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## PAN-GERMANISM AND THE IDEA OF COMMUNITY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF GERMAN DOMINATION BEFORE 1939

The text quoted below is an excerpt from my book on the criticism of Germany's nascent Nazism, a criticism carried out by Polish humanists before 1939, i.e. before the aggression (armed attack) on Poland on September 1, 1939. It concerns with the idea of Pan-Germanism consisting of the unauthorized, unwarranted aspirations of Germans for domination in Europe and the world. Domination for economic and cultural exploitation; domination that is proof of arrogance towards neighboring nations.<sup>2</sup>

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### 2.1.2. Pan-Germanism

In the regular column of *Myśl Narodowa* a journalist recalls that while on holiday in Switzerland he was given an opportunity to meet one of the most prominent commentators and theoreticians of Hitlerism, “Mr A.R.” (Alfred Rosenberg?). When he asked A.R. why nationalists attacked Stresemann's policy, even though it benefited Germany, hastened the liberation of the Ruhr and the Rhineland, relieved the payment of reparations and led to the regaining of superpowerhood, A.R. replied that even if it did, Stresemann's successes were the perpetuation of the non-indigenous factors in German life that broke the country down. He added

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<sup>2</sup> The text quoted below is an excerpt from my book: Janina Kostkiewicz, *Polski nurt krytyki nazizmu przed rokiem 1939. Aspekty ideologiczne i pedagogiczne* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Arcana, 2020), 90–106.

that Stresemann's policy and diplomacy, even though bringing peace to Europe, 'demoralised' the German people by weakening their energy and self-confidence, and that the spiritual power of the nation was the most important issue.<sup>3</sup>

The response given by A.R., a German theoretician of Nazism, contained unambiguously Pan-germanic aspirations. In contrast, the author of this account, a Polish journalist, concluded that Hitler's rise to power would mean that "German society no longer values the influence and possibilities of international organisations and Jewry" and that it would move towards maximising its development "not through the helpfulness of the League of Nations, but by its own efforts."<sup>4</sup> According to the Polish nationalists, Pan-Europeanism, with its totally dominant Pan-Germanism, was judged to be a project dangerous to the world as early as in 1932.<sup>5</sup>

The interpretation of the state of the German spirit recorded in the pages of *Mysł Narodowa* is consistent with the comments found in *Przegląd Powszechny*, in which a Polish critic diagnosed the state of German thinking by saying that the revival of Germanism in Europe meant that Germany was obliged to take the lead. In confirmation, he cited words from Albert von Holleben's book, *Kleineuropa* (1929): "We Germans have a great obligation to meet, namely, to establish a world state. [...] we have an obligation to found (at least) a European state."<sup>6</sup>

This state of the German mind hardly came from nowhere; it had been present in the sphere of education for years, supported by the military, and expressed in many fields of art through references to Old Germanic deities (e.g., in Wagner's music) and customs. Pan-Germanism was spread by youth movements that developed during what is now called the period of "German reform pedagogy," from 1890 to 1933.<sup>7</sup> In fact, Pan-Germanic educational practices opened the way for National Socialism to appear in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in many youth movements and organisations seeking the "roots of Germanness" in legends, fairy tales and poetry. An example is the youth movement called the "Wandervogel," which developed in Germany between 1901 and 1914 as a manifestation of revolt against the consequences of losing the war. It spread the slogan of the "free community" – concerning fraternity, solidarity and action – and the idea of creating a national culture, oscillating between being elated with individual personality and communitarianism. At the school level, these concepts were implemented by the "free school community" founded in 1910 in Wickersdorf by Gustav Wyneken. And although

<sup>3</sup> Jan Rembieliński, "Na widowni". *Mysł Narodowa* 10 (1932): 122.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Polish criticism of Nazism points to the "pan-movements" – four decades later it would be also pointed out by Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: A Harvest Book, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1976).

<sup>6</sup> Karol L. Koninski, "Logika swastyki". *Przegląd Powszechny* 197 (1933): 323. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations have been translated for the purposes of this paper by Marta Robson.

<sup>7</sup> See Mirosław S. Szymański, *Niemiecka pedagogika reformy 1890–1933* (Warszawa: WSiP, 1992).

the school defined in this way was to have equal rights for teachers and pupils, freedom of speech and student self-government, the movement collapsed. However, the idea of community persisted, taking more and more concrete forms after the First World War. Similar values were conveyed by the academic youth movement in Germany, which developed under the names Hochland and Quickborn. From this movement, the idea of community as a substructure of the national spirit began once again to permeate both theory and school practice.<sup>8</sup>

Bearing in mind Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* as the philosophical founding moment of Pan-Germanism, it is worth pointing to another important source. Polish intellectuals understood the links between the idea of Pan-Germanism and community, and aspirations to implement them educationally to expand the idea of the greatness of the German spirit. Konstanty Michalski, referring to Herman Schwarz's work *Gott im Volkstum* (Langensalza 1928), parodied the state of the German spirit inspired by Pan-Germanism as follows:

On the German side, the nobility inherited through blood must be guarded, the treasures enshrined in noble blood must be extracted with a creative will, for only on this path will the birth of the German god take place. There is no God above history, but God creates himself in the history of a nation.<sup>9</sup>

In Poland, it was claimed that maintaining the idea of Pan-Germanism in the consciousness or state of mind of the Germans of the interwar period could not succeed without education adequate to the idea. Poles observed educational projects implemented in Germany with concern. As early as 1934, Michalski predicted the totalitarian consequences of promoting National Socialism as bearing the living idea of Pan-Germanism. He proposed that without an educational ideology promoting it, Pan-Germanism had little chance. He also pointed out that Max Vanselow created his theory of education precisely to meet such needs.<sup>10</sup> According to it

The German child must be brought into spiritual contact with its people so that in togetherness, it participates in the birth of God. The central idea of education must be the German myth, which makes one listen to the voice of God coming from the depths of the nation, which makes one listen to them to perceive in them the tasks for the historic moment.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Andrzej Niesiołowski, *Zarys pedagogiki ogólnej. Rękopisy z oflagu*, ed. Janina Kostkiewicz (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2017), 202–203.

<sup>9</sup> Konstanty Michalski, "Fermenty religijne w Trzeciej Rzeszy". *Przegląd Powszechny* 201 (1934): 355.

<sup>10</sup> Max Vanselow, *Metaphysik der Erziehung* (Berlin: Junker und Dünhaupt, 1930), 134, after Michalski, "Fermenty", 325–350.

<sup>11</sup> Michalski, "Fermenty", 355. Totalitarianism appearing in the form of Nazism in the Polish current of its criticism is grasped with the help of these categories: ideology (in the case of A. Niesiołowski) and myth (consistently in the case of K. Michalski, who created his own conception).

Pan-Germanism meant that Germany was 'great' in its power, referring to international prestige, spheres of influence, and economic and cultural gains. Michalski, looking at the ideas that created Nazism, reached further back to Schwarz's *National-sozialistische Weltanschauung* (Berlin 1935). Here he finds confirmation for the phenomenon he had diagnosed. For education to make the myths that comprised National Socialism a reality, they must be underlined by unity and uniformity, a kind of collective consciousness. Only then can Germany become great.

For a man to carry his head high with conviction, for the idea of Pan-Germanism to live in each individual German, each one needed the conviction of the nobility of his soul. The idea, proclaimed as part of the German National Socialist thinking, targeted education. Michalski criticised Rosenberg as follows:

Speaking of the nobility of the Germanic soul, he intoxicates himself and others with wine not of his own making but taken from Catholic cellars. This is not the place to point out the exact origins of the idea of 'nobility of the soul' or to prove that one knows it very well from the Christian heraldry, that this 'nobility' is called 'the abyss of the soul', *abditum mentis*, in St. Augustine, the peak of the soul, *apex animae*, in St. Bonaventure, *nobilita* in Dante and the troubadours and medieval chivalry, a sparkle, *scintilla* also in St. Thomas, and finally the same nobility is *Seelenfunklein* in Eckhart. All these come from the same Christian coat of arms. Yet the same thing was done with the jewel of 'nobility', taken from Christian thought, as with other jewels; it was detached from God and placed in His place, forgetting that it took its radiance from Him. Having secularised religion, an open return to Germanic paganism takes place in the revolutionary camp.<sup>12</sup>

The same problem, though differently framed, was considered by van Dyle; he said that spiritual life had lost its value among Germans, that 'the essential traditions of spiritual and cultural life are today continued only by a minority who do not make their mark on the modern age, that the truly spiritual life of our time is confined to a kind of voluntary or forced concealment and perhaps even a diversion from current trends.'<sup>13</sup> This is not only a criticism of culture, but also of its effects. One of them is the disappearance of "the people," the "national organism," and its expression is the degradation of man.<sup>14</sup>

Equally tragic and uncompromising for the Germans was the diagnosis of Andrzej Niesiolowski, Polish educator, sociologist and politically committed young Christian Democrat of the time who asserted that "Germany has failed to find a way to reconcile freedom with order, activity with planning, and has longed for the compulsion of military, internal discipline."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 359.

<sup>13</sup> A. van Dyle, "Hitlerizm a religia". *Przegląd Powszechny* 196 (1932): 32.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>15</sup> Niesiolowski, *Zarys*, 203.

It is worth mentioning, as part of the Polish current of criticism of Nazism, that in Europe at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s the idea of Pan-Germanism clashed with that of Pan-Europeanism. On 1 June 1930, *Mysł Narodowa* opened with an article by Stanisław Kozicki on the initiative to create a Federation of Europe taken at the League of Nations, and the sending out of a memorandum to this effect on 17 May 1930 to the League's 26 member states. Kozicki demonstrated the necessity for the Polish government to take a firm stance to uphold this new order, including Poland's sovereignty – endorsing the policy of arbitration and international guarantees initiated at Locarno and represented by the interests of the victors of the World War. However, Kozicki regretted that the course of affairs was not moving in this direction. Citing articles from German newspapers of both the right and left, he argued that “the condition for the cooperation of European states is – in the German view – the partition of Poland.”<sup>16</sup>

Could Pan-Europa have been a ‘cure’ for Pan-Germania? Kozicki as representative of the Polish national milieu expressed no such hopes, characterising the previous concessions to Germany and the continued inequality of the states expressed in the forums of many international assemblies with the shameless keeping of Poland in the second rank. Germany's pan-Germanic aspirations, which had been born earlier than Nazism, were taken up and put into the service of myth.

The excellent understanding of the state of development of German philosophical, ideological, social and political thought of Polish intellectuals made them adopt a warning stance, trembling with terror and crying out in a voice of objection as strongly as they could. This attitude was characteristic of Polish thinkers of the conservative-nationalist and Catholic circles. Their accurate assessment of the “modern” phenomenon of German National Socialism was combined with an even more accurate – as would only become clear with the advent of the Second War – prediction of its consequences.

### **2.1.3. The national community as a founding myth. National Socialist Germany and its “religious” status**

As a result of the First World War, the bonds of national solidarity among the Germans tightened. They were consolidated by the Peace of Versailles, which was regarded as an injustice and a disgrace. And so, the idea of community began to take on real shape. A critique of Nazism leading to the thesis that the idea of the unity of the national community reached the status of religion in Germany, and became the founding myth of a totalitarian ideology, based on a sociological analysis

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<sup>16</sup> Stanisław Kozicki, “Polska, Niemcy i Paneuropa”. *Mysł Narodowa* 22 (1930): 338.

of social phenomena in their historical and current dimensions, was put forward by Andrzej Niesiołowski.<sup>17</sup>

According to Niesiołowski, a community (*Gemeinschaft*) is a group based on the sameness of experiences and aspirations, linked by the use of the pronoun 'we'. Although the idea was introduced in Ferdinand Tönnies' book *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887), it was originally not the leading concept for German philosophy of community. In fact, it was the publication of the lectures of the Congress of the German Philosophical Society *Philosophie der Gemeinschaft* (Berlin, 1929), edited by Felix Kruger, which reflected Germany's deepest aspirations, with 'community' being sought in various areas of life, from a doctor's relationship with his patients to Leibniz's and Hegel's concept of community.

As Helmuth Plessner said in his book *Die Grenzen der Gemeinschaft*, "The idol of this age is community."<sup>18</sup>

It was probably for these reasons that Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* was re-published in 1933. The idea of community fell on fertile ground, for, as Niesiołowski argues, it fitted in, internally and externally, with the trend towards the integration of a fractured culture and the desire for political unification of Germany. For its embodiment in philosophy, the concept of the collective unit, closely linked to the category of collective consciousness, was developed, even though it was emphasised among critics of Nazi ideology that to speak of a collective unit, of something like a collective being, is not allowed in Catholic philosophy.<sup>19</sup> The criticism of the German idea of community identified the moments in German history that consolidated its significance. According to Niesiołowski, these included the separatism of the individual Länder, the Reformation, the pre-Germanic idea of a leader, the economic crisis of the 1920s, the conflict between Germans and Jews in 1917, and German philosophy.<sup>20</sup>

In the Polish criticism of Nazism, its various elements are shown with emphasis on their particular German character and also as seen from the perspective of a neighbour experiencing their effects more acutely than other nations. Polish intellectuals noted that while in the history of mankind the division between warring tribes and their commonality was observed, in the German case the separatism of the tribes lasted an exceptionally long time, until the era of the Nazi revolution, and that even Bismarck did not manage to break it. The term 'Hitler's revolution' as used by Lenin used in the context of the October (Leninist) Revolution, says a lot about the perception of the change of regime in Germany. In Niesiołowski's view, the Germans have a strong urge towards the collective (in contrast to the Poles or

<sup>17</sup> Andrzej Niesiołowski, "Religia wspólnoty narodowej. U źródeł narodowego socjalizmu". *Przegląd Powszechny* 219 (1938): 10–24.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., Irena Gałęzowska, "Mit o jedności zbiorowej". *Przegląd Powszechny* 168 (1925): 263–291.

<sup>20</sup> Niesiołowski, "Religia wspólnoty", 12.

the French, who are individualists), which enabled the fulfilment of the longing for tribal unity, fostered by the presence of the ever-unwelcome mix of foreign blood (Slavic, Semitic) and the growing German anti-Semitism.

Another factor was the Reformation; having caused a religious rift, which was all the more dangerous as it partly coincided with the existing “tribal” boundaries (*land* borders), it permeated political and cultural life by creating different types of mentality. Political differentiation, standardising by its very nature, took an excessive form, giving rise to a longing for unification. Germans, always inclined to military domination, regarded the democratic nature of the Weimar Republic’s rule as a weakness. The forced admission of guilt for unleashing the First World War intensified the pragmatic yearning for a leader. This, in turn, was exacerbated by the economic crisis and the aspirations of the unemployed that made the idea of a national community, with a leader at its head, a salutary idea.

Other motives for creating a community included a natural post-war yearning for family warmth and social life, a sentiment for familiarity (*Heimat*), and a romantic search for the roots of Germanness. The idea of community involved the organic connection between the commonality of attitudes and destinies and their full integration to the individual personality. Its origins lay in Wilhelm Wundt’s work as one of the pioneers of recognising the individual as a product of the collective soul, and the will’s rejection of individualism. Not less significant was Wundt’s proposition that the individual should return to the community what he or she had taken from it. Tracing the history of the idea of community, Niesiołowski also mentioned Frederick Paulsen, who emphasised the maintenance of an historical ‘species type’.

Niesiołowski noted that, for Paulsen, community-building was the task of education, which must tackle the issue of understanding the role of the past in creating a national community. Paulsen, however, found the need to respect other nations and their rights, Niesiołowski argues,<sup>21</sup> which was an issue that neither Pan-Germanism nor National Socialism took into consideration.

Niesiołowski also mentioned the educational concepts that promoted the idea of community. One of these he found in the work of Paul Natorp’s, whose concept of community referred to idealism and social reformism. Natorp proposed that the individual is an abstraction and that one can only become a human being within a community. A community, on the other hand, is not a specific group, but:

An internal, ideal union of individuals that exists in their consciousness, devoid of any compulsion. It is only within the community that moral values, the expression of the practical reason of the members, develop. [...] The goal of development is complete moral unity, complete community – true socialism. Achieving this ideal requires a complete revolutionary transformation of social, state and economic relations.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Niesiołowski, *Zarys*, 201–202.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

And although Natorp, Niesiołowski says, aimed at bringing reason under control, to make behavioural motivations shift from the sensual to the rational and social, the sowing of socialism was completed on the basis of the implementation of the idea of community. By contrast, in 1933, it was only realized through the slogans shouted out at election rallies.

On the wave of these communal aspirations, it is no coincidence that their educational reinforcement appeared in Peter Petersen's Jena Plan School. Niesiołowski, a prisoner of the *oflag* war camp at the time, stated that Petersen's assumptions, initially vague and metaphysically inconsistent, were focused on the ultimate principle that the entire development of an individual could only take place in and through membership of a community. The other individual is always merely a stimulus, an excitement for the development of personality.<sup>23</sup>

The idea of Pan-Germanism was supported by the thesis of the superiority of the Germanic race. Germans who called themselves a nation of *Herrenvolk* – lords – found wide support among their own thinkers. In the Polish literature, those acknowledged in this context were Wilhelm Teutd, Gregor and Otto Strasser, A. von Hofmann, Herman Wirth, Otto Uebel, and Eduard Heyck. Among the lesser-known, whose works are as difficult to verify – as to whether they were at all known in Poland – were the founders of Nazism, such as A. Obrik, S. Nockel, G. Kossinna, L. F. Clauss.<sup>24</sup> In Halban's view, what these authors share is an idealisation of the past, hostility to foreign influences, especially Christianity as contrary to the spirit of Germanness and Germanic heroism.<sup>25</sup>

Poland would have been interested in Pan-Europa insofar as it would provide – if only on paper – a sealing of the Versailles borders. On the economic side, the issue was whether it would facilitate the export of Polish goods or the inflow of capital on fair terms. A *Mysł Narodowa* journalist wrote of the lack of hope for such solutions due to Germany's aggressive stance on issues that would provide development opportunities for Poland.<sup>26</sup> This idea of community co-creating the spirit of the nation, Niesiolowski says, was the key to the success of Nazism. Although this diagnosis and criticism came from manuscripts written in an *oflag* between 1939 and 1942, and given that these were conditions of isolation, they could be linked to the author's interpretation of the world before September 1939, when he had not yet been a prisoner of Nazism.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 205–206.

<sup>24</sup> Axel Olrik, *Nordisches Geistesleben in heidnischer und frühchristlicher Zeit* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1908); Gustaf Kossinna, *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte, eine hervorragende nationale Wissenschaft* (6<sup>th</sup> ed., Leipzig: Kabitzsch, 1932); after: Leon Halban, *Religia w Trzeciej Rzeszy* (Lwów: Nakładem Towarzystwa Naukowego, 1936), 47.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Stanisław Szczutowski, "Paneuropa i trzy B". *Mysł Narodowa* 2/35 (1930): 541–543.



### 2.1.4. Science in the service of ideology

On the path of the transformation from the idea of community into the “religion of community” that Nazism became, there was also the Nazi reform of science.<sup>27</sup> It, according to Niesiolowski, with its over-specialisation and terminological complexity, lost the sense of objective truth. This fact alone opened the door to all kinds of manipulation, while in the background the breakdown of philosophical thought into warring factions took place:

Agnosticism, positivism, materialism, the cult of fiction [...] pragmatism, all these prepared the ground for Hitler’s reform of science. [...] the Nazis decided to give up the knowledge (and even the existence) of objective truth [...] replacing it with the unity of the will. The truth is that which conforms to the ideology and interest of the nation.<sup>28</sup>

The Rectors of German universities approved of this new, absurd science as a consequence of the overgrowth of the idea of a national community. In the opinion of the Polish educationalist, it was taken as a given that the purpose of every scientific discipline is to serve the nation, but from a position of autonomy.

Thus did the independence of science became a fiction in Germany. It was recognised that if, in the Germany of the 1930s, science wanted to play any real role, it had to arise from the creative forces of the historical period in which it emerged. It had to, therefore, serve the tasks of the age.<sup>29</sup> Mirosław Sekreta argued, pointing to the views of Ernst Krieck, that the new Germany would not be reborn from the work of poets or philosophers, but it would emerge from the “spirit” of the Prussian soldier.

In Poland, a sentence uttered by Professor Krieck, Rector of Frankfurt University in July 1933, was repeated with amazement and disbelief: “The task of our universities is not to teach objective truth but to spread the knowledge of heroism, combat, military spirit and struggle.”<sup>30</sup>

Delving deeply into the German reality, Sekreta, Polish law professor, says that a particular resonance in the European countries of the time involved the

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<sup>27</sup> It is not the purpose of this chapter to describe the subordination of German universities to the new ideology. The sources included in the bibliography do not fully deal with this problem, so I stop here at citing certain aspects to show the critical consciousness of conservative Polish intellectuals on the issue of the Nazis’ instrumental attitude to science.

<sup>28</sup> Niesiolowski, “Religia społeczności”, 19.

<sup>29</sup> Mirosław Sekreta, “Współczesna niemiecka filozofia i pedagogika kultury”. *Kultura i Wychowanie* 3 (1935/1936): 240–251.

<sup>30</sup> Halban, *Religia*, 42. The critic cites the author as E. Krieck, *Wissenschaft, Weltanschauung, Hochschulreform* (Leipzig: Armanen-Verlag 1934). He mentions other scholars spreading this view, i.e., A. Rein, Prof. Baeumler, Prof. de Heyse, A. Rosenberg, and Dr. O. Dietrich. He recalls the February (1934) conference of rectors of Prussian universities and their statement that they deeply accept “the necessity of an internal renewal of science and universities based on National Socialist ideology”. The Polish critic draws the content of this statement from the journal *Schönere Zukunft* of 3 June 1934 (*ibid.*, 43).

1933 circulars of the Ministries of Education of the German lands on the teaching of history. The outrage was caused by their “barbarism” in ignoring the truth about historical facts and violating the foundations of science. As early as in the year that Nazis came to power, science was already in the service of this absurd worldview. Polish scholars carefully analysed the political instructions linked to science – for example, a commentary on a Württemberg circular by Dr Karl Drück of the Ministry of Education was discussed as it spoke of the German state’s claim to the exclusive right to teach. As a minister, Drück believed in the state ideals, and argued that the way in which teaching should be conducted must be derived from them: “Objectivity in the old sense of the word is completely excluded. Based on our beliefs, we not only have the courage to be subjective, but also the courage to admit it.”<sup>31</sup>

In the words of Sekreta, the facts sounded iconoclastic in relation to science. It is not so much a mockery or derision of German education and science, but a serious discussion of the absurdities taking place. The role of German science in the first half of the 1930s was summarised by Marian Wachowski, who said that in Germany, science could not develop independently of the dominant ideology.

For all these fields [of knowledge – JK], each according to its kind, participate in the totality of the national task, the performance of which is dictated by fate and need. [...] At the beginning stands a political decision.<sup>32</sup>

Criticism of all these phenomena within German National Socialism was not one-sided. There were also manifestations of opposition to it. In Poland, they were rated highly, as evidenced by the case of Professor Oncken, as discussed in a Lvov journal, who in his speeches defended the objectivity of history and other ideas expressed in the Humboldtian vision of the university. For this very reason, he was expelled from the university.<sup>33</sup> The fact that Polish academics took the side of a professor defending the ideals stemming from *Universitas* is, moreover, proof of the non-functioning in the Polish academic community of the criteria of race or nation in the evaluation of socio-political phenomena.

In Poland, the absurd, dogmatic and therefore dangerous nature of what was happening was seen for what it was. The Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow in 1934 wrote the following about the state of science in Europe:

While one can read with a pounding heart the enthusiastic hymns of Krieck or Rosenberg about the influence of God on human creativity, reason sees clearly that the promise has not been kept,

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<sup>31</sup> K. Drück, *Vom Zweiten zum Dritten Reich*, (Esslingen n. N.: Verlag der Burgbücherei, 1933); after: Halban, *Religia*, 43.

<sup>32</sup> Marian Wachowski, “Ernst Krieck, *Nationalpolitische Erziehung*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Leipzig, Armanen-Verlag, 1934, p. IV + 186”. *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny* (3–4) 1934, 303.

<sup>33</sup> See “Sprawa Onckena”. *Nowe Czesy*, 19 March 1935.

naturalism has not been overcome in the way of thought, but rather the opposite has been done, for God himself has been reduced to naturalistic lows, made into a vital force without intellect. In connection with God thus conceived, a new man appears on the horizon [...]. Krieck recklessly distorted the idea of Christianity to then have his own caricature blasted by mystical and humanist currents, but as the current political interest, not as the truth, apparently demands.<sup>34</sup>

And so, we arrive at a certain regularity – the dismantling of science by the Nazis must be accompanied by the dismantling of the foundations of all culture; at least in the humanities, it is impossible to separate the two. It is worth noting that these are just some of the elements of the critique made by Michalski of the development of the philosophy of history in Germany in the early 1930s that took place before the Pope issued his encyclical (the only one written in German) *Mit brennender Sorge*, which dealt with the threat of Nazism. As National Socialism, mainly with its racist assertion of the superiority of Nordic-Germanic culture, was based on myth, the role of its guarantor was also taken over by the belief in myth (ideology), a pseudo-religion.

Polish critics noted that this situation could not be socially satisfactory. Belief in myth cannot replace the lack of scientific historical sources. In this situation, science – in spite of everything – should feel called upon not to perpetuate or confirm the worldview (myth, ideology) that Nazism represented. Meanwhile, the exact opposite was happening in German science, as confirmed in Poland by many different researchers. For this to be possible, a fashion for irrationalism was invented in science.

Meanwhile, in the Polish current of criticism of National Socialism, the highly negative role of pseudo-scientific writing was emphasised, for example in the work of Professor Ernest Bergmann. This author, referring directly to religion (e.g., in his *Die Deutsche Nationalkirche*, Breslau 1933), actually went beyond the theological treatment of religion. Speaking of a “shackled Germania,” which had been trying to throw off the chains for a thousand years, he concluded that “all theology is the enemy of mankind.” It was Leon Halban who revealed the mechanism of the consolidation of Nazism: it is theology, according to Bergmann, that imprisons man by making him wait for “the next life.” Bergmann wrote of the Christian invention of the “otherworldly God.” He needed this to construct a non-Christian, Nordic anthropotheology (Halban’s term), in which is portrayed as a hero and a fighter, while Nordic religion has a certain message of salvation in the world construed in a different way. While presenting its content, Halban stated that Bergmann’s religious doctrines and his religion of German unity would presumably never be acceptable, but he recognised their influence as enormous.

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<sup>34</sup> Konstanty Michalski, *Tomizm wobec współczesnej filozofii dziejów*, Obd. *Księga Pamiątkowa Międzynarodowego Kongresu Filozofii Tomistycznej w Poznaniu 1934 rok*, (Gniezno: b.w., 1935), 9–10.

Thoughts on the New German religion did not constitute the entirety of Bergmann's message, which can be "described as an attempt to synthesise the Germanic philosophy of life"<sup>35</sup> implemented in the only correct humanities of Germany at the time.

Józef Pastuszka, a priest and philosopher, Polish critic of Nazism, gave an account of the Nazi scholars' "revelations." To give the reader an idea of the scale and depth of his work, it is worth pointing to the literature he included in his analysis: in addition to *Mein Kampf*, he considered Houston St. Chamberlain's, *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (München 1915); alongside Gobineau, a prime proponent of eugenics, came the Frenchman, de Lapouge, who shared his views. They were followed by many other luminaries of German science.<sup>36</sup> In fact, Pastuszka conjured up his own idea of the "unassailability" of their judgments when he said:

The historiosophical deductions of racism are a curious example of bold and original ingenuity, of a scientific creative imagination that knows how to construct from minor details a hypothesis of prime importance for the cultural history of humanity.<sup>37</sup>

He went on to give an account of the scientific and moral hypocrisy, the profound destruction of the moral dimension of German and Western science and culture. To Pastuszka we owe the most profound – among conservative and Catholic analyses – and at the same time fully scientific critique of racism, together with a critique of its biological justifications<sup>38</sup> (he published a critique of the historiosophical justifications in the third part of his series on racism in the pages of the *Ruch Katolicki*<sup>39</sup>).

Other Polish scholars also called attention to the degree that German science aided the development of Nazism. In the *Preface* to Karol Stojanowski's book<sup>40</sup> – which is, in his declaration, a continuation of his work *Rasizm przeciw Słowiańszczyźnie [Racism Against Slavism]* – Stojanowski analysed the power of German scholars' support for racism. He did so using the example of the second edition (from 1934), in book form, of a bibliography of racism compiled by Achim Gercke, a race research officer at the German Reich Ministry of the Interior. It contains a list and description of 691 works (many of them multi-volume editions, repeatedly reprinted) by 447 writers-scientists, publicists, and agitators. The purpose of this work was, as Stojanowski showed, twofold: to serve as a guide for Nazi party

<sup>35</sup> Halban, *Religia*, 46.

<sup>36</sup> It is worth pointing out the Nazi literature that he critically analyses L. Woltmann, *Die Germanen und die Renaissance in Italien* (Leipzig: Thüringische Verlagsanstalt, 1905); *Die Germanen in Frankreich* (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1907); L. Schemann's *Studien zur Geschichte des Rassengedankens* (vols. 1–3, München: Lehmann, 1930).

<sup>37</sup> Józef Pastuszka, "Krytyka światopoglądu rasistowskiego". *Ruch Katolicki* 9/7 (1939): 305.

<sup>38</sup> Józef Pastuszka, "Rasizm jako światopogląd". *Ruch Katolicki* 9/3 (1939): 102–116.

<sup>39</sup> Pastuszka, "Krytyka", 305–320.

<sup>40</sup> Karol Stojanowski, *Polsko-niemieckie zagadnienia rasy* (Katowice: Drukarnia Katolicka S.A., 1939), 7–10.

activists; and for non-Germans, it was intended to be a document testifying to the fact that Hitler's reforms (along with the entire National Socialist revolution) had solid scientific foundations. The bibliography has annotations in the margins such as 'scholarly book', 'propaganda book', 'Marxist point of view', 'National Socialist point of view' or 'Jewish point of view'. Stojanowski drew attention to the broader impact of the 447 authors included in this bibliography. He also issued a warning to his contemporaries: "This bibliography of German racism should therefore give Poland much food for thought."<sup>41</sup>

In the opinion of this Polish critic of the German offensive in the promotion of the Nordic race, the number of researchers of racial issues represents (although the bibliography is not complete) twice the number of all the scholars at the University of Poznan. Using Stojanowski's work as an example, we can conclude that Slavic researchers of racial issues saw for themselves the threat coming from ideologues of the Nordic race proclaiming the latter's superiority. They sought to valorise the Slavic race in their research. *Some* Polish scholars were inspired to pursue racial research, but it was neither popular nor in demand in Poland.

*Translated from Polish by Marta Robson*

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 8–9.

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