

3 *Fundamentals of National Socialism*

THE MYTH OF RACE

The Nazi ideology comprised three basic concepts—race mysticism, a belief in the relationship between blood and soil, and the leadership principle. These concepts constituted the basis of the Nazi *Weltanschauung* and were expounded in three principal works: in the official program of the Nazi party, in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and in Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century*. All of these publications reflected that Prussianism whose development was sketched in the previous chapters. The last of them appeared a few years before the victory of the Nazis in 1933; it was written by the Nazi party philosopher and educational supervisor, and, although it was never translated into English, it ranked next in importance to *Mein Kampf* as a reflection of Nazi doctrine.

Rosenberg's book is divided into three parts. The first commences with a very poetic but unscientific picture of the lost continent of Atlantis as the home of the Aryan race. By using Spengler's technique of culture analysis, Rosenberg tries to prove the myths of race and Nordic superiority.

In the second part of his book, Rosenberg deals with the "Essence of German Art." He measures culture with a racial yardstick and attempts to show the superiority of the Aryans, particularly the Teutons, by citing great works of art. He also elaborates the theme that the arts must be a reflection of the folkish character of the nation.

The third part is a forecast of "The Coming Reich" and a discussion of the main enemies of the racial folk state. These are, according to Rosenberg, the Jews—whom he calls the *Gegegenrasse*, or opposing race—and the Roman Catholics. All seven hundred pages of the book are permeated with tiresome and laborious references to race, blood and soil, and the leadership principle.

Let us try to see what Rosenberg meant by race. It may be recalled that Hegel imagined a Universal Spirit, or *Urge*, motivating the world's struggle for perfection, the nearest approach to which

was the absolute state. Rosenberg agreed that the absolute state approached perfection, but he invented the "Soul of Race" as the motivating force in his world. The state itself, Rosenberg felt, was soulless, merely the political expression of the race. But the race had a soul; each race had a different soul, although it was not the sort of thing one could discover or explain by science or reason. About this soul, Rosenberg wrote:

Soul means race seen from within and vice versa; race is the outer form of the soul. To bring to life the soul of race means to recognize its supreme value and under its rule assign to the other values their proper organic place in the state, in art, and in religion. This is the task of our century: to create a new human type out of a new life-myth. . . .

Each race has its soul and each soul belongs to a race. . . . Each race in the long run produces only one supreme ideal. . . . This supreme value demands a definite grouping of the other life values which are conditioned by it. It thus determines the way of life of a race, of a people. . . . The life of a race, or a people, is not understood as a logical, philosophical process, nor does it follow natural laws. Rather it is the unfolding of a mystical synthesis, an activity of the soul which cannot be explained by reason.¹

Rosenberg maintained that race, in his mythical sense, was determined not only by physical and mental attributes, but by enduring spiritual qualities as well. Race characteristics, he said, could not be overcome by the impact of environment upon members of one race in an alien land or climate; and, even if physical adaptation to environment should take place, the mental and spiritual characteristics would remain through all eternity. This was tantamount to saying, of course, that anyone with predominantly German ancestry is still German and feels and thinks like a German—or should.

Moreover, among all the races of the world, Rosenberg claimed superiority for the Aryans, by which he meant Germans. Hitler had written that everything done in the way of culture was the product of Aryans. Aryan man is the "founder of higher humanity, the Prometheus of mankind."² Rosenberg claimed superiority for Germans, but could not quite claim purity for them, since even Nazi specialists admitted that Germans were a mixture of Teutons, Celts,

¹ Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20-Jahrhunderts*, Hoheneichen Verlag, Munich, 1933, pp. 2, 116-117.

² Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Reynal & Hitchcock, New York, 1941, pp. 397-398.

Slavs, Wends, and Magyars. But in the course of centuries, they said, six basic Aryan types had developed: Nordic, Westic (Mediterranean), Dmaric, Baltic, Falic, and Ostic (Alpine).

Among these racial subtypes, Rosenberg explained, the Nordics are superior, although numerically the smallest group. Nordics are creative and valiant, he said, tall, lean, light-skinned, blond, and blue-eyed. Moreover:

The character of the Nordic race is distinguished by heroism and love of freedom; the Teutons are the ones who have given the world the conception of science and research, not to speak of the fact that the Nordics excel in loyalty and truthfulness. . . . There is no doubt that the Nordics, earlier than all of the other races, have been the bearers of a genuine culture in Europe. The great heroes, the artists, the founders of states are the offspring of the Nordic race. . . .¹

Notice that Rosenberg mentioned love of freedom as a special characteristic of the Nordic race. But this was a unique kind of freedom, as he explained:

Freedom, in the Germanic sense, means independence of mind, free possibilities of inquiry, the creation of a philosophy of the world, a genuine religious feeling. For Asiatic invaders and dark hybrids, on the other hand, freedom means unrestrained destruction of cultural values. . . . To grant outer freedom today to Czechs, Poles, and Levantines means to be delivered over to racial chaos. . . .²

On the basis of such convictions about racial differences, Rosenberg advocated the preservation of racial purity so that the truly superior races would not degenerate through intermarriage with inferior ones. Blood mixture with an inferior race Rosenberg called “incest,” and he observed that its result was always “the death of personality, nation, race, and civilization. No one who has defiled the religion of the blood,” Rosenberg wrote, “has ever escaped this vengeance of the blood, neither Indians nor Persians, neither Greeks nor Romans. Nor will Nordic Europe escape the same vengeance if it does not turn back.”³

The decline of Greece, Rosenberg asserted, began when the “Nordic” Greeks intermarried, under their democratic system, with already mixed Mediterranean races; and the downfall of Rome he

¹ Rosenberg, *op. cit.* (first edition of 1930), p. 566.

² *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23, author’s italics.

ascribed to intermarriage between the patrician and plebeian classes. Therefore, he said, such intermingling was to be avoided, and even within the Aryan race precaution was to be observed. The Alpine race, for example, he demanded, should not be permitted to dilute Nordic blood too much because its characteristic sympathies for political democracy, pacifism, and lack of spiritual interest were wholly unsuited to the Teutonic character.

His belief in the superiority of the Germans led Rosenberg to claim that their excellence entitled them to unique privileges. There were no absolute values, Rosenberg explained, valid for all races, because each race represented a culture which has its own distinctive kinds of honor, loyalty, freedom, justice, and right. Some races had none of these elements of true culture and others had only some of an inferior sort, according to Rosenberg, but the Nordics possessed virtues of better quality and in greater quantity than any other race whatsoever. This circumstance, he concluded, required that the Nordics, like Nietzsche's supermen, should not be bound nor judged by conventional standards of morality, and that they should enjoy a special standard and a unique kind of right. Right, Rosenberg said, is what serves German honor, but he left it to the individual German to determine what honor required.¹

Obviously Rosenberg's curious theories could not be buttressed by scientific proof. To have any currency at all, they had to be accepted on faith, as a myth or a religious creed. The Weimar Constitution had declared that supreme power emanated from the people. Rosenberg's idea was that in a Nazi state, supreme power, or sovereignty, should come from a belief in the race myth, that the sacrament of "blood and soil," the mystical relationship between race and fatherland, furnished the basis of the state's power, the national existence, and the national entity. Therefore, according to Rosenberg, the foremost aim of National Socialism was to create a new nobility of blood and soil.²

These theories not only involved acceptance of a new and mystical faith, but they demanded a complete break with traditional Christian and democratic ethics. Rosenberg accepted the consequence readily. He had little sympathy for the Bible because, he

¹ *Ibid.* See pp. 563-580.

² *Ibid.*, p. 596. See also Richard Walter Darré, *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden*, I. F. Lehmann, Munich and Berlin, 1939.

said, it was written by Jews (non-Aryans of the most despicable sort), and he had no use for Christian ethics because, he asserted, they were formulated by Jews and Levantines and were alien to the Nordic soul. Consequently, Rosenberg and his followers, with Hitler's tacit approval, rejected Christian values and agitated constantly for the substitution of a new, Nordic morality.

ANTI-CHRIST

The National Socialist program of 1920 promised "liberty for all religious denominations . . . in so far as they do not constitute a danger to the state and do not militate against the morality and moral sense of the German race." The program stated moreover that the party approved of "positive Christianity, but does not bind itself in the matter of creed to any particular confession. It combats Jewish materialist spirit. . . ."

This apparent affirmation of Christianity was quite misleading. Interpreted by Nazis themselves, the party's religious program had an obviously anti-Christian import. For instance, from the Nazi point of view, the Bible contained enough of the "Jewish materialist spirit" to make it dangerous for the Nordic mind. Furthermore, individual religious sects appeared to Nazis as a potential threat to the total authority of the state, and they did not permit these sects to maintain their independent organizations without "coordination" by the Nazi government. Finally, it became clear that the phrase "positive Christianity" actually represented the creed of a new "German church" in opposition to the "negative" religion of traditional Christian sects.

True Nazis were not interested in "coordinating" the Christian churches; they wanted to abolish them. Rosenberg stated quite frankly during the Nueremberg Party Congress of 1938:

It is my firm conviction that the Catholic Church and the confessional churches in their present form must disappear from the life of our people, and I believe I am entitled to say that this is also our Fuehrer's viewpoint.

"The Nordic race-soul," he had written earlier, "strives to establish a German folk church of its own. The creation of this myth is one of the greatest tasks to be carried out in our century."¹ This was

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 614, 615.

the word of the man entrusted with the supervision of *Kultur* in Germany.

Rosenberg's program for the reform of Christianity would have discarded Christian morality and substituted Nordic sagas and symbols for the Old Testament which, according to Rosenberg, comprised only "stories of cattle drovers and exploiters of prostitutes."¹ The personality of the Christ would have been analysed in a new light because, Rosenberg explained, it had been distorted by "Jewish fanatics like Matthew, or materialistic rabbis like Paul, or African jurists like Tertullian, or spineless mongrels like Augustine."² And the Christian faith as a whole which, according to the new Nazi exegesis, had once been aggressive, vigorous, and revolutionary but had long since become Jewish-Syrian in character, would have to be reinvigorated by the excision of such non-Nordic values as humility, mercy, pity, and charity.

It was these uniquely Christian virtues which aroused the most embittered opposition of the Nazis. Rosenberg explained that they only became part of the Christian tradition because Paul advocated them in the hope of winning support of the masses for a contemplated revolt. They were all right for orientals, Rosenberg admitted, but he felt that the spread of such Levantine values into Europe had wrecked the "religious genius of the Nordic spirit."³ And Reichbishop Mueller, the Nazi head of the German Protestant churches, stated bluntly that "Mercy is an un-German conception. The word 'mercy' is one of the numerous terms of the Bible with which we can have nothing to do."

All told, these Nazi ideas represented a radical perversion of the spiritual traditions of Christian civilization. Fanatical Nazis despised the crucifix as a symbol of death and supplanted it with the "sun-wheel" or swastika; and they replaced the sacraments with a curious "celebration of Nordic blood." Rosenberg even implied that the Fuehrer, Hitler, was the new Messiah of the Nordics.⁴

Among the neo-pagan Nazis who denounced the Holy Scriptures

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 614.

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³ See Lewis Spence, "The Neo-Pagan Movement in Germany," in *The Quarterly Review*, New York, July, 1940.

⁴ When he asserted, without mentioning Hitler by name, that the German church was to be "created by one man who longs as deeply for the purification of the New Testament as he has studied it scientifically."

as a Jewish threat to the Germanic spirit, there were three distinct groups. The "German Christians" were most moderate and advocated a purified New Testament, although they would have discarded the old. They admitted that Jesus grew up in an essentially Jewish environment, but they preferred to believe with Rosenberg, and H. S. Chamberlain before him, that Jesus was not necessarily of Jewish blood.

A second group, founded by General Eric Ludendorff and led, after his death, by his wife Mathilde, rejected anything faintly resembling Christianity. Ludendorff favored a return to the worship of Teutonic tribal deities: Odin, the god of virility, and Hertha, goddess of fertility, were his ideals. Professor Ernst Bergmann, who developed Ludendorff's creed in a book called *The Twenty-five Theses of the German Religion*, introduced the legendary Frau Holle, a famous fairy-tale character, as "German Mother-soul." He impiously identified Frau Holle with the Virgin Mary and frankly referred to Hitler as the new "Savior."¹

The Nordic Faith Movement, similarly neo-pagan, was more important than these other radical Nazi sects, however, and was more highly regarded among Nazis because of its stress upon race as an aspect of religion. The movement, founded by Professor Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, accepted neither Christian ethics nor Teutonic deities. It ascribed divinity to energy instead of persons and substituted a concept of Nordic struggle for the ideal of Christian peace. The result was a kind of political pantheism. There were twenty-seven articles in the creed of this new pagan faith as interpreted by Wilhelm Kusserow, and a quotation of the most significant ones seems worth while, since they were based upon the theories of Rosenberg and were evidently approved by him. The first eighteen articles comprised a new confession of faith, and the remaining nine described the ideological basis of a new Nordic state. Here are some of the more important theses:

I. We believe in the eternal struggle between the creative and the destructive powers on earth and the universe.

II. We believe in the eternal revelation in the Divine through the eternal laws of race, blood, and soil.

III. We believe in the unity of blood and soul in all beings.

¹ See below, p. 77.

THE ENEMIES OF DEMOCRACY

IV. We believe and acknowledge that the species of man are embodiments of forces which differ in value and duty.

V. We believe and confess that the struggle for the fashioning of this earth is part of our eternal struggle.

VII. We believe and confess that the meaning of our life is the fashioning of the divine powers of the Nordic Race which lie within us.

IX. We believe in the immortality of Nordic Man, in the inheritance of his kind and in the everlasting Nordic Soul as power of the divine on earth and in the universe.

X. The moral law inherent in us demands the struggle for the preservation, growth, and unification of the Nordic races on earth.

XVI. The moral law within us requires us to watch over the honor of our people as our own and to esteem the honor of those of equal birth.

XVII. The moral law within us requires preservation and increase of those of health stock and elimination and destruction of all that is unfit to live.

XIX. The states and peoples of Nordic blood, while fully preserving their historic peculiarities and recognizing the diversity of Germanic languages, must stand by each other's side against all other races for defensive and offensive purposes.

XX. Wars between people of Nordic race are in conflict with the Nordic mission.

XXI. All that is of common importance must be secured as against other races.

XXVII. Economic life in the Nordic state shall serve Man; labor shall serve the folk comrades (*Volksgenossen*). Its fruits are due to them according to the amount and the quality of the results achieved. The accumulation of large fortunes or large landed property is contrary to the rights of freedom of Nordic Man.²

The Nazis denied officially that they sponsored neo-paganism and pointed to their program of "positive Christianity." But such denials were mainly for foreign consumption. The Nazi ideology, logically developed, led inevitably to the repudiation of churches which did not accept the Nazi gospel, for the totalitarian state could not tolerate any cultural organization even remotely opposed to its principles.

THE LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE

In Nazi circles, the expression "totalitarian" was seldom used. Instead, Germany was known as a *Fuehrerstaat*, or "leader state." Ra-

² The translation used appeared in issue No. 31 of the bulletins of the *Friends of Europe*, London. See also Carl Carmer, ed., *The War Against God*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1943, pp. 6-10.

cialists called it a *Voelkischer Staat*, or "folk state." So perhaps a more accurate expression would be *Voelkischer Fuehrerstaat*, or folkish leader state.²

The leader of the state was both political head of the government and also the highest officer in the single political party. As a consequence, the party was the true source of authority in the state. But since the party, according to Nazi theory, was the clearest expression of the will of the racial comrades, the people were thus (in theory) represented after all. The German Reich was, accordingly, a tripartite political body, consisting of government, party, and leader. The Nazis called this concentration of power "unitarianism."²

The one-party system eliminated opposition and debate and made possible the absolute power of the leader. Nazi "cells" were distributed throughout the country. They guarded the party's authority jealously and encouraged faith in the metaphysical necessity of obedience. The Nazis, and Hitler himself, did not call this "dictatorship"; they called it "genuine leadership."

The first step toward the legal establishment of a leader state was the Enabling Act of March 24, 1933, passed by an overwhelming majority of the new Reichstag. This enactment was precipitated by the alleged communist arson which destroyed the Reichstag building. That incident and the trial which followed served to alienate many Germans from the liberal and radical cause, although it is now fairly well established that the fire was planned by high Nazi leaders. The Enabling Act, called a "preliminary constitution of the Reich,"³ curtailed the powers of the president of the Reich and gave the Hitler government authority to disregard the Weimar Constitution and rule by decree. Passage of the act, however, was due to terror. Most of the democratic and socialist members of the Reichstag had been arrested; those who remained did not dare to oppose the Hitler cabinet.⁴

² F. Morstein-Marx, *Government in the Third Reich*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1938, p. 64.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 67, where the author points out that Carl Schmitt first elaborated this principle in his book *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, Hamburg, 1933.

⁴ Wilhelm Frick, Nazi Minister of the Interior, *Der Neubau des Deutschen Reiches*, Berlin, 1934, p. 7. Cited in Franz Neumann, *Behemoth*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1942, p. 51.

⁴ The Enabling Act had a precedent in the Weimar Republic. Under the chancellorship of Dr. Heinrich Brüning, Germany was virtually ruled by decree. Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution expressly provided for such a possibility

After the Enabling Act had become law, the next step in building the leader state was the passage of the Reconstruction Act in January, 1934. Passed without debate, it granted the government sweeping power to promulgate new legislation. Most subsequent laws were executive decrees issued by authority granted in these two acts which had legalized the concentration of power necessary to the Fuehrerstaat. Henceforth Hitler could proclaim what decrees he wished and delegate his enormous powers to executive branches of the government. Only one check remained—the required approval of the president of the Republic.

The final step in concentrating political power was the fusion of the office of chancellor with that of the president. When Hindenburg died in 1934, Hitler assumed the combined role of president and chancellor. Armed now with the power conferred upon him by the Enabling Act and the Reconstruction Act, and backed by the “unitarian” organization of his party, the Fuehrer was more absolute than the Prussian kings had ever been. Henceforth, the ultimate decisions respecting the fate of the nation were left to one man—the Fuehrer.

After he had liquidated the last vestiges of constitutional democracy, Hitler carried the theories of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Spengler to their logical conclusion. These men had claimed that vital decisions had always been made by great leaders and that this was not only destiny, but the most desirable form of government. The Nazis broadened this idea by regarding Hitler as the expression or embodiment of the genius of the German people and by assuming that a mysterious bond linked the leader and the folk.

Such dogma, whether upheld by historical or metaphysical arguments, could be maintained only upon the assumption of human inequality and the outstanding superiority of the leader, although the precise qualifications of the leader and the nature of his alleged superiority might be subject to debate. Hitler himself implied that leadership demanded will power and energy more than intellectual genius; he regarded a combination of ability, determination, and perseverance as the indispensable requirements.¹ Walter Darré, former Minister of Agriculture, felt that character surpassed education and knowledge in importance. And Robert Ley, vociferous

¹ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Reynal and Hitchcock, Inc., New York, 1941, p. 485.

Minister of Labor, added that a good instinct was one of the most essential qualities of a Fuehrer who, he said, was "born and not made." Some of the leader's more devoted admirers felt that a leader like Hitler must have some special connection with the Almighty. Dr. Ley wrote in one of his National Socialist Training Letters, "We believe in this world in Adolf Hitler alone. . . . We believe that the Lord God has sent us Adolf Hitler that Germany should be established for all eternity." And Hermann Goering claimed a kind of divine infallibility for the leader. "Just as the Roman Catholics consider the Pope infallible in all matters concerning religion and morals," he wrote, "so do we National Socialists believe with the same inner conviction that for us, in all political and other matters concerning the national and social interest of the people, the Leader is infallible."¹

GEOPOLITICS

There remain to be described two other important aspects of National Socialist thought—geopolitics, and National Socialist economics.

Geopolitics is not the "static" science of political geography which defines relations between nations in terms of geography, assumes stable state boundaries, and describes conditions as they are, speculating little about what might be. On the contrary, geopolitics is a "dynamic" exploration of the soil and space as the bases of political power not just in the past, but especially in the future. Whereas political geography is definitely a child of geography, "geopolitics belongs to the realm of political science."² Specifically, German geopolitics examines the problem of *Lebensraum* (living space) and the establishment of German domination over the Euro-Asiatic land masses—to the consequent disadvantage of littoral countries.

In those areas today where geopolitical considerations do not dictate policy, international relations are based upon the fiction that all states are equal to one another and that each possesses sovereign powers. This fiction was first suggested by Hugo Grotius in the seventeenth century as a means of preserving peace. Al-

¹ Robert Ley, *Germany Reborn*, E. Mathews & Marrot, London, 1934, p. 79.

² Hans W. Weigert, *Generals and Geographers*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1942, pp. 12-13.

though anyone could see that vast inequalities in territory, resources, economic development, and cultural achievement did exist and, in reality, destroyed the fiction of sovereign equality, the fiction was adopted as practically useful and desirable. Actually, a compromise between the fiction of equality and the reality of inequality was the best that could be realized. In time of stress, even the compromise broke down, and issues were decided by power.

After the First World War, in an effort to bolster the ideal of sovereign equality, a system based upon "collective security" was proposed. Although intended as a practical program to preserve peace, collective security involved more far-sightedness and higher ethical standards than many states actually possessed. While many peoples clung to this new fiction, revolutionary philosophies developing in Italy, Germany, and Japan undermined it before their very eyes. The Nazis openly discussed the aggressive implications of their geopolitics, but Germany's democratic neighbors minded their own business and did not take the German geopoliticians too seriously.

The "invention" of geopolitics is sometimes attributed to Major General Professor Karl Haushofer of Munich, but this is wrong. Geopolitical thought developed during the nineteenth century in Anglo-Saxon countries as well as in Germany. Haushofer was but an eclectic who neither coined the term "geopolitics" nor created the science it describes. He himself never pretended to be its inventor and acknowledged his indebtedness to others. But he succeeded in making geopolitics a German ideology, and he is said to have inspired Hitler with his ideas to the extent that they became the driving power of the Nazi quest for world domination.

One of the first Germans to conceive of a German-dominated Central Europe was the economist Frederick List (1789-1846). But while he thought in predominantly economic terms, desirous of creating a Germanic customs union, the German geographer Frederick Ratzel (1844-1904) expanded political geography until some of his unusual conclusions took on a definitely geopolitical character.

Ratzel considered a nation as a biological organism whose only alternative to growth and expansion was stagnation and death. Expansion appeared to him, therefore, to be natural for every healthy

nation and even inevitable. It would involve a life and death struggle for survival which, Ratzel observed, would be ruthless and uncompromising without consideration of fairness or honesty. Only the toughest nation would win its "place in the sun."

German imperialists seized upon such a doctrine. Many of them absorbed Ratzel's teachings and began the campaign for *Lebensraum* (later for *Grossraum*, or greater space) which, they thought, could alone save the nation from decline. If space was a vital necessity for the growing German nation, the type and quantity of space to be striven for became the subject matter for geopolitical research. Was there, on this shrinking planet, sufficient space for several great powers? Could any of the smaller powers survive?

A British geographer, Sir Halford Mackinder, presented the world with an analysis of this problem in 1904 when he spoke to the Royal Geographical Society on the "Geographical Pivot of History."¹ He observed that in history, land-locked peoples had repeatedly attacked littoral peoples in Europe and Asia alike, and that Europe and Asia should be looked upon as a single geopolitical unit. The center of this Euro-Asiatic land mass he called the "Heartland." Germany and Russia, he said, were the two great powers competing for the Heartland. The possession of this area was, he felt, crucial for the expansion of power, and the position of littoral powers such as Britain, France, and Italy would be in danger if Germany and Russia were to become allied as the "pivot peoples of the Heartland," or, as we may add, if one of the countries should conquer the other and rule the Heartland alone.

Sir Halford broadened his concept fifteen years later, after the conclusion of the First World War, when he saw how unsatisfactory the peace terms were. He wrote a book which was then only a moderate success in Britain and an unqualified failure in America.² Anticipating a globe shrunk by improvements in communication, he foresaw a struggle for the geographical pivot areas. He enlarged his Euro-Asiatic "world island" by adding Africa to the pivot area. He anticipated the political unification of these enormous land masses and boldly asserted that they would be dominated by those who controlled the Heartland, for, "who rules East

¹ *The Geographic Journal*, London, April, 1904, Vol. XXIII, No. 4.

² Sir Halford Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1919, reprinted 1942.

Europe commands the Heartland, who rules the Heartland commands the world island, who rules the world island commands the world."¹

One of those who grasped the full implication of Mackinder's views was Karl Haushofer. He was that rare military man in Germany who was both an army officer and a scholar. He had studied several years in the Far East, and he was thoroughly acquainted with Japan and the Pacific area. He had learned much from the Swedish geographer Rudolf Kjellen (1864-1922) and he had appropriated from him his geopolitical terminology, including the word "geopolitics." Haushofer had a deep respect for Mackinder and elaborated his ideas in the Institute for Geopolitics at the University of Munich.

Interpreted by Haushofer, Mackinder's pivot theory of the Heartland provided a scientific basis for the old German *Drang nach dem Osten*, the urge toward the East. It corroborated arguments favoring Germany's "natural" right to expand. It supported the Nazis who, in their program of 1920, had demanded "land and territories (colonies) for the nourishment of our people and for settling our surplus population." Haushofer's geopolitics even pointed out the path for Germany's future policy of alliance. In the mid-nineteen twenties he published a book explaining why Germany should align herself with Japan against Britain, and why the United States would become involved in war with Japan, trying to save the empires of Britain, France, and Holland.² It was the first time that a larger public was confronted with the phenomenon of German geopolitical thought.

Haushofer himself never defined geopolitics precisely. He preferred statements in broad outlines, couched in an involved and flowery style, or he dealt concretely with specific problems illustrating his geopolitical philosophy. From these two sources and a variety of definitions proposed by his disciples,³ the broad outlines of Haushofer's geopolitics may be stated as follows:

Living space is essential for Germany and means the control of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

² Karl Haushofer, *Geopolitik des Pazifischen Ozeans*, K. Vorwinkler, Heidelberg, 1938.

³ See Derwent Whittlesey, *German Strategy of World Conquest*, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1942, pp. 81-82.

an area large enough to make the Reich self-sufficient and to maintain its large armed forces. This *Grossraum* is divided into "active" and "passive" areas. The "passive" area is the basic homeland, the *Hinterland*, where large reservoirs of manpower and essential raw materials may be stored and where the economy should be relatively independent of imports. The "active" areas are those strategic areas where the Reich's *Lebensraum* would be defended against contestants. Geopolitics is thus intimately related to military strategy, for only armed force can provide and defend living space.

The Germans regarded *Lebensraum* as indispensable to the Reich for two main reasons. One was the actual pressure resulting from a dense population. However, the Nazis did nothing to relieve this pressure either by easing their war economy, reapportioning their land holding, or negotiating with other powers for a settlement of their grievances. On the contrary, they insisted on more children. They required by law that the first-born son of a peasant inherit his father's farm entire and manage it. Younger sons were required to work for the older brother or leave the farm to join the army of dissatisfied seeking new soil. These policies, in addition to an armaments program offering guns instead of butter left no solution to Germany's population problem but expansion.

The other reason for German expansion was ideological. When Hitler came to power, geopolitics was "coordinated" with Nazi racialism and the doctrine of the soil combined with the racial myth. Although Haushofer never touched upon the racial myth, Nazis approached space as a racial as well as a military problem. Smaller states in the way of the "master race's" expansion they deemed unworthy of a national existence, and they boldly imagined the "liberation" and "coordination" of German-influenced culture areas which, they claimed, reached deep into Russia. Geopolitics and the racial myth thus united brought forth the ideology of "blood and soil," and geopolitics became a part of the whole Nazi *Weltanschauung*.

Haushofer and his followers believed that an entente between Germany and Russia was indispensable for the realization of Germany's geopolitical ambitions. The treaty concluded between the two countries in 1939 was a great victory for Haushofer; the inva-

sion of Russia was his worst defeat.¹ However, the jargon of geopolitics was definitely a part of the Nazi language, and Haushofer's ideas became an essential part of the Nazi philosophy. Geopolitical studies furnished information for various ministries, for the guidance of domestic policy and the determination of policies abroad, for purposes of education, and propaganda. Geopolitics produced global thinking in Germany at a time when isolationism flourished throughout the democratic world.²

Geopolitical activity in Germany concerned itself mainly with compiling facts about various regions of the globe. But in order to know how and why to find facts, students attended various institutes of geopolitics, the main one founded by Haushofer being associated with the University of Munich. Other geopolitical training and research centers included the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft fuer Geopolitik* (Work Group for Geopolitics) which was an educational bureau, and the *Reichsstelle fuer Raumordnung* (Reich Bureau for Space Organization) which popularized the concept of *Lebensraum* and may also have been active in redistributing populations.

These and other institutes collected scientific data in the fields of geography, climate, social psychology, politics, economics, and sociology for every area and country on the earth. Material suitable for military intelligence was also collected. A multitude of informants abroad paid by the state, furnished the institutes with the most complete data possible on the nature and potentialities of their areas.

Geopolitical instruction was also introduced into the public schools in many ways, and students were indoctrinated with cultural, racial, military, and economic reasons for Germany's expansion. Germany, the students were taught, was much greater than its actual territory and extended wherever Germans, German descendants, or German cultural influences were found. An example of this geopolitical indoctrination was an official school reader, *Vom*

¹ Weigert, *op. cit.*, pp. 155ff.

² An article on Haushofer's geopolitics, "Hitler's World Revolution," published in the *New Statesman and Nation* in London, August 26, 1939, on the eve of the Second World War aroused a mild sensation because of its novelty. See Robert Strausz-Hupé, *Geopolitics, The Struggle for Space and Power*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1942, pp. 77-78.

Deutschen Volk und seinem Lebensraum (The German People and their Living Space).¹ In this book German school children found the following description of their Reich:

By German territory we mean every region of Central Europe which is inhabited by Germans in more or less permanent settlements and which have received its cultural imprint from the German people. This territory includes the heart of Europe.²

This *Nazi Primer*, as the book is known in this country, asserts that the forefathers of the Germans, the Norsemen, expanded in ancient times to find new living space and, mixing with foreign peoples, brought them their own culture. "The culture of Europe and particularly of antiquity, as well as all that is today based thereon, does not come therefore out of the East. Its origin lies in the North, to a considerable extent on German soil."³ After describing further German migrations, the book concludes that "the Germans flooded Europe from the Urals to Gibraltar, from the North Cape to Constantinople," and that "Europe, as a cultural and spiritual unity, is therefore the work of Germans."⁴

The *Primer* then lists in considerable detail the "German culture isles" within foreign territory, in Czechoslovakia, Romania, the Baltic countries, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Russia. It admonishes young Germans to regard themselves as descendants of the ancient Teutons who forced their culture upon a degenerate Europe, and it implies that the greater spaces, belonging to the nations listed, are areas of German cultural influence and should, therefore, be eventually incorporated into the Reich.

The German desire for expansion pervaded the ideology of geopolitics and the result was a vicious political *perpetuum mobile*. Because the *Hinterland* could never be quite large enough for a suitable *Lebensraum* nor the "active" areas quite broad enough to defend it, one expansion would necessarily beget another, and the German "race" would invade even those lands which had nothing in common with German culture. The Nazis would have thought this proper too, because, according to them, the superiority of

¹ Translated by Harwood L. Childs and published as *The Nazi Primer*, Harper & Brothers, Inc., New York, 1938.

² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

the Nordics justified the subjection of lesser races. And there would be no limit to this expansion because, in Haushofer's own words, "the earth has long since become a single unit of power. No stone falls from the structure of a nation or a state without causing waves and repercussions around the earth. . . ." ¹ Consequently, for the German geopoliticians, "the whole earth is not too big for the expanding of the German 'race'—in short *Blut und Boden*." ²

NAZI ECONOMICS

The principles of Nazi economy are much misunderstood. To many people, Nazism appears to represent capitalism in its most extreme form, and Marxians, including Russian Communists, use the term "Fascist Capitalism" to designate the ultimate development of an economy based on profit. Their conclusions are wrong, but their misunderstanding is easily explained.

During the Weimar Republic, the democratic forces in Germany had been unable to wrest political control from the landed Junkers, industrial barons, and great bankers who had virtually ruled Germany before the November revolution and continued to rule it despite the new constitution. The Nazis came into power with the help of big industry and the banks. Fritz Thyssen, whose frank confession of having helped Hitler did not excuse him, was one among many capitalists who lent their great power and influence to the Nazi cause. ³

Because Hitler attained office with the financial backing of these powerful groups, it was assumed that he was their tool. Italian Fascism, from which the Nazis had borrowed some ideas, had not touched Italy's big capital and large estates, and it was surmised that the German Nazis would exercise equal restraint. For some time after Hitler became chancellor these assumptions appeared to be correct, but they became inadmissible since.

The Nazis outwitted the capitalists who had thought that the socialist ideas of the party's program served only to attract the masses and would not be carried out in practice. In the pursuit of their political aims, the Nazis did not hesitate before the inner

¹ *Weltpolitik von Heute*, Verlag Zeitgeschichte, Berlin, 1934, pp. 151-152.

² Whittlesey, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

³ See Fritz Thyssen, *I Paid Hitler*, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1941.

sanctum of German big capital. They demanded in their 1920 program that common welfare precede individual interests (Art. 10 and 24) and that unearned incomes be abolished (Art. 11). Furthermore, the program called for the nationalization of trusts (Art. 13), the introduction of profit sharing in the large industries (Art. 14), and a land reform to eliminate speculation and interest on mortgages (Art. 17). Hitler himself emphasized that the doctrine of "common interest before self-interest" was the spirit of the program and that the "abolition of the thralldom of interest" was the core of National Socialism.

Gottfried Feder, from whose economic conceptions Hitler derived his knowledge of national economics, stated the economic philosophy of Nazism as follows:¹

The duty of the state is to provide the necessaries of life and not to secure the highest possible rate of interest for capital. National Socialism recognizes private property on principle and gives it the protection of the state. The National welfare, however, demands that a limit shall be set to the amassing of wealth in the hands of individuals. . . .

All existing businesses which until now have been in the form of companies shall be nationalized. Usury and profiteering and personal enrichment at the expense of and to the injury of the nation shall be punished with death. . . .

Finance shall exist for the benefit of the state; the financial magnates shall not form a state within a state. Hence our aim is to abolish the thralldom of interest.

When Hitler became chancellor, he could not realize his party's economic program immediately. German capitalism was still too strong, and the German economy too weak to survive a sudden drastic reform. So the Nazis created a new General Economic Council (*Generalrat der Wirtschaft*) in September, 1933, and appointed the most powerful men of big industry and banking to be members of the Council. This seemed a renunciation of their program, but in reality the Nazis did not give up their basic anti-capitalistic philosophy. As the party became stronger and gained more control over Germany's economic and political life, the less Hitler needed the help of the capitalists. Goering's Four Year Plan and the transition to a war economy introduced strict planning of

¹ Gottfried Feder, *Hitler's Official Programme*, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1934, 1938, pp. 65-66.

production, and the power inherent in capital gradually shifted from private hands into the control of the Nazi state. Most of the once mighty *condottieres* of industry and commerce were forced to surrender their authority or retire. The outbreak of war in 1939, which most of them opposed, drove the remaining pillars of a once powerful capitalism out of power or even into concentration camps. The few who stayed on submitted to absolute "coordination." Wythe Williams, who perceived the full surrender of the capitalists better than most observers, wrote in 1941:

There is no such thing as straight capitalism in Germany. Bankers, factory owners, and directors of trusts still exist, and their position is high and exalted, but their every step is rigidly supervised and regimented by the State. They draw their dividend and other forms of profits, but in reality these are like salaries from the State more than anything else. . . .

A private right? There is no such thing in the Nazi Reich, even if the biggest banker in the land is involved. A vested interest? It may be an interest but it is no longer vested, for the State can take it away on a moment's notice. . . .

The outward forms of old-fashioned capitalism are preserved. . . . But actually, in all cases, the individual or the firm is told by the government just how much of his capital or earnings he may keep and how much he must transfer to the government. . . .¹

With this forthright analysis of the Germany economy, however, there was not universal agreement, and some writers insisted that, fundamentally, capitalism existed in Germany. Franz L. Neumann believed it had not undergone any substantial change since the time of the Weimar regime and that the Nazis did not have any consistent economic policy but proceeded entirely pragmatically, directed "by the need of the highest possible efficiency and productivity required for the conducting of the war."² E. B. Ashton, on the other hand, pointed out that the "economic structure of the Fascist community is quite as logical as all its other aspects,"³ and he stressed the difficulties of private capitalism under the total

¹ Wythe Williams, *The Riddle of the Reich*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1941, pp. 100-101.

² Franz L. Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1942, pp. 228ff

³ E. B. Ashton, *The Fascist: His State and his Mind*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1937, p. 91

control of a state which supervised every phase of the economic structure.

As a matter of fact, there is no absolutely noncapitalistic state in the world, even in Russia, and the labels "capitalist" or "non-capitalist" depend upon one's definition. We assume that, in addition to the recognition of private property and the right to profits there are two further conditions essential to capitalism: first, that capital be in the hands of private individuals to invest and control largely as they themselves decide without undue interference from the state; and second, that the free possession of capital carry with it substantial economic power and political influence.

In Nazi Germany, however, political power was denied to the private capitalist. He might have political influence, but it depended upon his party affiliation rather than upon his possession of capital. In Germany also the owner of wealth could not dispose of his capital as he saw fit, but had to comply with orders from the government. In Germany, moreover, the requirements of the total state and not the profit motive determined the nature of the economy. Under these circumstances, it is hard to see how National Socialist Germany could have been called a "capitalist" state.

Douglas Miller revealed how, in Germany, only the war prevented the organization of great government trusts similar to those in Soviet Russia.¹ Three superindustrial groups were to have been set up: automotive, building, and machinery. Standard techniques and administrative uniformity were to have been introduced. The *fuehrers* of the enterprises had already been chosen. This abortive plan indicated how the Nazis intended to nationalize big trusts, and it was probably a development of the policy begun with the Compulsory Cartel Act of July, 1933, which had enabled the Minister of Commerce to "organize" and establish centralized control over the independent entrepreneurs.

For reasons of political expediency the Nazis had to postpone the fulfillment of their complete economic program; chain stores were not liquidated, and interest was not abolished—much to the disappointment of the mass of lower middle-class people who

¹ Douglas Miller, *You Can't Do Business with Hitler*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1941, p. 21.

backed Hitler's election. But the Nazis did not renounce their basic economic principles, and their leaders, including Hitler himself, left no doubt of their opposition to economic individualism and their contempt of traditional capitalism.

The idea prevailed in some circles that the Nazi success in retaining the stability of the mark was nothing short of miraculous. Yet the explanation was simple enough. The first step, taken in the summer of 1933 upon the advice of the former democrat, Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, was to declare a moratorium on interest and amortization payments on all foreign obligations. Under the new ruling, German debtors did not need to buy foreign currency. They paid the Gold Discount Bank in Reichsmarks whose value was artificially inflated within the Reich. The German government got the money, and foreign creditors collected very little. The Germans preferred this partial repudiation to inflation, which would have ended National Socialism quickly enough, and the unilateral action involved was typical of nearly all decisions of the Nazi government concerning international relations.

In addition to defaulting upon foreign obligations, the Nazi government acquired enormous booty from Jews and other minority groups, not excluding Roman Catholics. Moreover, after each bloodless conquest, beginning with the Austrian *Anschluss* in 1938, the store of booty grew. And after the Nazis conquered almost all of Europe, loot from the subjugated nations was systematically absorbed into the German economy.

Although these tremendous spoils swelled the accounts of the German treasury, the Nazi economy remained essentially unproductive, since it concentrated almost entirely upon armament. The greater the armament program became, the more money went into unproductive channels and was, in consequence, lost for productive reinvestment. The Nazi government was thus forced to exploit other countries and to continue to do so.

Shortly after the *Machtübernahme* (seizure of power) in January, 1933, the Nazi government assumed almost total economic control in order to set up their war economy. Imports of nonessentials were virtually halted after 1934; and imports were permitted only for armament purposes after 1935. In spite of foreign boycott movements, German exports fell only slightly because

the Nazi government subsidized them heavily and was not concerned with the effects of reckless dumping practices abroad.

These practices, however, did not increase the value of the mark abroad. The mark became an increasingly disadvantageous medium of exchange, and Germany found it more and more difficult to pay for imports. The Nazis surmounted this obstacle and traded without cash by means of the barter system which Schacht introduced in 1934. Instead of observing the traditional practice in international trade, Schacht concluded individual treaties or contracts with each state. Under the supervision of appropriate national clearing centers, exporters in each country received payment in their own currency while the clearing banks transformed the international payments involved into a mere bookkeeping procedure and carried the balance on their books from one year to the next. Such a procedure, however, was bound to run into difficulties because "the factors which have originally made for an unbalanced trade persist and will lead to greater one-sided balances in subsequent years."¹ In negotiations with Germany, there was always the danger that she would not deliver goods in payment for material received. For instance, South Africa sold Germany the output of three years' wool but received very little of the promised locomotives and machinery in return because their export was banned by military authorities.²

The German economy was not miraculous; it was simply a crisis, or war, economy. It involved continuous economic warfare with other powers and a more or less permanent state of war within the Reich, for the geopolitical aims of the Nazis did not allow for real peace until the ultimate goal—the domination of the world island—was reached. It was an economy of complete and total restriction where government commandeering was a fundamental principle, where taxes were so heavy that even modest earnings were illusory, where prices were dictated and consumers' goods were rationed. The armed forces were given prior claim on almost all articles of modern civilization. Not only exports and imports, but also foreign and domestic investments were strictly controlled.³

¹ Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 77.

³ See Antonin Basch, *The New Economic Warfare*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1941, Chaps. 2 and 3

Owners of industrial or commercial enterprises were forced to act as the government's agents, but they had to bear all responsibility and received no extra pay. Private capital existed—on paper; but in practice it was being wiped out or transferred to party representatives in accordance with the Nazi principle that the total state could not tolerate any power which the state could not control.

It is true that some Nazi leaders, notably Goering and Ley, accumulated large fortunes and controlled important enterprises. But they were not capitalists in the traditional sense because their influence upon these industries was a consequence of their political position and not of their ownership. In the National Socialist state economy did not determine policy, but policy determined the economy. The economy was managed to suit the political situation. The possession of capital wealth was not important in itself because the state existed not to protect capital but to exploit it in the interest of the nation. This was Hitler's doctrine.

In order to impose their program upon the once powerful German private industry, the Nazis took over the Association of German Industry, an organization somewhat similar to the National Association of Manufacturers in America. They put it on a war footing long before the actual outbreak of war so as to meet the military needs of Germany's expanding army. Six divisions were set up: industry (subdivided into twenty-nine economic groups), trade, banking, insurance, power, and handicrafts. Moreover, a Reich Chamber of Economy, a sort of holding organization for the Central Association of Chambers of Industry and Economy, was set up parallel to the Association of German Industry, and branches were opened throughout the Reich. All manufacturers and most businessmen were compelled to join, and their political reliability was carefully investigated.

Agriculture was as thoroughly organized as industry and commerce. The Food Minister, who was also the "Reich Peasant Leader," established the *Reichsnaehrstand* (Reich Food Estate) in September, 1933, to control and coordinate farming activity. Membership was compulsory for farmers, and in 1939 the organization was incorporated into the Reich Food Ministry. The regimentation resulting from this organization's activity almost entirely removed individual planning and free enterprise from the field

of agriculture. E. B. Ashton remarks: "Fascism pursued a policy as out of step with capitalist notions as the Russian system of collective farming. What the *Reichsnaehrstand* . . . did to landowners cannot be called capitalism even by the most doctrinaire Communist. Farming was brought under a system of regimentation—or, more precisely, conscription—to a degree known heretofore only in the Soviet Union."¹

In all these organizations to coordinate economy, Nazi party members saw, heard, and directed everything. The Gestapo had at least 120,000 agents, and many of these men were members of all central or branch organizations of industry, commerce, and agriculture. Conduct incompatible with the prescribed laws or ideology of Hitlerism was noted, and the offender who dared to differ with official views suffered bitterly.

Thus the entire Nazi economic system was compounded of national planning, coordination, regimentation, coercion, outright thievery, and espionage. It was unconventional, to say the least, and cannot be judged in terms of classical economy. It certainly was not capitalistic in the traditional sense, as the former magnates of industry, commerce, and agriculture found to their sorrow.

¹ Ashton, *op cit.*, p. 104