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NSDAP YOUTH POLICY: RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

**(review of the monograph: Davletov O. R. Preparation of the “generation of wolves”:
training of future perpetrators of the Holocaust (Essays on the youth policy
of the NSDAP in 1922 – 1939). 2nd ed., 2019. 316 p.)**

МОЛОДІЖНА ПОЛІТИКА НСДАП: РЕТРОСПЕКТИВНИЙ АНАЛІЗ

**(рецензія на монографію: Давлетов О. Р. Підготовка “покоління вовків”:
вишкіл майбутніх виконавців Голокосту (Нариси молодіжної політики НСДАП
у 1922 – 1939 рр.). 2-е вид. доп. Дніпро: Український інститут вивчення
Голокосту “Ткума”, 2019. 316 с.)**

Due to World War II 75th Anniversary, a number of new scientific publications on various aspects of the origins, causes, nature, manifestations and consequences of the global conflict of 1939 – 1945 emerged. Numerous historians, including the domestic ones, put emphasis on the importance of studying the phenomenon of totalitarianism and its negative manifestations, which led to mass tragedies, among which the Holocaust stands out.

The Nazi regime was the Holocaust creator and executor primarily, whose policy covered all spheres of the socio-economic and socio-political life. The Nazi dictatorship's

establishing process in Germany was completed during the 30th of January in 1933 when Adolf Hitler was appointed as the coalition government Chancellor of the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP)) and the German People's Party (Deutsche Volkspartei (NNP)), and the 2nd of August in 1934, after the death of President Paul von Hindenburg when The Reich Chancellor proclaimed himself as the Third Reich Führer (Leader). Mass repression became an inextricable feature of it, which was elevated to the rank of state policy.

Particular attention was paid to young people as a catalyst for future change in Germany and abroad. The importance of studying the NSDAP youth policy peculiarities is actualized in the global changes' conditions of the present. The events in Ukraine demonstrate the individual political players' fervent desire to assert their influence and impose their will on the entire world community. In our opinion, the current trends in geopolitical development indicate the threat of certain political regimes returns to the totalitarian practices of the past. The political propaganda's Renaissance, interference in the internal affairs of other states, territorial changes, now known as the annexation and in the interwar period as the Anschluss, made us ruminate on the need to learn historical lessons in order to develop a strategy, which could prevent world conflicts and preserve the global world system.

The first attempts to protect the world from the global conflicts' recurrence and their devastating consequences were made immediately after the end of World War I. However, the League of Nations creation in 1919 did not prevent the totalitarian regimes' emergence on the European continent, which unleashed World War II. The National Socialism formation in Germany took place in the Weimar Republic, whose democratic regime could not withstand the pressure of internal problems and external factors. The Revanchist sentiments in Germany were generated, on the one hand, by the defeat in the World War, and, on the other hand, by misunderstanding and unwillingness to accept democracy. In fact, the majority of society shifted the responsibility for making fateful decisions to the most radical political force, personified by the NSDAP.

After the National Socialists came to power, more than 200,000 opponents of the regime were killed or tortured under the law on the arrest of suspects in the "subversive activities", and 450,000 were sentenced to 1,500 years in prison or sent to the concentration camps for political, religious, and racial reasons. In total, more than 3 million people were repressed. If communists, social democrats, and the anti-Nazi organizations' representatives were exterminated for their political beliefs, another factor in the mass persecution was the national and ethnic affiliation.

Furthermore, the Jews, who made up less than 1% of Germany's population, were declared almost the dictatorship's main enemies. The above-mentioned or a similar practice was a characteristic feature of the totalitarian regimes when the unification of society around the ruling ideology was carried out by "appointing" a common enemy and fighting against it. The Nazis' paramount goal was to remove the "non-Aryans" (the Jews) from public life (the Nazi interpretation of the "non-Aryans" comprised people who had Jewish parents or grandparents). The Jews were forbidden to engage in public affairs, to teach in schools and universities, to practice doctoring, dentistry, and lawyering. There were even special marks in their passports and in every woman's passport the name of Sarah was added and Israel – to man's passports.

In April of 1933, the NSDAP called for a boycott of the Jewish shops and firms, but the action was only partially successful, as the population was unprepared for such blatant anti-Semitism. In general, more than 400 laws and decrees were passed against the Jews in the 1930-ies. In Germany, the process of the Jews ousting from the economic, political, and

cultural life took five years. The children were expelled from schools, and the students from universities, who wanted to emigrate were released without their property. On the night of the 9th – 10th of November in 1938, the Nazis staged a massacre that went down in history as the “Crystal Night”. The Jewish shops, synagogues, and cemeteries were looted and destroyed throughout Germany. Hundreds of the Jews died, and about 30,000 Nazis were sent to the concentration camps. The Nazis blamed the Jews for the crime and forced them to pay 1 billion marks in “compensation”.

The NSDAP leaders were the Holocaust ideologues, led by Hitler, well understood that the anti-Semitic policies could succeed only as a result of their unconditional support by all social and age groups in German society. Hence, it is not a coincidence that a special role in its implementation was given to young people.

The second edition of the monograph, written by Oleksandr Rasydovych Davlyetov, Candidate of Historical Sciences, Professor of the Department of World History and International Relations at Zaporizhia National University, revealed the author’s vision concerning the genesis of the “wolf generation” – the future perpetrators of the Holocaust. In addition, O.R. Davlyetov from the standpoint of a researcher of the Weimar Republic history and the Third Reich studied and analyzed the basic preconditions, ideological and organizational factors, directions, forms and methods of the Nazi educational work with German youth in 1922 – 1939 comprehensively.

The structural and logical scheme of scientific work is the subject to the main goal – on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of sources and array of existing historiography of the problem to determine the main stages of the genesis of “Hitler Youth”, to highlight and reconstruct the activities of the Nazi youth movement at various stages of its existence. The NSDAP of the Weimar period (1922 – 1933) and during the development of the “Third Reich” (1933 – 1939), analyze the process of educating German youth through the prism of training future ordinary Holocaust perpetrators. In addition to the introduction, conclusions, and notes, the monograph consists of twelve essays, thirty appendices, a list of abbreviations, a list of sources and literature used, and a brief author’s reference. It is important to emphasize that the rich illustrative material from the archival, book and museum collections are a helping tool in better understanding the content of the work.

Furthermore, the author tried to conduct a systematic analysis of the fascism phenomenon in the first essay. In particular, he briefly described the its emergence preconditions, the main constituent elements, and also focused on the polyvariance of the definition.

The second essay is devoted to elucidating the National Socialist worldview system’s ideological and theoretical origins. The influence of social Darwinism, geopolitics, the theory of the Aryan race supremacy, various mythologists, ideas of occultism, mysticism, is traced on it.

Adolf Hitler’s views, the Nazi leader, concerning the education of German youth were the subject of consideration in the third essay. The Ukrainian historian analyzed them primarily on the basis of the Nazi movement program work – the book “My Struggle”.

The fourth essay focuses the reader’s attention on the Nazi youth movement emergence. Chronologically, the above-mentioned plot related to 1919 – 1922 and was associated with the NSDAP appearance and the Nazi party youth policy formation beginning.

The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth essays are devoted to influence of the Nazi youth organizations formation and evolution and the individual Nazi ideologues and practitioners movement in general. In particular, the role of 18-year-old Gustav Adolf Lenk in the formation of a special youth “brain center” and the activities of the “Jungsturm Adolf Hitler”

in 1922 – 1925 was revealed. Moreover, “Hitler Youth” formation was covered in 1925 – 1931. Finally, O. R. Davlyetov focused on the peculiarities and nature of competition with the “Hitler Youth” of other youth units of the NSDAP, coming to power and the role of 21-year-old German student at the University of Munich Baltur Baldur unification of the youth movement in Germany on the Nazi model.

The ninth essay in the monograph highlights two important aspects of the subject matter. On the one hand, it is about the “Hitler Youth” as the only youth organization of the Third Reich, and, on the other hand, it revealed the leading vectors of the Nazi youth association in 1936 – 1939.

The anti-Semitic aspects of the upbringing of young people in Nazi Germany and the legal support of the NSDAP’s anti-Semitic policy in 1933 – 1939 are analyzed in the tenth and eleventh essays. The emphasis was put on the following: the “Nazi propaganda machine, led by the Reich Minister of Propaganda of the “Third Reich” Josef Goebbels, during this time intensified in German society a negative and “empirically” justified image of the Jews” (pp. 135–136).

In the last, twelfth essay, having found an original approach to the scientific historical research, O. R. Davlyetov made a concise but comprehensive analysis of the study of the National Socialism phenomenon in European historiography of the XXth century. The author focused on the change of the conceptual and paradigmatic component, including the angle of the “paradigm shift” and the need to further find an answer to the still relevant, including in the light of the modern neo-Nazi threat, the answer to the question: “Why did the civilization collapse in Germany?”” (p. 150).

It should be noted that the important characteristic of the monograph is its documentary nature. In fact, the author proceeds from the renowned position of the German historian and historian of the German Empire Leopold von Ranke that only a direct follow of the sources can help establish the truth, “as it really was” (“Wie es eigentlich gewesen”). Hence, not only the wide involvement of documents for the analysis of the studied historical events and facts, but also the inclusion as an important element of the structural and logical scheme of the monograph of thirty documentary appendices (pp. 170–87).

A significant amount of scientifically interesting illustrative material not only complements the sources cited by O. R. Davlyetov, facilitates the perception of the presented material, but also strengthens the scientific nature of the historical research.

The monographic work is made on the basis of the author’s elaboration and involvement of a wide range of sources and literature. It is based on both foreign, primarily German, and domestic publications of documents and various scientific investigations.

In our opinion, the subject and object of the study need to be clarified, as it does not refer to the Holocaust in any way, although this term is present in the title of the monograph (p. 7). But only one task among 5 concerns the Holocaust issue.

The author should have explained in the introduction or in the first essay the essence and conceptual approaches to the definition of the Holocaust, revealed the meaning of the term the “generation of wolves”, established causal links between the NSDAP youth policy and the Holocaust, actualizing this topic in the context of modern events. It seems appropriate to strengthen the critical aspect in the coverage of the above-mentioned topic, in particular not only by citing the main facts of various vectors of the NSDAP youth policy, but also explaining what role it played in the “wolf generation” formation and its consequences for today. In some cases, it seems that the text proposed by the author is a kind of source for further study and analysis of the NSDAP youth policy in the training of future Holocaust perpetrators.

We consider it appropriate to recommend starting the main part of the work with an essay on the ideological and theoretical origins of the National Socialist worldview, establishing a connection between it and fascism as an ideology and bringing the reader to the second essay – “Fascism: Conditions of Origin” (essay I in the monograph’s text).

The ninth essay lacks the author’s critical view of the Hitler Youth’s activities and the conclusions need to be substantiated.

The general conclusions are deprived of the established and empirically proven causal links between the NSDAP youth policy and the Holocaust policy, the author’s attitude to this problem.

In general, the peer-reviewed work is original, interesting, meaningful. The presented factual, illustrative material, source base of research deserves special attention. Valuable for researchers are the applications proposed by the author, which reveal unknown aspects of the problem. In general, O. R. Davlyetov’s monograph “The Preparation of the “generation of wolves”: training of future Holocaust perpetrators (Essays on the youth policy of the NSDAP in 1922 – 1939)” is of unconditional scientific interest and can be recommended for both professional historians and students, graduate students, all those who are interested in the problems of German history of the interwar period and various aspects of the Holocaust research.

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