traditionally supports socialist parties. Theoreticians of a national-socialist state first appeared at the end of the 19th century, and shortly afterward nationalsocial, national-socialist, or socialist-nationalist groups were founded in England, France, Germany, Italy, and Austria. The various circles and parties were at the fringes of the socialist movement (*Arbeiterbewegung*). However, their origin was not accidental but intimately tied to the formation and democratization of the nation state. “Just as national liberalism and national conservatism existed, there had to be national socialism.”<sup>2</sup> Industrialization, combined with the idea of a relatively homogeneous community of people (*Volksgemeinschaft*), which provided its members with

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<sup>1</sup>See the report by Thankmar von Münchhausen, “Wurzeln in der Unterschicht,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 89 (April 16, 1996).

<sup>2</sup>Ernst Nolte, *Streitpunkte. Heutige und künftige Kontroversen um den Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 1993), p. 212.

collective economic security, led all across Europe, even before the outbreak of World War I, to the view of the state as an “armed producers’ association with a national foundation.”<sup>3</sup> World War I confirmed this new association between a national and a social order. The breakdown of the Socialist International, truce-making policies, and war socialism corresponded to the expectations of many national-socialists. One of them, Benito Mussolini, would justify his claim to power in Italy by pointing out that, during the war, the missed revolution had been accomplished and the *risorgimento* completed, and that in the trenches the working class and the nation had been reconciled.

The compromises which Italian Fascism had to accept after its rise to power made it appear initially more like a conventional educational dictatorship than like the prototype of a national-socialist order, and only after a short period of relaxation did the great crisis of the liberal system lead to the victory of a radical national-socialist variant. More than the special path (Sonderweg) or the late consequences of the Versailles treaty, the attraction of a program that promised national and social regeneration under strong leadership came to bear during the early 1930s in Germany. Hitler’s state appeared as a model of a new order between liberal capitalism and communism, not only to many Germans, but also to many small national-socialist movements in Europe. Yet, these national socialisms could no more succeed on their own than could the communist movements, and their hope for a European revolution with the help of the Wehrmacht was ruined by Hitler’s inability to put his military successes from 1939 to 1941 to constructive use. This, combined with Hitler’s Katastrophenpolitik, was the main reason why not only his regime but national socialism as a whole was discredited.

The national-socialist ideology could only survive the end of World War II disguised as internationalism within the Third World liberation movements. The idea of “African,” Arab, Indian, or Cuban socialism did not vanish until the collapse of the Soviet system. Even then, the idea of national socialism did not entirely die. Where the promises of a new world economic order remained unfulfilled, the crisis into which the nation state has slid as a result of the globalization of economy and technology has led to defensive reactions which try to preserve the national welfare state and create post-modern National Socialism that lacks the utopian and totalitarian features of the

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<sup>3</sup>Walther Rathenau, *Zur Kritik der Zeit [1912], Gesammelte Schriften 1* (Berlin, 1925), p. 68.

older brand of national socialism.<sup>4</sup>

### THE DARWINIAN LEFT AND THE CONCEPT OF EUGENIC SOCIALISM

It is impossible to understand the rise of national socialism before World War I without noting the paradigm change that took place at the end of the 19th century. All national-socialist concepts (in the widest sense of this term) came about in connection with Social Darwinism, which exercised an extraordinary influence in Europe, first on the educated classes and then on the general population. Francis Galton, the originator of this theory, spoke of a new religion to characterize the explosive force contained in an idea that Darwin had only suggested.<sup>5</sup> Not only the animal kingdom but man as well is the result of a struggle for survival and the selection of the fittest. After man's victory over his natural enemies, this *struggle for life* shifted from nature to history, expressed in the competition between different social classes or strata, and in the antagonism between the races and peoples. According to Galton, it was neither possible nor desirable for mankind to extricate itself from the laws of evolution,<sup>6</sup> even if reason no longer subjected man to blind fate: Social Darwinism offered at the same time a theoretical concept with which to understand the operation of nature within human society and created the possibility—by means of eugenics—to actively interfere so as to improve mankind.

Social Darwinism has dealt a deadly blow not only to Christian creationism but also to the idea, dominant since the enlightenment, that history would find its fulfillment in an all-encompassing humanization of man. Darwin, still convinced of the intelligibility of the world and the idea of human progress, unwittingly created the precondition for a dramatic change in the intellectual atmosphere from his death in 1882 to the outbreak of World War I. What French anthropologist and sociologist Georges Vacher de Lapouge expressed about the foundations of human existence was, in many respects, only the brutal consequence of then widely held views: "One neither

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<sup>4</sup>See Rolf Peter Sieferle, *Epochenwechsel: Die Deutschen an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1993), p. 212.

<sup>5</sup>Francis Galton, *Essays in Eugenics*, London 1909, p.42, also 24, 25; Francis Galton, *Memories of My Life* (London, 1908), pp. 310f.

<sup>6</sup>The environmental theory and the ideas of the Lamarckists were rejected with reference to the discovery of the laws of genetics by Gregor Mendel.

decides to become a member of a family nor a nation. The blood, which runs in one's veins from birth on, one keeps for one's entire life. The individual is dominated by his race and is nothing. The race, the nation is everything. Every man is related to all other men and all living beings. There is no such thing as human rights, no more than there are rights of the armadillo or the Gibbons syndactylus, of the horse which is harnessed or the ox which one eats. As soon as man loses the privilege of being a special being created in God's image, he possesses no more rights than any other mammal. The idea of justice is an illusion. There exists nothing but force. Rights are only agreements—contracts between equal or unequal powers."<sup>7</sup>

What makes Vacher de Lapouge's case noteworthy is the fact that he—unlike Galton and most other social Darwinists—sympathized with the political left. In the 1880s and 1890s, he wrote for various journals of the French socialists and ran repeatedly as a candidate for the *Parti socialiste ouvrier*. He accepted the central ideas of Arthur de Gobineau,<sup>8</sup> but he rejected Gobineau's aristocratic pessimism. In contrast, he liked the fatalistic view of the Marxists, yet had nothing but contempt for their utopian view of a conflict-free universal society. Vacher de Lapouge advocated a socialist order because only such an order could assure that each individual's racially based abilities could be determined independently of his class. When the "non-doctrinaire socialist" declared in an article published in 1896 that "socialism will be selectionist or it will not be at all,"<sup>9</sup> he meant above all that the left should adopt the program of a radical eugenic: the breeding of the Aryan man of the future could only be achieved if, without regard to family background or social status, all "racially inferior" were prevented from procreation, while all superior men, in addition to a *service militaire*, would be required to perform a *service sexuelle* without regard to all traditional norms of sexual behavior. Only if this political model of socialist eugenics were implemented, according to Vacher de Lapouge, would there be any chance that France would survive the impending great conflicts.

Despite the violent rejection of his anthroposociology in

<sup>7</sup>Georges Vacher de Lapouge, *L'Aryen, son rôle sociale. Cours libre de science politique: Professe à l'Université de Montpellier (1889-1890)* (Paris, 1899), pp. 511f.

<sup>8</sup>Gobineau had published a classic of race theory with his *Essay Sur C'inega-lite des Races* in 1853-55.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted from Jean Boissel, "George Vacher de Lapouge: Un socialiste révolutionnaire darwinien," *Nouvelle Ecole* 13 (1982): 59-83, here p. 74.

academia,<sup>10</sup> Vacher de Lapouge was by no means alone with his ideas among the French left. There were numerous individuals and groups who considered class struggle and race struggle as one and the same thing—especially with reference to the Jews,<sup>11</sup> who were seen as at the same time the embodiment of capitalism and German–Marxist internationalism.<sup>12</sup> In the last part of his main work *L’Aryen, son rôle sociale*, published in 1899, Vacher de Lapouge wrote with considerable optimism that “selectionism” had “with respect to its purpose much in common with socialism, in so far as they wanted to correct the natural consequences of economic development with the ultimate goal of social perfection.”<sup>13</sup>

Although Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels warned early on against a naturalistic interpretation of human history, and most socialists hoped for the final “displacement of the power of nature by the power of reason,”<sup>14</sup> Darwinian ideas had found acceptance in German social democracy since the 1870s. Indeed, eugenic concepts were widely accepted as modern instruments for the advancement of social welfare. The German Darwinian left, however, was restricted, as in France, to a small group of intellectuals. A first—actually premature—representative of this ideological direction was philosopher Eugen Dühring, who ultimately lost against the Marxists within the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and became increasingly isolated, but early on exercised considerable influence on the socialist movement. Dühring was an ardent defender of the “descendence-theory,” and unyieldingly maintained his idea of a special type of “socialism of the Aryan people” and the simultaneous “restriction, concentration, and exclusion” of the Jews.<sup>15</sup> In some

<sup>10</sup>See Linda L. Clark, *Social Darwinism in France* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1984), p. 144.

<sup>11</sup>Lapouge regarded the Jews, in contrast to most race theoreticians, not as a race but as a nationality. His antisemitism stemmed from the belief that the Jews used democracy to conceal their rule. The socialists, on account of their struggle against the plutocracy, would be the natural allies of selectionism. See Günter Nagel, *George Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sozialdarwinismus in Frankreich* (Freiburg, 1975), esp. pp. 39f., 59.

<sup>12</sup>See Edmund Silberner, *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sozialismus vom Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1914* (Berlin, 1962), pp. 65–82.

<sup>13</sup>Lapouge, *L’Aryen*, p. 504. However, among his students neither Americans Madison Grant and Carlos-C. Closson, nor the Spaniard Luis Huerta, nor the Norwegian Jon Alfred Mjoen considered themselves socialists. Only the theories of Germans Eugen Dühring and Ludwig Woltmann corresponded to Vacher de Lapouge’s idea about a special affinity between socialism and Darwinism.

<sup>14</sup>Ludwig Büchner, “Darwinismus und Sozialismus oder Der Kampf um das Dasein und die moderne Gesellschaft,” *Darwinistische Schriften*, Erste Folge 19, (Leipzig, 1894), p. 18.

<sup>15</sup>Quoted from Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner, “Vom Konkurrenten des Karl Marx

respects, his ideas were similar to those advocated a generation later by Ludwig Woltmann. However, Woltmann considered himself above all a student of Vacher de Lapouge. Woltman even published Vacher de Lapouge's work after it could no longer appear in France, in his *Politisch-anthropologische Revue*. Woltmann, a physician and private scholar, had begun as a traditional socialist, and accordingly had rejected the selectionism of the "bourgeois-Darwinians."<sup>16</sup> However, he held that the human races were distinct and of different value.<sup>17</sup> Like Vacher de Lapouge, Woltmann believed that only the Aryans, and in particular the Germans, were culturally creative. He explains the prospect of future developments in the conclusions of one of his main works, *Politische Anthropologie*, as follows: "In its final development, the capitalist mode of production will become an obstacle for the social selection of natural talents and indeed become antiselectionist. Hence, we are convinced that the future will bring great economic upheavals which will have a constitutional-collectivist character." The "Germanic strata" within the leadership of the Social Democrats would take advantage of these upheavals and assume partial power. "Only actual responsibility can cure the working class of the unnatural craze of internationalism which will suffocate the perfecting competition between nations for economic, political, and intellectual supremacy."<sup>18</sup>

Woltmann did not achieve much further influence due to his death in 1907, and Vacher de Lapouge could not gain a large following because of the eccentricity of his position—he expected the self-extinction of the contemporary French once they had grasped their own racial inferiority. However, in Great Britain, Karl Pearson succeeded in gaining considerable influence on leading circles within the socialist movement. Since the 1880s, Pearson had belonged to a circle of radical intellectuals assembling around Eleanor Marx, Havelock Ellis, George Bernhard Shaw, and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, all of whom

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zum Vorläufer Hitlers: Eugen Dühring," in *Propheten des Nationalismus*, Karl Schwedhelm, ed., (Munich, 1969), pp. 36–55, here p. 51.

<sup>16</sup>Ludwig Woltmann, *Die Darwinsche Theorie und der Sozialismus: Ein Beitrag zur Naturgeschichte der menschlichen Gesellschaft* (Duesseldorf, 1899), p. 67.

<sup>17</sup>Similar were the views of other eugenicists in the camp of the Social Democrats, for example Alfred Grotjahn and Alfred Ploetz. See on this Michael Schwartz, "'Proletarier' und 'Lumpen.' Sozialistische Ursprünge eugenischen Denkens," *Vierteljahreshfte fuer Zeitgeschichte* 42 (1994): 537–70, here p. 563; also see Rolf-Peter Sieferle, *Die Krise der menschlichen Natur: Zur Geschichte eines Konzepts* (Frankfurt/M., 1989), esp. p. 125.

<sup>18</sup>Ludwig Woltmann, *Politische Anthropologie: Eine Untersuchung ueber den Einfluss der Descendenztheorie auf die Lehre von der politischen Entwicklung der Völker* (Jena, 1903), pp. 325f.

would later become leaders of the socialist Fabian Society.<sup>19</sup> Pearson was equally impressed by Marxism, but during his study in Germany he had also learned to understand the significance of the practical social reforms implemented by Bismarck. It cannot be ruled out that Pearson also came in direct contact with the ideas of the “Katheder-Sozialisten,”<sup>20</sup> and in any case he was affected by Fichte’s ideas concerning the isolated state (geschlossenen Handelsstaat). However, the decisive motive for his specific type of socialism was his encounter with the Darwinian doctrine, which appeared to him to provide the key to understanding all central social developments. He sharply rejected the earlier Social Darwinists, such as Herbert Spencer and Ernst Haeckel, who had applied the idea of a struggle for life solely to individuals, while in fact it concerned the fitness of collectives.<sup>21</sup> Socialism, for Pearson, was not so much a specific form of economic organization but rather a general “tendency towards social organization always prominent in progressive communities.”<sup>22</sup>

Pearson initially worked as a mathematician, but in 1911, through the influence of Galton, he received the first chair for eugenics at the University of London. In the course of his statistical investigations, he had become interested in the problem of eugenics, and his analyses reinforced his conviction that the progress of medicine and hygiene leads to the proliferation of “inferior” people. In particular, other races, especially the Irish and the Jews, threatened the existence of the “English race.” For Pearson’s “socialism of the future”—similar as for Vacher de Lapouge and Woltmann, but also the Webbs, Shaw, and the Fabian Herbert George Wells<sup>23</sup>—an encompassing and thorough eugenic politics was essential. The state should assume the power to regulate the procreation according to its desires. A society that was based on traditional values and morals, that entrusted all decisions to a debating parliament, and that tolerated extreme differences of wealth was incapable of doing so. Equality was necessary in order to find out who was worthy of procreating. The demand for equality was not based on natural human rights—“there is no natural equality

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<sup>19</sup>See Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p. 24.

<sup>20</sup>See Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought 1895-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 38.

<sup>21</sup>According to Pearson, the nation was an “organized whole.” See Karl Pearson, *National Life from the Standpoint of Science* (London, 1905), p. 46.

<sup>22</sup>Karl Pearson, *The Grammar of Science* (London, 1900), p. 365.

<sup>23</sup>See Semmel, *Imperialism*, p. 51.

of human races, any more than there is a natural equality of human beings"<sup>24</sup>—but rather on the demonstration of healthy genetic material. Only the genetically superior would have equal rights, regardless of social background or wealth of their forefathers. Only socialism seemed to assure that the most able and talented would rise to the top of the state and prepare the nation to survive the inescapable wars against “inferior races or equal races in the fight for trade routes, natural resources and food supplies,”<sup>25</sup> and to appropriate the means for preserving English socialism.

### EMPIRE SOCIALISM AND THE CULT OF EFFICIENCY

In 1917, Lenin wrote: “Imperialist ideology also penetrates the working class. It is not separated by a Chinese wall from the other classes,” and even at the beginning of the century in England the appearance of Fabian-imperialists, who advocated the creation of a world empire in the name of the proletariat, was apparent.<sup>26</sup>

If one removes his polemics against the “opportunistic” parts of the workers movement, it cannot be denied that Lenin’s statement was correct. In the 1880s, Robert Blatchford, editor of the largest socialist weekly in Great Britain, *The Clarion*, had developed his ideas of “socialism of the barracks,”<sup>27</sup> and proposed in a sharp anti-liberal turn the amalgamation of the workers movement and nationalism.

It was even more important, however, that there were representatives of an Empire socialism within the leadership of the Fabians. The best known among these was initially Benjamin Kidd who, in 1894, had acquired sudden fame with the publication of his book *Social Evolution*. Kidd rejected the liberal doctrine of social evolution that centered on the individual as much as he rejected Marxism with its materialist doctrine of progress through class struggle. He believed that human history was driven by the antagonism between the races and peoples. The Anglo-Saxons and the Germans, as members of the “Teutonic

<sup>24</sup>Karl Pearson, *Social Problems: Their Treatment, Past, Present and Future* (London, 1912), p. 7.

<sup>25</sup>Quoted from Hannon Kesting, *Herrschaft und Knechtschaft: Die ‘soziale Frage’ und ihre Loesungen* (Freiburg), p. 75.

<sup>26</sup>V.I. Lenin, *Der Imperialismus als höchstes Stadium des Kapitalismus* [1917], in W.I. Lenin, *Theorie-Ökonomie-Politik: Ausgewählte Texte und Werke*, I. Fetscher, ed. (Stuttgart, 1974), p. 227.

<sup>27</sup>See Semmel, *Imperialism*, p. 225.

race,” stood at the top of the racial hierarchy; and the nation would triumph that achieved the highest degree of “social efficiency” by completely controlling its members and redirecting the struggle for survival from within the society outward to create an Empire which could ensure one’s own group’s permanent survival.

Kidd’s social imperialism was still somewhat tentative, but his idea of national efficiency became an effective slogan in the political debate in Great Britain at the beginning of this century. Britain began the century facing diplomatic instability and internal upheaval: the rise of Germany, the difficulties with the Boers in South Africa, and the Irish independence movement all posed military threats. At the same time, Britain needed to confront unrest among the working class and an obvious need for reform of the internal administration.

In response to these pressures, new organizations and intellectual circles arose to mobilize the masses for the empire. One such circle was the *Coefficients Club*, founded in 1902 by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, which assembled Fabians, liberal imperialists,<sup>28</sup> and conservatives. What connected them was their belief in the necessity of efficient and scientifically based politics, social reform, and imperialism. For the Fabians, who had until then paid little attention to the Empire, it was necessary to take a clear stand regarding the Boer war. Against the opposition of a substantial minority, in February 1900, the faction led by the Webbs and George Bernhard Shaw finally won. Shaw was appointed to write an official position paper for the Fabians, and in the same year he published *Fabianism and the Empire: A Manifesto by the Fabian Society*. In this publication, Shaw claimed that “the partition of the greater part of the globe”<sup>29</sup> among the imperial powers was a fact that simply had to be acknowledged, regardless of any moral evaluation. As a result, the Fabians would support a policy that took into account not only the interests of one social group but “the effective social organization of the whole Empire, and its rescue from the strife of classes and private interests.”<sup>30</sup> Among the prerequisites of an effective social organization the Fabians counted the introduction of universal suffrage; while liberals and

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<sup>28</sup>Including the former prime minister Archibald Philip Primrose, Lord Rosebery, the future secretary of state in the foreign office Edward Grey, and the geographer Halford John Mackinder.

<sup>29</sup>Bernard Shaw, *Fabianism and the Empire: A Manifesto by the Fabian Society* (London, 1900), p. 3.

<sup>30</sup>Shaw, *Fabianism and the Empire*, p. 6.

conservatives generally rejected this demand, the socialists advocated the passage of legislation according to which male adults should, until age 21, work only 18 hours per week and undergo military training for the remaining 30 hours.

These ideas could hope to find support among those who believed that the British parliamentarism was no longer up to the demands of modern times. In particular, high colonial officers of the Empire who were used to ruling foreign populations—by means of force, if need be—held the view that a real government had to be authoritarian and hierarchically structured. One of those proconsuls was Lord Alfred Milner, the former British High Commissioner for South Africa, who had been recalled by his own government in 1905, when the conditions in the concentration camps for which he had been responsible had become publicly known. Milner had brought his personal following—his “kindergarden”—back from South Africa, and upon his return was considered as the political hope of all those who wanted the traditional political system fundamentally changed. Upon invitation by the Webbs, he joined the Coefficients Club, and eagerly convinced himself of the necessity of combining internal reforms with a popular, mass-supported imperialism. Milner even spoke about a “noble socialism,” which was not based on envy and tried to organize the nation as “one body-politic.”<sup>31</sup>

The Coefficients Club met until 1908, when it dissolved. The original idea that it would be possible to create a new party of social imperialism and national efficiency out of disappointed liberals, conservatives and socialists had by then become obsolete. The Webbs turned toward the Labour Party, which they had regarded with a certain elitist arrogance until then, and had great influence on its future development. Their enthusiasm for collectivism would lead them later on to laudatory statements regarding Mussolini and high praise for the Soviet Union and Stalin. Grey became a member of the newly formed liberal government, and concentrated on preparing for the war against Germany, which he, like the other Coefficients, regarded as unavoidable. Milner, who was probably the only one qualified to lead a new political movement, was too poor a public speaker to assume the role of a tribune. With a certain amount of resignation, he later admitted that his idea of a scientifically based paternal despotism had no prospect of success because the

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<sup>31</sup>Alfred Milner, “A political Ishmaelite,” in *The Nation and the Empire* (London, 1913), pp. 152–63, here p. 161.

masses demanded an agitator.<sup>32</sup> The appearance of such a personality was the last hope, although it could not be ruled out that he might lead the country into ruin.

Milner's political model was the Germany of William II. In this, he agreed with most Empire-socialists and social-imperialists, who admired as much as feared the authoritarian order of the Reich: "The German nation is homogeneous: organised. Their imperial policy is continuous. . . . Their principle is the theory of blood and iron," Blatchford had written and continued: "The German nation is an army. The British nation is a mob of antagonistic helpless atoms."

Concerning this view of German conditions, it was certainly correct that the more conservative social structure of the Reich and the partial integration of the working class accomplished through Bismarck's social policies hampered the development of political movements such as those in England. For instance, the *National Soziale Verein* (NSV), founded in 1896 by Friedrich Naumann, remained without any significance. Naumann's attempt to attract the workers for his "German-national" socialism by taking their interests seriously and demanding their inclusion in the process of political decision making was without success.<sup>33</sup> His ideas about parliamentarization and popular monarchy found as little support as his demand for an expansionist policy and the financing of social reforms. The NSV failed in every election, and was dissolved in 1903. Naumann, with some of his supporters, joined the left liberals. Similarly unsuccessful as the NSV in Germany was the attempt of Enrico Corradini, the leader of the *Associazione Nazionalista Italiana*, to declare his country a "proletarian nation," and to incite the workers to participate with all Italians in the international class struggle for the acquisition of colonies. When Corradini operated with the slogan of "national socialism" in 1910, during the Libyan war, he found a few sympathizers among the working-class leadership, but he failed to attract any lasting support.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Quoted from Hans-Christoph Schröder, *Imperialismus und antidemokratisches Denken: Alfred Milners Kritik am politischen System Englands* (Wiesbaden, 1978), p. 50; on the hope for a "drummer," pp. 63, 73.

<sup>33</sup>In the first flyer of the NSV its purpose was explicitly stated: "It is the slow but purposeful preparation of a new party . . . for national socialism." Quoted from Dieter Düdung, *Der Nationalsoziale Verein 1896-1903: Der gescheiterte Versuch einer parteipolitischen Synthese von Nationalismus, Sozialismus und Liberalismus* (Munich and Vienna, 1972), p. 63, n 1.

<sup>34</sup>Quoted from Wilhelm Alff, "Die Associazione Nazionalista Italiana von 1910," in Georg Eckert and Otto-Ernst Schüdekopf, eds., *Faschismus-Nationalsozialismus, Schriftenreihe des Internationalen Schulbuchinstituts* 8 (Braunschweig, 1964), pp. 7-27.

### **SOCIALIST NATIONALISM—NATIONAL SOCIALISM**

What Corradini, Naumann, or the Fabians meant by socialism had little to do with what the political left had meant by the term. Cosmopolitanism and the idea of absolute equality appeared unscientific to them. In this, they could invoke not only Darwinism, which seemed to make an elitist concept of politics necessary, but also the new realist sociology, which was represented around the turn of the century by men such as Max Weber, Robert Michels, Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, and Georges Sorel. Socialism for Corradini, Naumann, and the Fabians was a synonym for increased and intensified organizational integration of the entire nation. They were not concerned with ending the exploitation of men by men, but with preventing social disintegration as a consequence of the process of modernization, so as to strengthen the state for the process of international competition. For them, socialism was to serve and promote nationalism. They wanted to attenuate the antagonism between the classes by partial redistribution and by directing the antagonism outward; they regarded the nation as an integral whole, and the opposition between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat was supposed to be replaced by that between compatriots (*Volksgenossen*) and strangers (foreigners), or between ruler-nation (*Reichsvolk*) and helots.

However, neither in Great Britain, Germany, nor Italy did a national-socialist party with a large popular following originate before World War I. In Great Britain, where the conditions were probably most favorable, the parliamentary system overcame the Edwardian crisis, not in the least because the liberal establishment adopted part of the demands of its opponents—imperialism and social reform. Despite, or perhaps because of, its very different social conditions, national socialism first became a mass movement in France. With its military defeat of 1870–71 by Prussia and the overthrow of Napoleon III, France had experienced its last civil war, which ended with the defeat of the Jacobinian left. From then on, Jacobinism stood for the desire for greater social equality and the opposition to bourgeois parliamentarism. The unrest which General Georges Boulanger brought to the country between 1886 and 1888, when he became the leader of a nationalist mass movement that wanted to overthrow the bourgeoisie and lead a war of revenge against Germany, was proof of the strength of the Jacobinian ideology in

the minds of many French. However, Boulanger ultimately failed due to his own inability and the lack of clarity of his political goals. The heirs to Boulangism were those members of the French left who—against pacifist and cosmopolitan currents—held onto the republican militarism and nationalism. In the following years, when the French political system was shaken by numerous affairs, the core of a wider national-socialist movement was formed here.

The idea of national socialism was particularly important in the political life of the writer Maurice Barrès, who, in 1898, became a member of parliament as a Boulangistes. For Barrès, nationalism represented the fateful tie of the individual to “soil and blood.”<sup>35</sup> The nation was a compulsory collective which would use socialism once it had freed itself of its “liberal poison” and made clear to the worker that he had to fight not against the entrepreneurs of its own country but against the foreign—that is, Jewish—capitalists.<sup>36</sup> For Barrès, national socialism meant the protection of racial unity, integration of the lower classes, and military strength to prepare for the future war against Germany. The *Comités republicain socialiste national*, which had been formed during Barrès’s election campaigns, did not lead to permanent political organizations, but a part of the French left referred to itself henceforth as *socialiste-nationaliste*. A first attempt to organize this movement was the *Parti National Socialist* (PNS), founded in 1903.<sup>37</sup> Its leader, Pierre Biétry, originally came from the radical left. When he realized that the PNS would not be a success, he and his followers joined the *Fédération National des Jeunes de France* (FNJF), which had existed since 1902. The “yellow” federation of workers, whose undisputed leader was Biétry, became the first proletarian, anti-Marxist mass movement anywhere. Before World War I, it drew 300,000 members. Under the slogan “French workers unite,” Biétry wanted to make the proletariat the promoters of a “national renaissance.”

The “yellows” propagated national solidarity between workers and capitalists against “internationalist” Jewish finance capital and “internationalist” Jewish Marxism. Their ideas necessitated ideological contact with the nationalists who

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<sup>35</sup>See Maurice Barrès, *Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme* (Paris, [1902] 1987), pp. 13f.

<sup>36</sup>Quoted from Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le Nationalisme Français* (Brussels, 1985), p. 225 n. 3.

<sup>37</sup>See Zeev Sternhell, *Ni Droite, ni Gauche: L’Ideologie fasciste en France* (Paris, 1987), pp. 83–85.

were organized in the *Action Française* (AF) and who, after the Dreyfus affair, searched for allies in their fight against the republic. Charles Maurras, the leader of the AF, soon recognized that the yellows were far too pragmatic, however. His ideas of a new monarchist-social or socialist-monarchist ideology could be more easily realized in conjunction with the extreme left.<sup>38</sup> Influenced by Sorel's ideas about direct action and the general strike as a weapon against the liberal system, a group of syndicalists was formed in France in 1907 which considered the labor unions, rather than the socialist parties, as the main force in the proletarian struggle. What led some of its leading figures to join with the nationalists and create a forum of discussion in the *Cercle Proudhon* in 1912 was their common opposition to the bourgeois state and their belief in the role of activist minorities. The plan of a double revolt, represented by nationalists and syndicalists, failed. But even Sorel, encouraged by Maurras, moved increasingly to the right after 1910 (without giving up all of his reservations, however).

In some respects, Sorel's ideas were more successful in Italy than in his own country. Although the number of revolutionary syndicalists remained small in Italy as well, the prospect of a coalition with the new nationalism appeared more promising. One of the leading figures of the movement, Angelo Olivetti, wrote in 1910 in Sorelian spirit: "Syndicalism and nationalism are anti-democratic and anti-bourgeois. And, we say, they are two aristocratic tendencies within a common materialist society. The one tries everything to create an elite of workers, the other promotes the rule of a racial elite."<sup>39</sup> Corradini's vote for a *socialismo nazionale* was in some way the answer to the offer made by Olivetti. Indeed, the united front of syndicalists and nationalists first appeared during the war against Libya. While the syndicalists dreamed of a revolutionary war which would pave the way for a great social transformation, and in any case would instill bravery and discipline in the proletarian masses, Corradini and his followers hoped for the integrating effect of social imperialism, which would not only give recognition to their country but also help overcome the internal division within Italian society. However, the liberal system was still too stable to be shaken. Only after the outbreak of World War I and the debate on Italian participation did these various ideological components gain new meaning and momentum.

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<sup>38</sup>Sternhell, *Ni Droite*, p. 95.

<sup>39</sup>Quoted from Zeev Sternhell, Mario Sznajder, Maia Asheri, *Naissance de l'idéologie fasciste* (Paris, 1989), p. 224.

By then, Benito Mussolini, a student of Sorel's, had largely adopted the ideas of national syndicalism or national socialism. During the last years prior to the war, Mussolini's rise within the *Partito Socialista Italiano* seemed to be unstoppable. His followers recognized him as the undisputed *duce* of Italian socialism, and at the outbreak of the war in 1914 his political position was so strong that, among all European leaders of the workers movement, only Mussolini could threaten his government with a popular revolt should his country participate in the conflict between the imperialist states. More surprising was his complete turnaround. Already in October of 1914, Mussolini supported a policy of interventionism and demanded that Italy join the war against Austria-Germany. His party did not follow him, but rather excluded him as a traitor. Mussolini managed to retain only his personal followers and kept agitating in favor of Italy's participation in the war. When Italy declared war on Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1915, Mussolini saw himself at the end of his goals. He believed that through the military conflict the missing Italian revolution would finally be achieved. Through victory, one would not only complete the *risorgimento*—the national unification of the 19th century—and join the unredeemed territories—the *irredenta*—to the fatherland, but would also sweep away the old order. A new elite would rise to the top of the state, composed of the *ritornati*, the returning soldiers. Only soldiers who had fought at the front were qualified to create a new, anti-Marxist national socialism based not on theory but on the experience of war.

Mussolini's high expectations were not fulfilled, though. Italy's hope for large territorial gains were dashed in the course of the reorganization of Europe negotiated in the Paris suburbs in 1918–19, and the Russian October revolution created an unexpected rival in the communists. When Mussolini, in March 1919, formed the *Fasci di Combattimento* out of former soldiers, nationalists, and socialists, these fighter associations were not only supposed to “defend and preserve the victor” but also to prevent a world revolution on Italian soil. Fascism was directed against communism, which threatened Italy with revolution, but it did not stand on the side of the reactionaries. The fascists, too, demanded a government of worker councils, the expropriation of industry and *latifundia*, and the elimination of the influence of church and monarchy. Initially, they competed as national socialists both against revolutionary Marxism, which was similar in its violence, primitivism, and strength of emotions, and against collectivism, and its belief in a post-bourgeois age

inhabited by a “new man.”

### CHRISTIAN-SOCIAL, GERMAN-SOCIAL, AND NATIONAL-SOCIALIST

Hitler identified himself with Mussolini only after the success of the fascists in Italy, yet he always looked with respect upon the intransigence of French nationalism. The analogy between the French situation after 1871 and the German after 1919 was evident to him, as it was for many contemporaries. Pre-war Germany did not offer any opportunities for movements such as Boulangism or ideas such as those of Barrès, however. This was not only due to the stability of the monarchical system, but also because of the Marxist background of the working class. The beginnings of the national-socialist movement—weak in comparison to England, France and Italy—occurred under entirely different circumstances. In the wake of the depression, which brought the economic expansion of the founding era to a halt in 1873, antisemitism became a political factor in Germany. Initially it was only isolated individuals who, in articles and pamphlets, advocated an ideology which tried to combine the older religiously motivated anti-Judaism with hints of a new type of racially based antisemitism. The antisemites knew that they owed their rise to the economic crisis, and they catered to the petty bourgeoisie and their economic fears. However, their success was rather limited.

Only the *Christlich-Soziale Arbeiterpartei*, founded in 1878 by the court priest Adolf Stoecker, provided an organizational basis for such political agitation, but it quickly faltered because Stoecker did not want to cut ties to the traditional political right, the conservative party, and could not reach the proletariat. Subsequently, a new movement emerged, entirely independent of the conservatives, whose attraction consisted largely in the fact that men such as Otto Boeckel and Hermann Ahlwardt replaced the wooden royalism and state-supportive attitude of the conservatives with popular political advertisement and sharp polemics. Their success also helped the *Deutsche Reformpartei*, which had existed since 1881, and the *Deutsch-soziale Partei*, founded in 1889. Apart from the fight against the Jews, these antisemitic parties had little in common. They did, however, share some political emotions that were directed against the “Jew-protection troops”—that is, the left liberals and the social democrats—as well as the “Cohnservatives.” Some antisemites called for the violent

overthrow of the rule of the “Junkers and Jews” and a “German-national” reorganization of the economy. This socialist propaganda was taken seriously, and led some conservatives to predict that in the future antisemitism would “turn against property as such, and become a variant of social democracy.”<sup>40</sup>

Objectively, this danger hardly existed, however. The extent of political antisemitism decreased in Germany until the turn of the century. In contrast, a German-national or all-German movement, which effectively combined the call for the unification of all Germans within one state with a slogan of the fight against “Jewish rule,” emerged first during the Habsburg Empire. The origin of this movement had as its reason the disappointment of many Austrians following their exclusion from German unification in 1871. Georg Ritter von Schönerer, a former liberal whose most militant followers were among student corporations (fraternities), athlete associations (Turnerschaften), and the Germans in Bohemia and Moravia, rose to become their leader. While Schönerer was not a national socialist, he held views that were close to those of pre-war national socialism: “Nationalism must be considered a higher principle than socialism, and must not be manoevered into opposition against it but rather, in renouncing all corporatist and class interests, try to incorporate the just demands of socialism. Once nationalism has thus absorbed and integrated socialism, then clericalism and liberalism will be but pale shadows in contrast to the light that it sheds on the world.”<sup>41</sup>

Schönerer’s rather tentative attempt to integrate nationalism and socialism was also related to the German-national workers movement that had emerged in Bohemia as a result of the conflict between German and Czech workers. Already in 1885, in reaction to the immigration of Czechs who worked for lower wages, union-like associations of German workers were formed. After the disintegration of the Schönerer movement due to internal frictions, these associations were left alone, and a long-standing plan—to found a German national workers party—found increasing support. The model of the *Czech National-Socialist Party*, which had separated from the Social Democrats and was founded in 1896, played an important role, and in 1904, in Aussig, the founding party congress of the

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<sup>40</sup>Julius Graf von Mirbach-Sorquitten, Quoted in Walter Frank, *Hofprediger Adolph Stoecker und die christlichsoziale Bewegung* (Hamburg, 1935), p. 235.

<sup>41</sup>Quoted from Alois Ciller, *Deutscher Sozialismus in den Sudetenländern und der Ostmark, Schriften zur Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung 1* (Hamburg, 1939), p. 51.

*Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (DAP) (German Workers' Party) took place.<sup>42</sup> Like the Czech National Socialists, the followers of the DAP were anticlerical, antifeudal, and anticapitalist. They combined the idea of a progressive collectivization with the rejection of the idea of class struggle which would make the destruction of the Habsburg monarchy even more difficult and be an impediment on the way to the establishment of a national-socialist German Empire. Even at the founding of the DAP, the idea to name the party "national socialist," or "national-social," or "German-social" had come up. However, no majority existed for this proposal. Nonetheless, it was clear that the DAP, with its program accepted on August 15, 1904 in Trautenau, belonged to the small number of pre-war national-socialist parties. In addition to fielding calls that could be expected for an all-German association in Austria, it contained a catalogue of radical-democratic and social measures. Representatives of the DAP demanded the abolition of the upper house (Herrenhaus), the complete separation of state and church (also in the field of education), the democratization of the military, the introduction of universal suffrage, equality of women, the restriction of working hours and legislation for the protection of workers, and the abolition of child labor and unhealthy-women labor. Large firms should be collectivized.

As a result of the national election in June 1911, for the first time the DAP was represented in the central parliament with three seats. The DAP representatives joined the German National Association (Deutscher Nationalverbund) but remained an alien element within this bourgeois environment. The vote on the military budget in 1912 led to a split. In light of growing social problems, the party did not want to support a higher military budget. At its party convention in September 1913 in Iglau, an addition to the program was accepted that emphasized more strongly than before the party's working-class orientation. This move to the left did not prevent the party leaders from increasingly sharp polemics against the Social Democratic and Jewish power; however, only the DAP would recognize the "maliciousness of the internationalist doctrines for the German people and the dishonesty of the Social Democrats, led by Jews and in cahoots with the mobile finance capital."<sup>43</sup>

The outbreak of World War I disrupted further development

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<sup>42</sup>On the entire context see Andrew G. Whiteside, "Nationaler Sozialismus in Österreich vor 1918," *Vierteljahreshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte* 9 (1961): 333-59.

<sup>43</sup>Quoted from Francis L. Carsten, *Faschismus in Österreich: Von Schönerer zu Hitler* (Munich, 1978), p. 107.

and fundamentally altered the political situation of the Austrian national socialists. Most DAP parliamentarians were drafted into the armed forces, and parliamentary work was suspended until May 1917. When the parliament reassembled, the DAP was largely concerned with internal disputes. Since the summer of 1916, debates had continued regarding a new name for the party, and in May 1918, the delegates to the Vienna party congress decided to change the name to *Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei* (DNSAP). The DNSAP accepted the old DAP program by and large, but also demanded “the unification of all European territories settled by Germans into one democratic, social German Empire.”<sup>44</sup>

The idea of the Austrian national socialists for a new all-German state was at this time still founded on the hope for a victorious peace. A few months later this perspective had changed entirely, and in late October 1918, in light of the disintegrating Habsburg Empire and military defeat, the party demanded that Germany and German-Austria combine to form a German Empire and be turned into a “free, social All-Germany.” The dissolution of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy resulted in the formation of a German-Austrian, a German-Czech and a German-Polish branch of the recently founded DNSAP. While in Polish Silesia the national socialists were only a temporary phenomenon, in Bohemia and Moravia the DNSAP, in conjunction with the *Deutsche Nationalpartei*, was a force to be reckoned with. It was here that the party had its roots, whereas the national socialists in the newly founded Austrian republic—although they had survived the collapse—first had to take hold. This turned out to be even more difficult because they had hoped for swift unification with the German Empire, and now they saw themselves confronted with rather different conditions. In addition, the leaders of the German-Austrian and the German-Czech party became entangled in ideological conflict.

The conflict was over the party program’s central ideas of democracy and socialism. While the Austrians around Walther Riehl wished to hold on to a parliamentary system and advocated state socialism that resembled traditional revisionist social-democratic ideas, the influential German-Czech national-socialist Rudolf Jung held the opinion that democracy was an obsolete social order and should be replaced by a corporatist social structure and an elitist leadership. Jung, as many other

<sup>44</sup>Quoted from Rudolph Brandstötter, *Dr. Walter Riehl und die Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung in Österreich* (Vienna, 1969), p. 131.

National Socialists from Bohemia, was a follower of Dühring, and in his book *Der nationale Sozialismus*, published in 1919, he propagated an authoritarian Führerstaat based on racial homogeneity that would assume the fight against Judaism in its new form—Bolshevism. Jung opposed colonialism but advocated the occupation of new territories “in the east” for “social imperialism.”<sup>45</sup>

### HITLER’S NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Not one of the mentioned socialist-nationalist, national-social, or national-socialist movements achieved great success in the pre-war era. Their ideologies, neither unambiguously left nor right, were without prospect of success so long as the political framework inherited from the French revolution remained intact. The war changed the bourgeois order and the clear distinction between a conservative right, a liberal middle, and a radical democratic-socialist left. World War I thus assumed the same significance for the 20th century as the French revolution had for the 19th; the events between 1914 and 1918 swept away the old order, both internally and externally. They brought about a mass society and changed the international order as a result of the U.S. participation in the war and the emergence of the Soviet Union. New ideologies, the liberal democracy of the West and Russian Bolshevism, tried to attain global political hegemony and for a brief period appeared to succeed in doing so. However, during the early 1920s an alternative to “Wilson or Lenin” was offered in the form of the national-socialist position.

This alternative gained particular attraction in the militarily defeated, politically torn, and internally and externally threatened Germany. Between November 1918 and June 28, 1919, the day when the Versailles treaty was signed by the German delegation, uncertainty reigned with regard to the future development. But there was a widespread feeling that a radical break with the past was unavoidable. Religious ravings, revolutionary energies, the thesis of the “Decline of the West,” and the drive toward heroic self-sacrifice all found adherents. The atmosphere was hysteric and productive, and ideas that previously had seemed incompatible were now combined: Christianity and anarchism, ecstatic dance and communist revolt, conservatism and revolution, nation and socialism. To many Germans, national socialism appeared well suited as a basis on which to evaluate their positive experience with war

<sup>45</sup>Brandstötter, *Dr. Walter Riehl und die Geschichte*, p. 17.

socialism—the cooperation between High Military Command, labor unions, and business—and overcome the severe economic problems left by the war and effectively concentrate popular energies in the face of defeat. Moreover, national socialism would allow the continuation of the uniquely “German way,” in between and beyond the capitalist West and its unconstrained individualism and the bolshevist East and its collectivism and barbarism. This is what the philosopher Max Wundt meant when he wrote that the German ideology of the future would be “National rather than international, men rather than masses, socialism rather than capitalism.”<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Oswald Spengler wrote about the need for “Prussian Socialism,” Arthur Moeller van den Bruck about an “organic socialism,” and Paul Tafel about a “German” or simply “national socialism.”

This first national-socialist wave in post-war Germany made the attraction of the idea obvious, but it did not lead to an effective organization. Only a few Social Democrats—such as Paul Lensch, Johann Plenge or August Winnig<sup>47</sup>—expressed their national-socialist sympathies. Rather, the slogan of national socialism was adopted by the nationalists (Völkischen), which experienced an unexpected upswing from 1918 until 1922. Hitler later correctly characterized the development as follows: “The same idea and the same need created the same movement in all corners of the Empire. We were of course independent of each other. In Düsseldorf they did not know that the same things went on in Munich, and we in Munich did not know about events in Kiel, and this path toward the solution, which we found, shows that the programs, while developed independently of each other, ultimately all said the same.”<sup>48</sup> With this remark about Düsseldorf and Köln, Hitler referred to the *Deutschsozialistische Partei* (DSP) of the engineer Alfred Brunner, which had been founded around the turn of 1918–19 as a “party free of Jews and capitalists,” and which organized local party groups in North and West Germany in close cooperation with Austrian national socialists. The DSP was still largely rooted in the antisemitic tradition of the pre-war era, however. It did not develop an effective mass propaganda machine and never grew beyond a few thousand members. By 1922, it was completely absorbed by Hitler’s *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP), which managed to incorporate by the end of the 1920s all older

<sup>46</sup>Quoted from Albrecht Tyrell, *Vom ‘Trommler’ zum ‘Führer’: Der Wandel von Hitlers Selbstverständnis zwischen 1919 und 1924 und die Entwicklung der NSDAP* (Munich, 1975), p. 21.

<sup>47</sup>See Rolf Peter Sieferle, *Die Konservative Revolution* (Frankfurt/M., 1995), pp. 70f.

<sup>48</sup>Quoted from Ciller, *Sozialismus*, pp. 144f.

antisemitic associations and groups. Essentially, from then on, no form of national socialism existed in Germany except Hitler's.<sup>49</sup>

In the summer of 1921, one and a half years after he had joined the insignificant *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* in Munich, Hitler assumed party leadership. This position fell to the former soldier who, without training and position, had decided to become a professional speaker because of his extraordinary oratorical and demagogic skills. His ideological concepts were hardly original and did not differ from those that had been propagated by the radical right since the beginning of the Weimar Republic. Hitler proclaimed his adherence to the national community of all Germans and demanded the revision of the Versailles treaty. At the core of his ideological system was a social-Darwinistic interpretation of history. The races were the promoters of all historical developments for him, and the competition between the Aryans and the Jews was the center of a permanent race struggle. As a German national socialist, he wanted to see all war profiteers and the Jewish "grab-capital" expropriated so that the working class could finally be integrated into the national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) led by the front soldiers.

Early in 1921, some changes could be noticed in Hitler's argumentation. Until then, with the call for the disempowerment of the Jews, he represented the traditional antisemitic position. Now he began to emphasize the role of the Jews as organizers and beneficiaries of the Russian revolution and the world threat of Bolshevism. Under the influence of the writer Dietrich Eckart and the German-Baltic journalist Alfred Rosenberg, Hitler reached the conclusion that the Bolshevik revolution represented a "Jewish dictatorship," and that Germany would "sink into a Bolshevik swamp of blood" unless appropriate countermeasures were taken by a dictatorial regime.<sup>50</sup> In order to reach the goal of a national dictatorship, Hitler formed an alliance with other groups of the revolutionary right, but his "March on Berlin," planned in accordance with the model of Mussolini's "March on Rome," failed and his *putsch* of November 1923 broke down when the conservative Bavarian government mobilized the army and the state police. The NSDAP was outlawed, and Hitler was sentenced to a five-year

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<sup>49</sup>See Helmut Heiber, *Adolf Hitler: Eine Biographie* (Berlin, 1960), p. 157.

<sup>50</sup>Adolf Hitler, "Der völkische Gedanke und die Partei," *Völkischer Beobachter* (January 1, 1921); quoted from Eberhard Jäckel and Axel Kuhn, eds., *Hitler: Sämtliche Aufzeichnungen 1905-1924, Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte 21* (Stuttgart, 1980), p. 279 [document 178].

prison term. Hitler later referred to his prison time as a “university education at the state’s expense,”<sup>51</sup> because during the months of his imprisonment he engaged (probably for the first time) in systematic reading and study. The forced leisure also afforded the opportunity to dictate his memoirs, the first volume of which appeared in 1925 under the title *Mein Kampf*. In the manuscript, Hitler attempted to present his ideology as a systematic whole. And while it cannot be demonstrated conclusively that Hitler was familiar with the ideas of the national-socialist theoreticians of the pre-war era, the similarities are obvious.

Essentially, Hitler concentrated on three themes: race theory, national socialism, and living-space (Lebensraum) imperialism. Hitler’s idea about the need for “purity of blood” had little to do with mysticism but rather with the fear of all social Darwinists concerning the “regression toward the mean.”<sup>52</sup> He defined the Aryan essentially by one characteristic, his “greatest contrast” to the Jew. The “Jewish question” was the center of the race question for him, and the Jew was as much a hated as admiringly feared enemy. He not only considered the Jews as parasites and destroyers of culture, but he also suspected that they preserved a unique purity of blood while, under the cover of humanitarian phraseology, they planned the bastardization of their “host people”<sup>53</sup> in order to gain a decisive advantage in the race struggle that would determine the “progress of mankind.”<sup>54</sup> As for many national socialists of the pre-war era, socialism for Hitler stood in direct connection to this race struggle. Only the elimination of all remnants of the bourgeois class society would mobilize the nation’s energies for the upcoming conflicts. His socialism had as little to do with humanitarian concerns as did that of Barrès, Pearson, or Woltmann. Hitler was a socialist because he believed the proletariat possessed “primeval energies”<sup>55</sup> that would aid in regenerating the decadent upper class and once again make the Germans a “people of brutal willpower,” which was necessary for survival in the “natural order of power.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Quoted from Ernst Deuerlein, ed., *Der Aufstieg der NSDAP in Augenzeugenberichten* (Munich, 1982), p. 241.

<sup>52</sup>See Rolf Peter Sieferle, “Sozialdarwinismus,” in Bodo-Michael Baumunk and Jürgen Riess, eds., *Darwin und der Darwinismus* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 134–42, esp. 142.

<sup>53</sup>Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich, 1937), p. 357.

<sup>54</sup>Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 286.

<sup>55</sup>Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 364.

<sup>56</sup>Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 148.

Like most social Darwinists, Hitler thought wars were natural, and that nature, the “cruel queen of wisdom,”<sup>57</sup> provided for the merciless selection of the strong through elimination of the weak. Socialism, the negative selection of the “inferior,” and the exclusion of the Jews all served the same purpose: the construction of a natural order which would survive in the natural conflict between powers. Which state constitution would be suited to achieve this goal Hitler left open; he had little interest in questions of constitutional details. The explanations in *Mein Kampf* about Germanic democracy and later about the leader principle (Führerprinzip) remained general and abstract. It was only clear that the national-socialist state would have to be authoritarian and that Western democracy could not assure the self-preservation of the Aryan people. Western democracy was a sign of decadence because it was committed to anti-selectionist principles and unable to assure the selection of an elite in accordance with racial-national ability.

Hitler knew that his goals could not be accomplished within the existing political system. He was not interested in defending any particular state organization. Mentally he belonged, like most national socialists, to the revolutionaries rather than the conservatives. However, after the failed *putsch* of 1923, he realized that in modern societies classical revolutions could only succeed under exceptional circumstances and would be problematic even then, for they would lead to irreparable losses of human substance. The promoters of the revolution would have to be a “path-breaking minority,”<sup>58</sup> a political elite of disappointed extremists, men of the extreme right and the extreme left joining the national-socialist party. The NSDAP should not mobilize the “herd of bourgeois voters”<sup>59</sup> but constitute the hard core of a new movement which—under the cover of legality—would try by all means to reach power.

Once this goal was attained, the system would have to be replaced by a national-socialist state whose main task was the shaping of a new German man. Although Hitler believed that a lengthy period of time was necessary to reach this end, he spent considerable energy in *Mein Kampf* explaining the basic principles of his long-range foreign policy plans. Central to this was the necessity of destroying the alliance between the victorious powers of the war, and drawing Italy and above all Great Britain into the German camp. The support of the

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<sup>57</sup>Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 144.

<sup>58</sup>See Jäckel and Kuhn, *Hitler*, p. 708 [document 412].

<sup>59</sup>Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 375.

“Germanic brother nation” was critical in order to gain a free hand for an active East policy. Hitler believed that the social integration of all members of the national community would lead to considerable costs which—in light of shrinking markets—could not be borne by internal economic growth. Thus, the conquest of living space in the East would serve to provide not only the food supply for a growing nation but also the economic basis for uncompromising social imperialism. Theoretically, this problem could also be solved by the acquisition of overseas territories, but Hitler considered the possession of regions adjacent to the territory of the German Empire geopolitically advantageous for improving Germany’s military and strategic power in future wars. That any German attempt to reach this goal would inevitably lead to a conflict with the Soviet Union was something that Hitler not only accepted but welcomed. This would make probable an all-decisive battle against the Jewry, because Bolshevism was not just a hostile ideology. The political system of the Soviet Union represented also the “open dictatorship” of the Jewry.<sup>60</sup>

When Hitler developed these ideas in *Mein Kampf* in the mid-1920s, he seemed further away from the realization of his plans than ever. His failed attempt to copy Mussolini’s grasp of power condemned him on the one hand “not to shoot but to vote his enemies dead,” and on the other hand it determined and defined the relationship between German National Socialism and Italian Fascism for more than ten years. Both movements were closely connected but by no means identical. Their sociopolitical environment and ideological emphases were distinctly different. Thus, occasionally Hitler stressed the national-socialist content of fascism<sup>61</sup> and simultaneously criticized its lack of consistency that frequently led Mussolini to compromise and moderation despite his verbal radicalism. The March on Rome of 1922, a mixture of propaganda coup and revolutionary threat, had been successful only because the fascists could count on the tacit support by the old elites and the sympathy of large numbers of the army and police. Thus, the regime which Mussolini implemented in the following years little resembled his older national-socialist ideals. He did not touch on the monarchical order, the relationship to the Vatican was stabilized, and the economic order remained essentially unchanged despite some corporatist reforms. Mussolini took a

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<sup>60</sup>Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p. 357.

<sup>61</sup>Adolf Hitler, “Vorwort zur deutschen Ausgabe,” in Vincenzo Meletti, *Die Revolution des Faschismus* (Munich, 1931), pp. 7f.

mediating position between his conservative coalition partners and the radical forces within his own party, the *squadristi*. Totalitarian features, such as the legal prohibition of opposition parties and the latent terror by the secret police, appeared only after the mid-1920s, and there was not a system of concentration camps, nor any plan to annihilate any part of the Italian population. What separated the fascists from traditional authoritarian regimes was their will and desire to be popular and the principle of mass mobilization. The party, the militia, and the youth organizations served above all the purpose of ideological instruction and the preparation of those great shows for which Mussolini had a special talent. Combined with the beginnings of a fascist welfare state, these forms of direct and unmediated integration contributed significantly to the popularity of the regime, and by the mid-1930s there was practically no opposition which could hope for widespread support. With some justification, Renzo de Felice speculated that if Mussolini had avoided entering the war, the fascist system would probably have lasted in a somewhat modified form until today.<sup>62</sup>

### THE THIRD REICH AND THE BROWN WELFARE STATE

Although no Fascist International was ever founded and Mussolini doubted that fascism could be exported, with the March on Rome a number of smaller movements which called themselves fascist or were with some justification so labeled arose. Neither the Romanian *Legion Archangel Michael* of Corneliu Z. Codreanu, the Finnish *Lappo-Movement* under the former general chief of staff Kurt Martti Walenius, nor the Austrian *home-militias* (not to speak of such peripheral movements as the *British Fascisti* and the *Faisceau* of the French Georges Valois) succeeded in coming to power as Mussolini did. These groups were not simply copies of Italian fascism. They differed widely ideologically, and their commonality consisted only in their political style, the “wish to wear a colorful shirt,”<sup>63</sup> their militancy, and their common enemies—Marxism and liberalism. When, in October 1930, Hitler stated that the communist threat could be eliminated solely by eliminating parliamentary democracy and the “fascistization of the

<sup>62</sup>Renzo de Felice, *Der Faschismus: Ein Interview* (Stuttgart, 1977), p. 64.

<sup>63</sup>Ernst Nolte, *Der Faschismus von Mussolini zu Hitler: Texte, Bilder und Dokumente* (Munich, 1968), p. 157.

European states,” this was largely a propaganda slogan. The economic depression had given a boost to all in the widest sense fascist movements, but nowhere in Europe did they become decisive factors. Only the success of the “national revolution” in Germany would lead to a second national-socialist wave in the period between the wars. The victory of the NSDAP in Germany was due to Germany’s unusual situation as a defeated and, as a result of the Versailles treaty, a permanently humiliated country, and in particular to the great crisis of the liberal system that had affected not only the economy but the constitutional order and foreign policy of the European and Europeanized states. This crisis made the idea of a national socialism appear increasingly attractive in that it appealed to the “anticapitalist yearnings”<sup>64</sup> of the masses and the widespread belief that economic isolation and protectionism would lead to a healthier economic basis.

When it became clear to Hitler that the normal fascist way to power was closed, he successfully reorganized the National Socialists as an omnibus or catch-all party. As can be seen from the composition and organization of party members and voters, by the end of the 1920s the NSDAP had become a populist protest party whose platform played only a minor role.<sup>65</sup> The all-classes encompassing integration of its followers was due to the charisma of the Führer and the modern means of mass propagandizing. The mobilization of the masses was achieved in particular through the promise of national and social regeneration. Important but unpopular elements in Hitler’s ideology—the racist antisemitism and the conquest of living space—were deliberately deemphasized or left unmentioned. In light of this fact, it was not to be expected that after rising to government power on January 30, 1933, the National Socialists would engage in decisions that would threaten their support among the masses. The fate of the unpopular governments of Brüning, Papen, and Schleicher was before Hitler’s eyes, and the “Caesarist” structure of the new government, which was only gradually stabilized, required sound popular support. Hence, there were constant appeals for a national community (Volksgemeinschaft) and for a “social revolution aimed at modernization.”

Social modernization was by no means contrary to Hitler’s

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<sup>64</sup>Quoted from Martin Broszat, “Die Machtergreifung. Der Aufstieg der NSDAP und die Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik,” *Deutsche Geschichte der neuesten Zeit* 16 (Munich, 1993), p. 495.

<sup>65</sup>Jürgen Falter, *Hitlers Wähler* (Munich, 1991), p. 364.

intentions. In fact, “Hitler not only welcomed the process of industrialization and the increase in social mobility, he consciously promoted this development.”<sup>66</sup> The new strength that the regime gave to the economy was by no means restricted to preparation for war. Rather, Hitler promoted the development of an infrastructure (the construction of canals, expressways, airports, and the electrification of railroads) and the systematic modernization of industries. Taylorism, originally opposed for ideological reasons, was now introduced. The DINTA—the German Institute for Technical Work Organization—was concerned with the training of future managers and problems of efficiency and productivity along the lines of American models. It would be incorrect to speak of ideologically motivated preferential treatment of agriculture. The organization of the “estate of the farmers” (Reichsnährstand), which best corresponded to the official propaganda of “blood and soil,” was subject to technocratic reforms at the end of the 1930s, when it had become clear that traditional agriculture was unable to fulfill the demands for autarky. After all attempts to stop the process of urbanization had failed, the mechanization of agricultural production was promoted on a large scale. Hitler accepted the modern view that the goal of the economy was the improvement of the general standard of living. Investment in consumer-goods industries fell behind investment in military production but was nonetheless extensive and contributed considerably to the Americanization of the German lifestyle in the the 1930s.

The decisive reason for the stability of the regime was the elimination of unemployment, however. Even if the 1933 job-creating programs had much to do with war preparation, they still had an extraordinarily strong effect on the German social structure. While the German workers lost some participation-rights under the NS regime and, on the average, until 1939 had to work longer and for lower pay than in the Weimar Republic, the general economic conditions still appeared significantly better—more stable and less crisis-prone—than during the 1920s. The entrepreneurs, many of whom had feared “brown Bolshevism,” were disaffected by the egalitarian tendencies of the NS regime and the “Four-Year Plan” and the “Defense-Economic-Production Plan.” Yet, they gave in to Hitler and Göring when they were threatened that militarily important industries might be nationalized, and they profited handsomely from the

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<sup>66</sup>Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler. Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs* (Stuttgart, 1989), p. 495.

government's economic and job-creating programs during the 1930s. Similarly ambivalent was their assessment of the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, the compulsory organization of workers and employers whose leader, Robert Ley, planned to create a national-socialist welfare state with full employment, guaranteed work-time, wage justice (also for women), mother protection, universal health insurance, organized mass tourism (*Kraft durch Freude*), and a dynamic old-age pension system.

In fact, there was no break in the tendency toward the modern welfare state in Germany during the NS era. Likewise, especially in light of the war destruction, the National Socialists increasingly gave up their initial reservations regarding cities and city life, and engaged in regional planning by promoting the development of pre-fabricated housing construction and large-scale public housing. In accordance with the goal of modernization was also the design of a new "national state," wherein each member would have equal opportunities. Thus in 1943, Goebbels could say with some justification: "We Germans did not become equal in rights and obligations but equal in opportunities."<sup>67</sup> Indeed, vertical mobility in peace time doubled as compared to the last six years of the Weimar Republic. In particular, in the parallel structures of the party apparatus it was possible to reach leading positions without otherwise necessary requirements (such as *matura* or university study). Not all economic barriers were broken down within the education system, but the new "elite schools" of the regime did in fact recruit far more children from the lower social strata than did traditional educational institutions.

There can be little doubt that these elements of national socialism contributed much to integrating the population in the system. Neither passive acceptance nor permanent terror can explain the durability that the NS regime displayed during war time. And neither the euthanasia program, nor the mass extermination of Jews, can be separated or isolated from this connection. Their ideological justification was based on social Darwinism and race theory, which belonged to the ideological core of practically all national-socialist variants. Hitler and his executives were convinced of their scientific basis. Both—euthanasia and the murder of Jews—were not the result of some irrational destructionism but rather of the necessity of an active population policy. They were motivated by "planning and practice-oriented rationalism that tended to shake off all moral

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<sup>67</sup>Quoted from Hans-Jürgen Eitner, *Hitlers Deutsche: Das Ende eines Tabus* (Wiesbaden), p. 297.

constraints and found a perfect environment in national socialism” that wanted to eliminate “useless eaters” and parasites (Volksschädlinge) so as to increase the fitness of the nation which, in case of a conflict, could not tolerate any internal strain or enemy.<sup>68</sup>

### THE WORLD WAR AS A NATIONAL SOCIALIST REVOLUTION?

That national socialism also possessed considerable appeal outside the German borders was not because of a knowledge or acceptance of its destructive program. To foreign admirers, the NS regime installed in 1933 appeared more modern than Italian fascism, less compromised by remnants of the bourgeois order, more efficient, more social, and indeed equidistant from capitalism and communism. National-socialist parties emerged in Holland under the leadership of Anton Adriaan Mussert, in Flanders under Staff de Clercq, in Norway under Vidkun Quisling, in Romania under Horia Sima, and in Hungary under Ferenc Szalasi. The *Falange* movement of the Spaniard Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, and Patrick O’Duffy’s *Blueshirts*, which had grown out of Irish-republican radicalism, also belonged to this group. They were unable to gain power on their own, but in Latin America at least two regimes emerged which can be counted as national socialist in the interwar period, even though the social conditions there were significantly different from those in Europe. The first was the *Estado Novo* (1930-1945) of the Brazilian president Getulio Vargas. Vargas conducted a policy that was based on support by the masses and the military and which was directed against the power of the U.S. and the economic influence of the upper class. Vargas’s followers, the movement of the *Integralistas* (which he later dissolved), resembled in its program the *Shirtless* of the Argentinian president Juan Domingo Peron who, at least during the beginning of his reign (1943–55), openly invoked Mussolini and Hitler and imposed his “fascism of the under-class” against the resistance of the old elites.<sup>69</sup>

The pronounced leftist tendency of these two regimes<sup>70</sup> was by

<sup>68</sup>Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung: Auschwitz und die Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung* (Frankfurt/M., 1993), p. 19. For a critique of the work by Götz and Heim see Dan Diner, “Rationalisierung und Methode,” *Vierteljahreshfte fuer Zeitgeschichte* 40 (1990): 359–82.

<sup>69</sup>See Ernst-Otto Schüddekopf, *Bis alles in Scherben fällt: Die Geschichte des Faschismus* (London, 1973), p. 212.

<sup>70</sup>Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Das Zeitalter der Extreme: Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*

no means atypical of the national socialism of the 1930s. There were numerous socialists who followed Mussolini's path. One of them was Oswald Mosley. Mosley had started his political career as a conservative, yet he won his first mandate in 1918 under the flag of "social imperialism."<sup>71</sup> The resemblance of his ideas to the Fabians from the pre-war era was no accident, and when Mosley, annoyed by the attentism of the old parties, became a member of the Labour Party in 1924, he developed a program—a combination of Empire-autarky, planned economy, and job-creation programs—which was "genuinely national-socialist."<sup>72</sup> Shortly after he became a cabinet member in 1929, he presented a manifesto to the other government members in which he once again concretized his ideas. When he encountered rejection and did not succeed at the 1931 Labour Party convention, he left the party and founded the short-lived New Party. If one relies on his memoirs, Mosley was inspired in this step by Shaw, with whom he had a personal friendship and who also influenced his elitism and Nietzschean ideas about the importance of great men.<sup>73</sup> Only after Mosley acknowledged that his New Party would be unable to break the power of the *old gang* did he model his ideas increasingly on Mussolini and Hitler. In October 1932, he founded the British Union of Fascists which, despite its name, sympathized more with national socialist Germany and, after some hesitation, he also adopted its antisemitism. The *Blackshirts* were not initially a marginal movement. Their membership rose dramatically until 1935, and they received substantial financial support. One of the most influential publishers of the country, Lord Rothermere, followed Mosley's political activities for some time with unconcealed sympathy. That Mosley's national-socialist movement ultimately failed was not only because most Englishmen had little taste for the fascist style, but in particular because of the strength of the conservative government which had ruled the country since 1931, and the gradual recovery of the economy.

Very different was the political situation in France, which was in a permanent crisis beginning early in the 1930s. Here the former "crown prince" of the communist party, Jacques Doriot, and the former secretary of the socialist members of parliament,

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(Munich and Vienna, 1995), p. 175; the Marxist historian summarizes: "the fascist regimes in Europe destroyed the workers movements; the Latin-American leaders, inspired by the European fascists, founded the workers movements."

<sup>71</sup>See Semmel, *Imperialism*, p. 248.

<sup>72</sup>Ernst Nolte, *Die faschistischen Bewegungen* (Lausanne, 1969), p. 282.

<sup>73</sup>See Sir Oswald Mosley, *Weg und Wagnis: Ein Leben für Europa* (Leoni, 1973), pp. 180-82.

Marcel Déat, followed Mussolini's example. Out of disappointment about the lack of willingness of the PCF to form a pact with the parties of the moderate left against fascism, Doriot had left the party and attracted the support of one segment of the French working class for his *Parti Populaire Française*, founded in 1936. However, as soon as he had accomplished his original goal in the form of the "popular front," Doriot's view fundamentally changed. He came to the conclusion that the republic would not be able to survive, and that France, in order to put it back on the foundation of 1789, needed a "national and social revolution."<sup>74</sup> While Doriot constantly warned of the danger of German aggression, he praised the NS regime for its labor policies and attempts at economic autarky, and the PPF—as a leadership party with party members in uniform—would not deny the German model and inspiration.

In their basic views, Doriot's and Déat's ideologies were quite similar. Déat and other SFIO members of parliament had left their party because they opposed the indecisiveness of the party leadership. His neo-socialists were quickly suspected of being fascists, although initially without reason. Yet the *neos* represented a picture of socialism which differed significantly from that of the rest of the left insofar as it wanted to replace the triad "liberté-égalité-fraternité" with the entirely different one of "order-nation-authority." They did not consider fascism as a handyman of the reactionaries and capitalists but as the inevitable reaction against the decadence of the liberal system: "Fascism is put on trial, but the trial is unjust because fascism was born everywhere of the disease of democracy."<sup>75</sup>

Déat's ideas about neo-socialism were heavily influenced by the works of the Belgian socialist leader, Hendrik de Man who, beginning in the mid-1920s, had propagated the necessity of overcoming the reformism of the workers movement while at the same time sharply rejecting the Bolshevik model. De Man demanded a complete discarding of internationalism and a concentration on "socialism in one country."<sup>76</sup> A comprehensive economic plan, "as an expression and symbol of the new phase of socialist action,"<sup>77</sup> would have to detail the measures needed for

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<sup>74</sup>See Dieter Wolf, *Die Doriot Bewegung: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des französischen Faschismus* (Stuttgart, 1967), p. 222.

<sup>75</sup>Quoted from Reinhard Schwarzer, *Idee und politische Wirklichkeit bei Marcel Déat* (Pfaffenweiler, 1987), p. 222.

<sup>76</sup>Hendrik de Man, *Die sozialistische Idee* (Jena, 1933), p. 335.

<sup>77</sup>de Man, *Die sozialistische Idee*, p. 328.

such a revolutionary transformation. The plan should prepare for the socialization of all suitable firms, but de Man opposed complete socialization. Rather, he was convinced that the free market should be kept in place wherever monopolistic economic structures were still lacking.

De Man's views had striking resemblance to other ideas about planned economies that had been implemented in the 1930s in industrialized countries. In most cases, it was a combination of Keynesian models with moderate autarky as pursued by the United States in relation to Latin America, and by Great Britain and France in relation to their overseas territories. However, with his idea that "planism" should create a new attachment of the masses to the national state, de Man came very close to ideas which can be classified as national socialist, indicating once more that Hitler's movement and regime were by no means a peripheral phenomenon, and were reflecting a widespread historical tendency.<sup>78</sup> The curious ambivalence of de Man was also revealed in the fact that de Man, whose books were confiscated and burned in Germany in 1933, published a manifesto directed at the proletarians of his country on June 28, 1940, when the German troops occupied Belgium. In this manifesto he wrote: "For the working classes and socialism, this collapse of a rotten world is no misfortune but a liberation. Despite all of our defeats, pains, and disappointments, the path is cleared for the pacification of Europe and social justice."<sup>79</sup> De Man considered the collapse of the parliamentary system and the flight of the Belgian upper class as an externally induced revolution. In contrast to Doriot and Déat, he rejected the idea of the German model as suitable for Belgium, but like them he was of the opinion that the military disaster of their countries had brought about a revolutionary situation in which it would be possible to create the national state of the 20th century. In fact, the German occupation forces were greeted in a more-friendly manner in the working class suburbs of Brussels and Paris than in middle class neighborhoods, and it should not be forgotten that a considerable part of the unionized left in Belgium and France became members of the collaboration.<sup>80</sup>

Yet de Man, Doriot, and Déat would be as disappointed in

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<sup>78</sup>John Lukacs noted that Hitler was the "outstanding representation of a historical movement which shaped for at least 20 or 25 years in ever new forms the entire world." *Churchill und Hitler: Der Zweikampf* (Munich and Zurich, 1995), p. 22.

<sup>79</sup>Quoted from Hendrik de Man, *Gegen den Strom: Memoiren eines europäischen Sozialisten* (Stuttgart, 1953), p. 246.

<sup>80</sup>See Schwarzer, *Idee*, pp. 88, 99, 102.

their expectations as would the other leaders of the larger or smaller national-socialist parties who had put all their hopes into cooperating with Germany. They did not want forced cooperation with a victorious conqueror but the establishment of an entirely new national-socialist bloc of states under German hegemony. In fact, during the brief period between the victory over France in May 1940 and the beginning of the war against the Soviet Union in June 1941, it appeared conceivable that national socialism would become a continental-European phenomenon: authoritarian and militaristic, nationalist and social, anticommunist, anticapitalist, and antisemitic. As difficult as the establishment of such a system would have been, however, its realization was impossible because Hitler—quite consistent in light of his Darwinian convictions—was not interested in the export of the German system to other countries. In this case, other countries could have used the same sources of energy which he wanted to reserve exclusively for the Germans. On the contrary, he preferred to cooperate with bourgeois or openly reactionary governments from which he expected more willingness for compromise. Even when, under the impression of the first military disappointments in Russia, Hitler showed more willingness to cooperate with the conquered people, this propaganda for a “New Europe” had largely tactical purposes. His complete inability to develop a viable foreign policy strategy immediately defeated any such plans.

In June 1944 when the defeat of the NS regime had become unavoidable, one of Hitler’s most ardent defenders, French author Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, wrote that the experiment of a new Europe had failed because the “revolutionary elan of Nationalsocialism” had proved to be too weak. The petty bourgeois Hitler had been incapable of bringing about the necessary “socialist revolution in Europe,”<sup>81</sup> which had led to a situation in which the Anglo-Saxons and the Russians partitioned the continent among themselves. Only the willingness to act like Stalin and bring about a complete social transformation would have prevented this development. What Drieu la Rochelle could not know was that Hitler had reached similar conclusions by then. In a letter to Mussolini dated March 8, 1940, he had noted that “Russia . . . after Stalin’s final victory would undoubtedly undergo a transformation of the Bolshevick

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<sup>81</sup>Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, *Faschistische Bilanz* (July 15, 1944); quoted from Hans Werner Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich: Einigungsbestrebungen im deutschen Machtbereich 1939–1945* (Munich, 1987), p.280–88, here pp. 284, 285f.

principle in the direction of a national Russian way of life.”<sup>82</sup> The measures by which Stalin had, since the beginning of the war between Germany and the USSR, increasingly enriched Soviet-patriotism with elements of traditional Russian nationalism caused Hitler as much respect as the brutality with which his mirror image held his empire together. After the failed coup of July 20, 1944, Hitler expressed regret for not having dealt with the German officer corps in the same way as Stalin had done with that of the Red Army during the 1930s.

Like Mussolini, who had been thrown out of power in the summer of 1943, Hitler dreamed of returning to the revolutionary beginnings of the national-socialist movement and starting all over again with the necessary seriousness. Mussolini called his short-lived northern Italian remnant state a “social republic”—a slogan of the Second International<sup>83</sup>—and he propagated socializing industries, which even some of his fans considered “communistoid.”<sup>84</sup> In a sharp anticapitalist turn, Mussolini went so far as to have published those writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin which he considered worthwhile as a theoretical foundation of his old-new class politics. While the German officialdom became increasingly irritated with the Duce’s politics, Hitler did not intervene. He himself would admit in his “Political Testament” that it was a mistake not to have radically eliminated the old ruling elites and incited the German and foreign workers against their exploiters and the oppressed Asian people against their British and French colonial rulers in order to set an “all-European revolution” in motion.<sup>85</sup>

Hitler did not believe that national socialism had failed until the very end. He believed that his ideology would reemerge after a period during which the victorious powers would jointly hold Germany down, and that the countries of the Third World would rise against them. There, strands of national socialism have in fact survived since 1945. In the wake of decolonization, numerous dictatorships have tried to promote the process of nation-building through some special form of national socialism.<sup>86</sup> That this was generally pro-Soviet and

<sup>82</sup>Quoted from Zitelmann, *Hitler*, p. 478.

<sup>83</sup>See Georg Scheuer, *Genosse Mussolini: Wurzeln und Wege des Ur-Fascismus* (Vienna, 1985), p. 98.

<sup>84</sup>See Karl Mittermaier, *Mussolinis Ende: Die Republik von Salo 1943–1945* (Munich, 1995), p. 138.

<sup>85</sup>Quoted from Rainer Zitelmann, *Adolf Hitler: Eine politische Biographie* (Goettingen, 1989), p. 170.

<sup>86</sup>On this connection see Michael Wolffsohn, “Linker und rechter National-

that only in exceptional cases did a direct continuity with the fascisms or national socialisms of the interwar period exist—as in the case of Nasser, who rose out of the movement of the Egyptian *Silvershirts*, or of the great-Syrian national socialists—is of only minor importance once it is recalled that the anticommunism of the national socialists of the interwar period was an important but by no means primary characteristic. The strongest motive for the development and formation of national-socialist ideas was, and will likely be in the future, the protection of the nation and the comprehensive social integration of its members for the purpose of some, however defined, national self-preservation. Hence, the collapse of the Soviet system by no means led to the disappearance of the phenomenon, and as long as nation states are considered essential and efficient political units, this is not likely to occur.

### CONCLUSION

“Generally, the mistake is made of considering national socialism merely as a revolt against reason, as an irrational movement without intellectual foundation,” wrote Friedrich A. Hayek in *The Road to Serfdom*. He added: “Once its premises are accepted, it becomes impossible to escape its logic.”<sup>87</sup> In fact, national socialism never developed a consistent theory such as Marxism, yet it fascinated a large number of intellectuals. Its partial ambivalence, indeed inconsistency, did not diminish its attraction. Quite to the contrary, national socialism was an ideological mosaic in which pieces could be missing without affecting the overall impression. It represented the most extreme form of nationalism and provided stable political orientation. It affirmed national-ethnic traditions and opposed the idea of equality. It called for an authoritarian state constitution, not in its traditional but in a functional sense and with decidedly technocratic features. The national socialists acknowledged the democratic age insofar as they always sought legitimation through popular assent. After initial indecisiveness, the idea of a totalitarian democracy almost inevitably took hold among them, in which the will of all would be condensed in one person. The leadership cult, as the mobilization of the masses, was one of the most outstanding common features of all national-socialist parties and regimes. Both seemed necessary in order to overcome the atomization of the individual in modern industrial societies,

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Sozialismus,” *Zeitschrift für Politik* 24 (1977): 56–80.

<sup>87</sup>Friedrich A. Hayek, *Der Weg zur Knechtschaft* (Munich, 1975), p. 173.

to deal with the threat of national competition, and to mold the many into one integrated whole. The identification of an internal foe (capitalism, Judaism, “foreignness and disease”) and external enemies (potential military adversaries, occupants of resources and living space) defined and held the movement together, while the plausibility of the idea of protecting the nation state as a social state assured mass loyalty.

The ideological location of the national-socialist movement is only problematic if one accepts the traditional (left, middle, right) political classification system. While national-socialism can with some justification be counted among the new revolutionary right which emerged in the late 19th century, it is essential to emphasize its unique proletarian character. In light of this, national socialism can also be considered as a variant of the overall socialist movement, which was in fact never unified and consisted of many different forms. Social egalitarianism and the drive toward economic interventionism always assumed—unlike in conservative dictatorships—a great role for national socialists, and the number of collaborators from the camp of workers’ parties was always comparatively great. Ultimately, the conclusion appears warranted that there is no place for national socialism within the scheme inherited from the French revolution. It is a product of the 20th century and was able to become one of its most influential ideologies at a time when the modern nation state had reached its highest degree of effectiveness and was called into question for the first time by new forms of political socialization. These conditions made national-socialism gain increasing popularity because, as with every successful ideology, it comprehended one particular aspect of reality, made it the center of its worldview, and combined it with other sometimes disparate ideas. Under the conditions of modern mass society, national-socialism offered an alternative to the *ancien regime* of the liberal state, its parliamentary system, its parties, and its inefficient bourgeois lifestyle. It was an alternative which was different from communism and appeared more appealing in the developed states of Europe than the model of the radical left, but it ultimately led to a collectivism that could hardly be distinguished from the Soviet kind.