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THE REVISION OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY, NAZISM
AND ANTI-BOLSHEVISM IN WESTERN EUROPE,
1933 - 1945

In June 1941 when Nazi Germany launched a 'pre-emptive' attack on the Soviet Union she declared to the world that she was, by this act, leading a European 'Crusade' against Bolshevism. Employing the full resources of the Nazi propaganda machine, the media in Germany and throughout occupied Europe proposed that the Panzer brigades which were sweeping to the East were the Teutonic knights of the twentieth century; their goal the defence of Western - and, therefore, European - civilisation. Germany, so it was claimed, was directing a vast operation of European policing to which all parts of the continent had the responsibility to contribute.¹

Few in Western Europe answered this call to arms. From the occupied territories between the autumn of 1941 and the summer of 1944 a total of no more than 50,000 men volunteered themselves for active service on the Eastern front in the specially created Danish, Dutch, Flemish, French, Nordic and Walloon formations.² The real and effective weight of support for the Wehrmacht came from elsewhere: a Spanish 'Legion' dispatched by Franco as a way of avoiding the more substantial co-operation with the Axis which Hitler had sought in 1940; more than 200,000 Italians; and, most important, the 27 divisions and, ultimately, half a million casualties given by Antonescu's Romania. To these should be added the Balts, Cossacks and Vlasovites and, from the spring of 1944, the significant weight of the Hungarian army.³ It was in East and Central Europe above all, therefore, that Germany's coercive diplomacy bore most evident fruit, and where it is at least possible for the historian to talk of a multinational armed campaign against Bolshevism.

¹ P. Mernet and Y.M. Danan, 'Les thèmes de propagande après le 22 juin 1941', *Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale*, No. 66 (1966), pp. 48-53.

² J. Forster, '„Croisade de l'Europe contre le bolchevisme"; la participation d'unités de volontaires européennes à l'opération „Barberousse" en 1941', *Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale*, No. 118 (1980), pp.1-26. Other useful accounts and estimates of participation in the Crusade in O.A. Davey, 'The origin of the Légion Française contre le Bolchevisme', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 6 (1971), pp. 29-45; J. Vincx, *Vlaanderen in Uniform 1940-1945*, (Antwerpen, 1981); S. van der Zee, *Voor Führer, volk en vaderland sneuvelde...de SS in Nederland, Nederland in de SS*, (Den Haag, 1975).

³ See Joseph Rothschild, *Return to diversity. A political history of East Central Europe since World War II*, pp. 43-4, 63-4.

Yet, if the scale of the contribution of manpower from the West was minimal and scarcely meriting the description of a 'Crusade', it does not necessarily follow that a larger contribution was either desired or sought by the Nazis. None of the Western occupied countries could be bribed by the irredentist possibilities held out in the East. More, the re-establishment of substantial armies, together with their officer corps, in countries which had only a year before been humiliatingly and decisively defeated, held an unacceptable risk of creating centres of national focus and revival which continued occupation was designed to prevent. Nor, in any case, was it evident that the policy of conscription which would have had to be pursued in order to achieve a reasonable level of participation in the 'Crusade' was one which fitted with the relations which Germany had with her new satellites. Even in the Netherlands where Nazification and eventual incorporation in the Reich was, from the beginning, the public goal of the occupier, the Reichskommissar, Seyss-Inquart, recoiled from too rapid and thorough an application of this commission.⁴ Terboven in Norway was more reticent still. Elsewhere, the form of long-term relations with Nazi Germany was less distinct and less susceptible to enthusiasm for military co-operation with the Axis. Vichy France was, until 1944, an uncertain ally whose future – if any – in the New Europe remained ill-defined and disputed by the Nazi leadership; in Belgium the supreme German authority, General von Falkenhausen, refused before June 1944 to allow a permanent SS presence in the country, let alone to contemplate coercive military conscription; Denmark was the 'Model Protectorate' whose population was to be cajoled and seduced into co-operation.⁵

If it is the case, then, that the Nazis were cautious in giving too literal an interpretation in practice in the occupied Western territories to their call to participate in an anti-Bolshevik Crusade, are we to conclude that this call had no function beyond the rhetorical? While acknowledging the important part played by rhetoric in all Nazi propaganda, the present essay will propose, nonetheless, that the theme of anti-Bolshevism was a central point of contact between occupier and occupied. Further, so far from anti-Bolshevism being incidental and peripheral, it will be argued that it functioned as a repressive device in Western occupied societies, and that it did so by promoting a view of European unity which was premised on accepting the necessity and

⁴ A. Seyss-Inquart, 'Erste Bericht über die Lage und Entwicklung in den besetzten niederländischen Gebieten', in International Military Tribunal, *Trial*, vol. XXVI, pp. 413–18.

⁵ See Eberhart Jäckel, *Frankreich in Hitlers Europa. Die deutsche Frankreichspolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart 1966); A.A. de Jonghe, 'De strijd Himmler-Reeder om de benoeming van een HSSPF te Brussel', *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, 3 (1974) and 4 (1976); E. Thomsen, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Dänemark, 1940–1945*, (Düsseldorf, 1971).

logic of a systemic conflict as the only basis for the defence of the West. As such, it will be suggested that the theme foreshadowed and helped to shape the fundamental divisions of the post-war world.

Anti-Bolshevism pervaded West European politics before 1939. In this context, as was recently argued by Ernst Nolte, the whole period between 1917 and the end of the Second World War may properly be seen as a drawn-out European civil war caused by the eruption and spread of Bolshevism and the response which this caused.⁶ In Nolte's hands this argument was directed primarily to excuse Nazism and to justify its murderous policies as a 'mirror-image' of the form which Bolshevism had taken in Russia and, through the KPD, would have taken in Germany.⁷ But in a larger perspective the idea that there was a disguised 'civil war' of which one side was occupied by Nazism (alongside Italian Fascism and other similar radical ideological formulations of the inter-war period) has some descriptive utility. For it points to the common origins of such movements as defensive reactions in some Western countries to a perceived Communist threat. Certainly, the growth and rise to power of Nazism itself cannot be understood separately either from the history of the challenge mounted by the German Communist Party and of that Party's relation to the new Soviet state, or of German relations, before and after Versailles, with the Russian state. But what the argument of a 'civil war' distorts is the fact that the clear polarisation engendered by Bolshevism and its nationally based Fascist or Nazi opponents was a function of the history of unintegrated states. In other parts of Western Europe the case was different: there the radical forces of the Left, buoyed by the success of the Russian Revolution as much as by the defeat of Germany, expected to make a fundamental breakthrough in the three years after the first World War.⁸ That they did not, and that a 'bourgeois order' was restored, complicates the history of their subsequent relation to Bolshevism. Firstly, because their challenge was merely diverted; secondly, because 'restoration' (to use Maier's word) was carried through in the ground that lay between the two forces of Bolshevism and its competing antithesis, Fascism.

⁶ Ernst Nolte, *Der europäische Bürgerkrieg 1917–1945: Nationalsozialismus und Bolschewismus*, (Berlin, 1987).

⁷ See the lucid critique of Nolte's arguments by Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow. West German historians and the attempt to escape from the Nazi past*, (London 1989).

⁸ Charles S. Maier, 'The two postwar eras and the conditions for stability in twentieth century Western Europe', in Maier, *In Search of Stability. Explorations in Historical Political Economy*, (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 153–184.

The key to the defeat of the radical Left in the early 1920s was the ability of Western Europe to return to prosperity, accompanied by some measure of redistribution of wealth.⁹ At the heart of this achievement lay the successful insertion in the political mainstream of the old social-democratic Left. While this was so, the attraction of Bolshevism could be contained – a fact helped by the relative weakness and isolation of the Soviet Union at this period. So, too, the decline of the challenge posed internally by Bolshevism diminished the danger of the emergence, or appeal, of a radical Fascist opponent. Thus, the central feature of the political landscape was a common interest from Left and Right in maintaining a strong rejection of Communism. The ground of political conflict was not toward one or other of the poles represented by Communism or Fascism but to define the limits of change that was possible between them.

What altered this landscape was the Depression which dominated the years of the 1930s. It was in this decade that there was set the pattern of the anti-Bolshevism which was later to form a cohesive theme during the War. Crucial to the understanding of this development is not simply to recognise the re-emergence to centre stage of the two conflicting anti-system movements, but equally to perceive the challenge which the Depression posed for the non-Communist Left. The economic crisis which engulfed Western Europe exposed, for many, a deeper crisis. For, not only the severity of the downturn but also the lack of any counter-cyclical measures suggested an incapacity at the heart of the liberal-democratic order itself. The deficiencies to which the continuing Depression testified, inevitably refocussed debate on the necessity of radical reforms of structure. In this respect the claims of reformist social-democracy to be able to manage capitalism began to look weak, as did the form of tripartite, corporatist arrangement in which it had sought to do so since the First World War. This was the more so since the beginning of the 1930s saw a revived challenge from the Soviet system as practised in Russia. The Soviet drive to rapid industrialisation – which coincided with, and was partly a response to, the crisis in the West – offered the largest contrast and challenge yet to the post-Versailles restoration. By 1933 the Soviet state seemed able to substantiate its claim to have realised a more viable form of economic and social organisation. More, it appeared as a consequence to offer the only certain defence against a Fascism which was also energised by the Depression.

These claims served to finalise the division within European Socialism that had been created by the isolation of post-revolutionary Russia from the mainstream of

⁹ For a summary of his argument see Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe. Stabilization in France, Germany and Italy in the decade after World War I*, (Princeton, 1975), pp. 579–594.

Western development. The resurgence of a Soviet Russia transformed from backwardness attacked the weakest point in the armour of Western social-democracy: namely its inability after four years of mounting unemployment and under-production either to ensure prosperity for its own supporters or to prevent the rise in influence (and in the case of Germany, the rise to power) of violently anti-socialist and anti-democratic movements; movements which were also making inroads in some of social-democracy's own constituency. To compound the problem, although the scale of the Soviet transformation was hard to deny, the nature of the state which had been created in the process was abhorrent. The ethos of the Plan with its forced movement and destruction of populations, and its model of Stakhanovite labour, engendered the response that such a price for overcoming the crisis was unacceptable. Moreover, the emerging lines of Stalin's dictatorship and, above all, the increasing appropriation of Marxism to the national interests of the Soviet state, drove many in the West to conclude that Socialism, at least in its now dominant Marxist-Leninist form, was dangerously counter-productive. Proof of the correctness of this fear appeared confirmed by the débâcle of German Socialism in the face of the Nazi challenge.

The period of the early 1930s proved to be a watershed of the articulation of a new and distinct position within Western social-democracy. This formulation, while anti-capitalist – in the sense that capitalism was regarded as no longer able to offer any plausible social construct – and anti-Fascist, was equally anti-Bolshevik. Given impetus both by the collapse of Socialism in Germany and the parallel challenge from the Comintern, a new 'crisis' Socialism was argued out in much of Western Europe to the extent that, by the middle of the decade, it dominated the Belgian and Dutch Socialist Parties and had a strong voice in France.¹⁰ Its origin and cohesiveness owed most to the analysis of the Belgian socialist, and future leader of the Belgian Socialist Party, Hendrik de Man. In fact de Man had started on a path of the revision of Marx before the Depression. His book *Zur Psychologie des Sozialismus*, published in 1926/7 – and, revealingly, translated into French under the title *Au delà du Marxisme (Beyond Marxism)* – had already argued the basis for challenging the hegemony of a bureaucratic Marxism over the labour movements, thereby restoring both radicalism and

¹⁰ Peter Dodge, *Beyond Marxism: the faith and works of Hendrik de Man*; H. van Hulst et al., *Het roode vaandel volgen wij*, (Den Haag, 1969); P.W. Klein (ed.), *De jaren dertig: aspecten van crisis en werkloosheid*, (Amsterdam 1979); J. Touchard, 'L'esprit des années trente', in G. Michaud (ed.), *Tendances politiques dans la vie française depuis 1789* (Paris, 1960).

the 'spontaneity' of the individual.¹¹ This revision he continued in *Der Kampf um die Arbeitsfreude* (1927) and, most influentially, *Die Sozialistische Idee* (1933) where for the first time he proposed a revived social-democracy which would break through the impediment of its class exclusiveness and form a more broadly based movement with parts of the middle class.¹² For those who at this period feared both the attractive pull of Fascism and the increasing confidence of a Soviet system which was rapidly developing its own state power under the argument of protecting the historic interests of one class, de Man became an increasingly central figure. What is more, by the middle of the 1930s his influence extended widely beyond the formal confines of social-democratic politics.¹³

Although de Man's revision of Marx went deep, it was not in itself a comprehensive programme of anti-crisis action. This was provided by his analysis of the relation between Fascism and Communism and, in particular, of Fascism's debt to a fear of Communism. De Man argued that the continuing crisis in Western society was both the cause of, and was deepened and prolonged by, the appeal of the growing mass movements which claimed, uniquely, to be able to master it. On the one hand, the deflationary policies used in all Western societies to combat the Depression tended, as unemployment rose, to drive people toward Communism. Given the changes in the Russian state, the case became more powerful for identifying with the necessity for Soviet hegemony. On the other hand Fascism, too, drew strength from the same unemployment whose effects helped feed the fear of Red revolution – a fear not confined to the ranks of the middle classes but felt also by those (relatively few in numbers as they still were) in the working class whose jobs were at risk. As evidence de Man cited the drift of parts of the German labour movement into the trap of Fascist nationalism.¹⁴ Between these counter pulls, social-democracy had little to offer. Even its long-term opposition to Communism was now, as politics polarised, a weakness; certainly, de Man saw it as insufficient by itself to sustain a mass allegiance in the face of the continued crisis to which social-democracy had contributed. Fascism's strength

¹¹ H. de Man, *Zur Psychologie des Sozialismus*, (Jena 1927). In the next five years translations of de Man's book were made into French, Dutch, Spanish, English, Swedish and Czech.

¹² For a broad analysis of these ideas see P. Dodge, *Beyond Marxism*, esp. pp. 91–113.

¹³ The most extensive discussion of the spread of de Man's ideas and influence is to be found in the Special Number of the *Cahiers Vilfredo Pareto. Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, Vol. XII, no. 31 (1974), especially the articles by H. Brugmans, G. Lefranc and A. G. Slama.

¹⁴ See de Man's speech to the Congress of the Belgian Socialist Party, Christmas 1933: *Belgische Werkliedenpartij, 48ste Congres: Brussel 24 en 25 December 1933. Stenografisch Verslag*, (Brussels, 1934), pp. 22–3.

lay not so much in its offer to counter the crisis of the old liberal parliamentary regimes by harnessing the forces of national revival, but more that it was engaged in building a new coalition to do so. This coalition, de Man noted, went across classes.¹⁵ It followed that the attraction of Fascism could only be counterbalanced by challenging it on its own ground. That meant forming an equally broadly based coalition and, in order to do so, defining a powerful shaping theme. In practice this amounted to a cross-class coalition which would create the basis of a national recovery by a judicious mix of mass popular mobilisation and autarkic macro-economic planning: the phenomenon, in fact, which under de Man's name of *planisme* swept Western Europe between 1934 and 1936.¹⁶

What is important to note about the formulation of *planisme* is not that it was simply an attempt to turn Fascism's perceived recruiting strength as the most effective defence against it. It is, rather, that by accepting, in the name of the nation, the central idea of the transcendence of class, de Man and his followers moved beyond the revision of Marx to a direct challenge both to the internationalism of the Socialist movement and to its expression, after 1934, in the popular coalitions promoted by the Soviet Union. This was so for the basic reason that the pursuit of a strategy by which Fascism would be combatted by mobilising against it a social and political consensus which competed for the same allegiances, had itself to occupy some of Fascism's own ground. The assertion that social-democracy's historic role was no longer sustainable, nor able to end the economic crisis without the energy of the nation gathered behind a new belief, conceded that internationalism had had its day. As de Man assured his Party when advocating the acceptance of an 'anti-crisis socialism' which depended on the nation: 'the Plan is nothing, the action for the Plan is everything.' Above all, the 'Plan' would be the expression of the national will in which all classes would learn to speak their 'mother tongue' rather than the universal language that came from the Eastern motherland.¹⁷

It would be wrong to overestimate the attraction which the full philosophy of *planisme* had in practice over the socialist movements of Western Europe; especially at the end of the decade when concern about the coming war tended to supersede

¹⁵ The clearest summary of the positions which led to *planisme* may be found in the series of thirteen more or less weekly articles which de Man wrote between 24 September and 6 December 1933 for the newspaper *Le Peuple* under the general title *Pour un plan d'action*.

¹⁶ For a description of the *planiste* wave see G. Lefranc, 'Les conférences internationales des Plans', in *Cahiers Vilfredo Pareto*, No. 31 (1974), pp. 189-96.

¹⁷ *48ste Congres*, pp. 12-21.

arguments about the urgency of internal structural reform. In France its most distinguished promoter, Marcel Déat, was successfully marginalised from the S.F.I.O. and, ultimately, forced to create a *néo-socialiste* grouping. Under Léon Blum the French became the first major power to seek to halt Fascism, both internally and internationally, through the formation of a Popular Front government in which the Communists sat.¹⁸ In the Netherlands, while the SDAP – also apprehensive of the gains which National Socialism was making in the country – was converted to fighting the 1937 election campaign under its own *planiste* banner, the *Plan van de Arbeid* (*Labour Plan*), it neither gained nor lost votes in the process.¹⁹ In Belgium, de Man became Minister in charge of economic reconstruction in the coalition government and was never able to push *planisme* beyond uncontroversial legislation to create the outlines of a mixed economy.²⁰

Yet, the revision of Socialism which de Man and his followers started had more long-term consequences. Firstly, the space which *planisme* found in Western Socialist movements revealed the extent of the doctrinal and tactical crisis within a social-democracy faced with the Depression and the rise of Nazism to power. Secondly, despite the short-lived experiment of the Popular Front and the commitment to collective security, social-democracy finalised in the revisionist debate its rejection of the internationalism promoted by the Soviet Union – a rejection which the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 made absolute. Following from this, and lastly, there was created a core of hostility to the Soviet state itself, increasingly regarded as imperialist. Much of the impetus toward pacifism in the social-democratic movement during the period immediately preceding the outbreak of war came from this hostility. So, too, did the belief that if Europe could remain at peace, Germany would serve to rein in Soviet ambitions. A clear expression of this view may be found in the article written in November 1939 by the French revisionist socialist, L. Zoretti, in which he argued that ‘It is no use beating Hitler if the Nazi regime disappears too. Any regime seems to us preferable to the revolutionary Stalinist regime.’²¹ What such a statement reveals – and similar positions might be cited from many within the French S.F.I.O. or the series of articles in the journal

¹⁸ On the battles which led to the formation of the *néo-socialiste* group see Marcel Déat, *Mémoires politiques* (Paris, 1989), pp. 233–322.

¹⁹ *Het Plan van de Arbeid* (Amsterdam, 1936). For an account of the genesis and development of the Plan campaign in the Netherlands: R. Abma, ‘Het Plan van de arbeid en de SDAP’, *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 92 (1976), pp. 37–68.

²⁰ Henri de Man, *Cavalier Seul. 45 années de socialisme européen* (Geneva, 1947), pp. 133–190.

²¹ *Redressement*, 1 November 1939.

Leiding which de Man wrote on the eve of the war²² – is a paradox. The revisionism which had started as a response to the threat of Fascism had turned, by the time of the outbreak of the war which it had always sought to prevent, to identifying the greater danger to Europe as that of an expansionary Bolshevism.

It was this ambiguity of focus which left social-democracy as a whole uncertain and defenceless when, after eight months of *drôle de guerre*, Germany launched her attack on the West. 'Anti-crisis socialism' had failed either to create the means for economic recovery or the coalition of forces in the nation on which reforms of structure might be based. The failure to prevent Nazi aggression or to prepare adequately for the war was, of course, one for which all groups in western societies shared the responsibility. Social-democracy alone, after nearly a decade of energy spent combatting both Communism and Fascism, had reached an impasse. Throughout the newly occupied western nations, social-democracy went into retreat and disbanded itself as a force for the immediate future. In France, even before the Germans had arrived in the temporary seat of government, Bordeaux, the National Assembly had voted by an overwhelming majority for the end of the Third Republic. Among those who agreed to transfer full powers to Marshal Pétain were 90 socialists.²³

If the defeat of 1940 left most socialists unable to define a practical or theoretical response, for some it provided the beginning of a new position. Men such as René Belin, the head of the largest trade union in France, rallied to the authoritarian Vichy regime as Minister of Labour, anxious to take the opportunity to put into action a new 'Labour Charter' which had been blocked before the war.²⁴ In Holland many thousands of members of the SDAP (as well as those from other political parties) joined an entirely new movement – the *Nederlandse Unie* (Netherlands Union) – which sought to develop new cross-class and cross-confessional forms of political and social co-operation in the absence of the traditional constraints posed by the existing parties. Before the end of the year the movement had over 800,000 members.²⁵ Above

²² The pacifist argument within the French Socialist Party is analysed in Marc Sadoun, *Les socialistes sous l'occupation. Résistance et collaboration*, pp. 5–33. In Belgium de Man published eleven lengthy polemics in the Dutch language Socialist periodical, *Leiding*, between January and December 1939. A twelfth article: *Einde van een polemiek*, ended the series in February 1940.

²³ Sadoun, *Les socialistes*, pp. 38–41.

²⁴ R. Belin, *Du secrétariat de la CGT au gouvernement de Vichy. Mémoires*, (Paris, 1978).

²⁵ For the history of the formation of the Netherlands Union: M.L. Smith, 'Neither resistance nor collaboration: historians and the problem of the *Nederlandse Unie*', *History*, No. 237 (1987), pp. 251–60.

all, in Belgium, de Man reacted to the defeat (against which he had been an active combattant) by issuing, on 28 June 1940, a Manifesto to activists of the Socialist Party. In it he declared the Party to be dead and asked its members to 'prepare to become the cadres of a movement of resurrection' which would achieve the social justice that had been impossible to attain before the defeat.²⁶ His initiative led rapidly to the formation of such a new movement: the UTMI, or Union of Workers by Hand and Brain.²⁷

It must be stressed that social-democracy was not the only source of renovationist thinking; although its ranks provided both the greatest number and the most articulate of activists in the period immediately following the defeat. It would equally be a distortion to see these reactions to defeat as having their origin either in a positive welcome for Nazi occupation or as a conversion to Nazism. Certainly, the first reactions were based on what the protagonists saw as a realistic assessment that Germany was likely to be the hegemonic continental power for some time. Much more, the theme that ran through the manifestos and pronouncements was that of the liberation from the impasse of the pre-war, in which was included the incapacity of the parliamentary regimes to bring about conditions of social justice. As de Man put it in his call to new action: 'this destruction of a decrepit world, far from being a disaster is a deliverance'; words echoed in the Manifesto of the *Nederlandse Unie* which identified 'the birth of a new task' from the necessity of the times.²⁸ The Nazis were greeted, then, neither as liberators nor as ideological allies, but as facilitators of what had not been possible to achieve before their arrival. What needed to be defined was the point of contact and conduit between them.

Before analysing the form in which that contact was articulated and, in particular the function which anti-Bolshevism had in this process, it is necessary broadly to describe the relationship between Germany and the occupied western territories in the period after the defeats of 1940 but before the war against the Soviet Union. The conquests of 1939 and 1940 had allowed the Nazis to open up the economies of developed Europe to their use. In so doing they partially freed themselves from the domestic economic constraints imposed on their regime by the need to maintain some

²⁶ The text of the Manifesto may be found in Henri de Man, *Après coup*, (Brussels, 1941), pp. 318–19.

²⁷ For the early history of UTMI: E. Delvo, *De mens wikt...Terugblik op een wisselvallig leven*, (Antwerp, 1978), p. 103ff.

²⁸ De Man, *Après coup*, p. 319. The Manifesto of the Netherlands Union: *Manifest aan het Nederlandse Volk*, 24 July 1940, together with the *Program*, in *De Unie*, No. 1 (August 1940).

measure of internal social acquiescence. The economies of the occupied territories were, then, in varying degrees and forms subject to immediate plunder and longer term expropriation.²⁹ It was from the stocks and productive capacity of these countries that the Nazis replenished the consumer goods (as well as achieving a healthy profit on the real costs of occupation) which were essential to maintain social peace in the Reich. Simultaneously this allowed for an expanded armaments programme to be put in motion. Western Europe, then, helped free the resources that enabled the Nazis to build for the campaign in the East which, precisely because it was conceived and presented in terms of a short war, demanded in its preparation a far greater commitment to production and mobilisation than could be expected of the German population alone. The success of *Blitzkrieg* had put at the disposal of the Nazi regime those means necessary for the final assault on Bolshevism. It equally permitted them to continue to disguise the true scale of the war that they planned, a scale whose extent may be judged by the fact that even with the extensive looting of western Europe it was still necessary in late 1940 to push through the deeply unpopular measure of freezing wages and increasing prices within the Reich.³⁰

German dependence on the European economies was well established before she launched her attack on the Soviet Union. When *Blitzkrieg* failed in the face of the Soviet counter-attack in 1942 this did not, therefore, create a relation; it simply made its smooth operation more urgent. If the change to all-out war found German society in many respects unprepared and the regime prey to the possibility of openly expressed discontent at home, this served to make the contribution of the occupied territories more vital than ever. The logic of Nazi goals in Europe increasingly bound regime and population in Germany together in a need to exploit resources elsewhere. These would provide a cushion against the true material costs of the war and, further, as the war began to go wrong, ensure the basis of national security itself.

Although the outlines of the unequal relationship were well developed before the Russian campaign, the process of exploitation remained largely *ad hoc*. It was only from the time when the first *Blitzkrieg* assault on the Soviet Union ran out of steam that western Europe, hitherto the object of a somewhat uncoordinated, if generally

²⁹ A. S. Milward, *The New Order and the French Economy*, (Oxford, 1970); J.R. Gillingham, *Belgian Business in the Nazi New Order*, (Ghent, 1977); G. Hirschfeld, *Freundherrschaft und Kollaboration: die Niederlande unter deutscher Besatzung 1940–1945*, (Stuttgart, 1984).

³⁰ Cited in S. Salter, 'Structures of consensus and coercion: workers' morale and the maintenance of work discipline, 1939–1945', in D. Welch (ed.), *Nazi propaganda*, (London, 1983), pp. 88–116.

effective, plunder, took on a more integrated importance to the German war effort. In March 1942 Fritz Sauckel was appointed as Reich General Plenipotentiary for Labour with the specific brief of recruiting mass drafts of manpower from the occupied areas – in particular from countries such as France which had remained relatively untapped in this respect. One month earlier Albert Speer had been named as Minister for Armaments charged with rationalising production, especially the under-utilised high-technology resources of western European industry. Contracts for war work, the retooling of factories geared to production of war *matériel*, the return, in countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands, to high levels of employment in the engineering and electrical sectors and the increased draining off of surplus labour from the dole queues into largely menial jobs in the Reich, all intensified in number during this period.³¹ The war became an explicitly European conflict, fought not only by a growing European army but, as importantly, by European workers and the productive capacity of the advanced part of the Continent.

Such a level of exploitation in western Europe naturally required co-operation at the level of the indigenous administrations. To some extent this was readily conceded (though rarely volunteered) insofar as occupier and occupied shared an interest in maintaining high levels of employment. This was especially so in countries such as the Netherlands, in which unemployment had persisted right up to May 1940, or Belgium, where there was a long tradition of labour migration to German industry. In the second half of 1940 and throughout 1941 the senior civil servants put their expertise and authority more or less willingly behind the urgent task of restoring economic life. With the change in the intensity of German requirements it was not a very great step to increase the demand for co-operation to include accepting an ever greater volume of German orders, especially those involving the production of components directly useful in armament manufacture.³²

³¹ For Speer and Sauckel's policies: Milward, *The French Economy*, Ch. VI; P.F. Klemm, *German economic policies in Belgium from 1940 to 1944*, (Ann Arbor, 1978); Hirschfeld, *Freundherrschaft*, pp. 117–54; P.W. Becker, *The basis of the German war economy under Albert Speer, 1942–1944*, (Stanford, 1971); E.L. Homze, *Foreign Labour in Nazi Germany*, (Princeton, 1967), Chs. V–VII.

³² On this question see the memoirs of the senior Dutch civil servant, the Secretary-General for Economic Affairs: H. Hirschfeld, *Herinneringen uit de Bezettingstijd*, (Amsterdam, 1960) and the testimony given by civil servants to the post-war Parliamentary Enquiry in *Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940–1945*, Vol. 7C: *Leiding en voorlichting aan ambtenaren en burgers in de bezette gebieden*, ('s-Gravenhage, 1956). For Belgium: J.L. Charles and P. Dasnoy (eds.), *Les Secrétaires-généraux face à l'occupant. Procès-verbaux des réunions, 1940–1944*, (Brussels, 1974). For France a useful summary is provided by Michel Margairaz, 'L'Etat et la décision économique', in J.-P. Azéma (ed), *Vichy et les Français*, (Paris, 1992), pp. 329–44.

What started as cooperation at the administrative level became increasingly forced. The appointment of Speer and Sauckel was one indication of this change of relationship, as it was of the greater importance which the Germans placed on co-ordinating exploitation. The developing reluctance of officials to consent to too close an association with the German war effort had to be counteracted by threats. These were provided by the presence of the Nazis' collaborationist allies. National Socialist movements and ideologically imitative groups – small in numbers as they were – were freely used in the first year and a half of the occupation to stifle complaints about the extent of economic exploitation by the simple threat that the Germans might allow them to exercise real power themselves. How seriously such a threat was taken may be judged by the prevalence within occupied western Europe of the decision to make concessions in order to avoid something worse. France serves as the clearest example. There, the presence in Paris of a group of 'ultra' collaborationists willing to take power had a major influence in keeping Vichy, with its desire to retain autonomy, in line with German demands.³³

In fact the Nazis kept their imitators tantalisingly away from real power, relying on the contempt in which they were held by their countrymen to provide a sufficient incentive for collaborators to stay loyal. As we now know, the Nazis themselves shared this contempt.³⁴ Moreover, they calculated that granting real authority to such groups risked disturbing the relatively favourable balance of the occupation. Yet, as the resources and skills of occupied Europe were more and more needed to replace those swallowed by the conflict in the East and, additionally, as the strain on social relations in the Reich caused by this haemorrhage, as well as by the effects of the Allied bombing, began to tell, so the Nazis could not afford to ignore and frustrate their obvious allies. It became essential that they should keep alive the basis of collaboration by providing as broad a spectrum as possible of the collaborationist groups with a role and a future within their own societies.

The obvious link between the Nazis and their putative partners was anti-Bolshevism. From the moment of the attack on the Soviet Union this theme became a key sustaining myth of the utility of confined partnership. For that part of the ideological spectrum in which indigenous National Socialists were to be found, the anti-Bolshevik crusade provided the Nazis with an instrument by which they could test

³³ A good recent survey may be found in F.G. Dreyfus, *Histoire de Vichy. Vérités et légendes*, (Paris, 1991), esp. Ch IV, pp. 620-92.

³⁴ Typical is Seyss-Inquart, 'Erste Bericht', pp. 415-16.

the loyalty and commitment of their most ardent foreign supporters. Participation in this area of the German war effort became the most public sign, from France to Scandinavia, of collaboration with the Nazi cause. More cynically, the crusade served as a most useful means of removing figures who were potentially too charismatic or independently-minded to be entirely subordinate. Doriot, the leading personality of the French collaboration and Degrelle in Belgium were prominent examples of collaborators who were encouraged by the Germans in their desire to fight on the eastern front, from which it was hoped that they would heroically fail to return. For these people, in their turn, the crusade against world communism expressed the main shared point of reference between themselves and the Nazis and completed the history of a drift to Fascism that had often started in Spain or the rejection of the Popular Front.

The conjunction of interests that was subsumed in the participation of collaborationists in the anti-Bolshevik crusade was intrinsically ordinary and predictable. Less so was the attraction that the theme held for those people who, as outlined earlier, had reacted to the changes of 1940 with a positive energy. Their pre-war trajectory had led them to reject socialist internationalism as appropriated by the Soviet state. But this rejection neither implied, nor led directly to, giving aid toward the physical destruction of that state under Nazi auspices. Fascism had always, after all, until recently been regarded as an enemy equal to Bolshevism.

Yet, despite the danger inherent in taking sides in the systemic conflict that, from June 1941, was waged in the East, the decision to do so came to seem increasingly inevitable. This was so for three reasons: the change in the scope of the war itself; the desire to bring to completion a new social and political construct; and the search for a new internationalism. The first depended on the argument that the war had moved beyond the realm of the compromise peace which had always seemed a possible outcome during the first year after the defeat. It was, therefore, no longer reasonable to pretend that the shape of fundamental social and political reforms created in outline in expectation of the end of a short-lived period of occupation, could rapidly be brought to fruition. But – and this provided the second reason for the attractive logic of anti-Bolshevism – the necessity of articulating such reforms was, to their authors, no less urgent than it had been in 1940. On the contrary, the momentum of the first phase had, inevitably, slackened insofar as the benefits of the new Europe which would follow the *tabula rasa* of defeat had patently failed to materialise. Instead, the worsening of material conditions and the increasingly exploitative demands of the occupier, effectively put all initiatives in abeyance. The vigorous prosecution of the war against the Soviet

Union, they argued, alone gave the chance of a permanent European peace; such a peace was, equally, the precondition for economic and social reconstruction to start.³⁵

Lastly, and following from the above positions, the focus of anti-Bolshevism permitted the shape of a European-wide reconstruction to be defined. Before the war many, as we have seen, had come to the conclusion that the Soviet system was imperialist in a territorial as much as an ideological sense. For them, the defeat of Germany at its hands would open the way for the Bolshevisation of the Continent. Thus, however unattractive Fascism (and especially its Nazi variant) was, Germany represented, even in her current political form, the sole committed rampart against Communist expansion. Further, Germany alone, through her defence against Bolshevism, incarnated the possibility (perverted as this was at present under the Nazi regime) of achieving a politics between capitalism and Marxism. Above all, the defeat of Bolshevism was necessary if international co-operation was again to be a creative force. Those who before the war had been attracted by the various strands of socialist revisionism and had looked to define a different social construct, were increasingly convinced, then, that it was Germany, through her containment of Bolshevism, which held the key to the realisation of their ideas. Anti-Bolshevism provided them with the bedrock of a belief that they and National Socialism were – although only in this one respect – pushing towards the same ends. More, that in the pursuit of the destruction of Bolshevism lay the only guarantee of a European context in which social justice might flourish.

It was in exploiting this sense of a mutuality of interests that the conduit of anti-Bolshevism was most useful to the Nazis, serving a central function in sustaining their own concept of Europe. In the occupied territories of western Europe anti-Bolshevism helped undermine a national unity already under strain. It did so by transposing patriotism so that the betrayal of the national interest was suggested as being its most profound defence. What the anti-Bolshevik crusade sought to create was the sense that not only were the German armies defending Europe, but that the freedom of the historic nations at its core was conditional on victory over Bolshevism.³⁶ As Joseph Goebbels expressed it at a later date in his speech after the defeat at Stalingrad: if the German people put their blood at the disposal of Europe, it was the duty of the constituent nations freely to give their labour and productive resources and,

³⁵ De Man, *Cavalier seul* pp. 256–57.

³⁶ A. Seyss-Inquart, *Vier Jahre in den Niederlanden. Gesammelte Reden*, (Amsterdam, 1944), pp. 67–79.

by so doing, redeem the sacrifice which was being made on their collective behalf.³⁷ The anti-Bolshevik crusade subsumed the idea of European unity itself and made it dependent on transcendent German interests.

Active collaborationists were a small and – as the defeat of Germany became more certain – a declining minority in occupied western Europe. If anti-Bolshevism attracted them it was as satellites of long date in the orbit of Fascism rather than as converts to a new cause. Those, such as de Man and the people he had inspired in other countries, who were drawn into that orbit by other calculations of what the war might bring, also eventually sought to free themselves from the service which anti-Bolshevism rendered to the means of Nazi oppression. They realised, too late perhaps, that anti-Bolshevism in the hands of the Nazi state was no more than the attempt cynically to harness the destructive forces which its own ideological drive had called into play. Some, like de Man, went into internal exile; others joined the Resistance.³⁸ This uncertain trajectory is important to note since it helps to focus attention away from the question of the extent to which their role in the occupation made them fascist by association.³⁹ What is more certain is that they sought to continue under the occupation what they had started before the war. To do so in the conditions of apparent fluidity that pertained after the defeat of France in 1940 was both an overwhelming temptation and a mistake. That they sought a public role in their occupied societies does not in itself, however, invalidate their argument that national revival could only occur around a revised social-democracy. What did vitiate their case was the taint given to it by its contact with Nazism through the conduit of anti-Bolshevism. They had believed it possible to harness their own rejection of the internationalist claims of the Soviet state to the very different hegemonic intentions of the Nazis. They had wanted to free Europe from the threat of Bolshevism and, by so doing, create the conditions in which Nazism would modify itself. That belief tied the achievement of their transformational aims to the outcome of a fundamental battle between two absolute competing ideologies. It was this choice which in the realities of the post-war world disqualified their political and social arguments from consideration.

³⁷ Cited in E.K. Bramsted, *Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda 1925–1945*, (London, 1965), pp. 264–68.

³⁸ For a discussion of the analytical problem caused by such a transfer from collaboration to resistance in the Netherlands: M.L. Smith, 'The *Nederlandse Unie*', pp. 261–69.

³⁹ This position has consistently been argued by the historian Zeev Sternhell; most forcefully in his study of French ideology in the 1930s: *Ni droite, ni gauche. L'idéologie fasciste en France* (Paris, 83). For a survey of this debate, which has importance outside French history: J. Julliard, 'Sur un fascisme imaginaire', *Annales*, Vol. 4 (1984), pp. 849–61.

The disunity of Europe after the war suggested that they were, nonetheless, still of some relevance.

MICHAEL L. SMITH

A SZOCIÁLDEMOKRÁCIA REVÍZIÓJA; NÁCIZMUS ÉS ANTIBOLSEVIZMUS NYUGAT-EURÓPÁBAN, (1933 – 1945)

1941-ben a náci propaganda a Nyugat, a civilizáció védelmét szolgáló kereszteshadjáratként állította be a Szovjetunió megtámadását, s arról igyekezett meggyőzni a megszállt Nyugat-Európa lakosságát, hogy az egész kontinensnek hozzá kell járulni a sikerhez. Első pillantásra úgy tűnhet, kevés fogantja volt ennek a propagandának. A „kereszteshadjárat” csatlakozó nyugat-európai önkéntesek száma (kb. 50 000 fő) katonai szempontból jelentéktelen, s maguk a megszállók is óvakodtak attól, hogy pl. Dániában vagy Hollandiában a nyugati civilizáció fegyveres védelme ürügyén lehetőséget adjanak a néhány hónapja legyőzött, szétszórta hadseregek újjászervezésére. Katonai szempontból sokkal fontosabb volt Németország számára az a támogatás, amelyet a spanyol, olasz, román, magyar, stb. reguláris erők képviseltek a keleti fronton.

Ennek ellenére sem mondhatjuk azt, hogy az antibolsevista kereszteshadjáratra való felhívásnak pusztán propagandisztikus-retorikus jelentősége volt. Az antibolsevizmus vált ugyanis az összekötő kapocsá a megszálló és megszállottak között, ekörül a tengely körül alakult ki az a minimális konszenzus és együttműködés, amire a németeknek nemcsak a gazdaság működtetése érdekében volt szükségük, hanem egy náciellenes nemzeti egység kialakulásának meggátálása céljából is.

Az okokat kutatva a szerző kimutatja, hogy a bolsevizmus-ellenesség mélyen áthatotta a két világháború közötti Nyugat-Európa társadalmát. Kialakításában nemcsak a klasszikus jobboldali erők vagy a feltörekvő fasizmus vállalt szerepet, hanem a szociáldemokrácia is. Ennek következtében hatóköre széles tömegekre terjedt ki.

A szerző véleménye szerint a szociáldemokrácia esetében különbséget kell tennünk a huszas és a harmincas évek antibolsevizmusa között. A huszas évek elején a szovjetellenességet elsősorban a forradalom közvetlen veszélyétől s a militáns baloldaltól való félelem motiválta. A nyugat-európai kommunisták lába alól azonban kihúzta a talajt a háború utáni válság leküzdése, a Nyugat képessége a prosperitás megújítására. E folyamat közepette a szociáldemokráciának sikerült bekapcsolódnia a politika főáramába. A Szovjetunió gazdasági gyengesége, politikai elszigeteltsége, stb. csökkentette a bolsevik internacionalizmustól való félelmet. Úgy tűnt, nem a fasizmus és bolsevizmus közötti választás a probléma, hanem a cselekvés határainak kijelölése a kettő közötti területen.

A második világháború alatti antibolsevizmus jellemző jegyei azonban nem a huszas, hanem a harmincas években alakultak ki. Megértésükhöz nemcsak azt kell figyelembe vennünk, hogy a válsággal küzdő európai kapitalizmus számára a fasizmus és a kommunizmus mint két, a rendszerrel szemben fellépő mozgalom jelentkezett, hanem azt a kihívást is, amit a kezelhetetlennek tűnő válság a nem kommunista baloldal számára jelentett. Úgy tűnt, a történelem magát a liberális-demokratikus rendszert kérdőjelezi meg. A mérleg másik serpenyőjébe nemcsak az a vonzás került, amit a náci gazdaság- és szociálpolitika gyakorolt a munkásság tekintélyes részére, hanem a szovjet veszély új formája is. A nyugat-európai szociáldemokrata vezetők úgy látták, a gyorsan iparosodó Szovjetunió nemcsak gazdasági gondjait oldja meg, ami önmagában is kihívást jelent a nyugatnak, hanem a marxista internacionalizmust mindinkább azonosítja a szovjet állam érdekeivel, s ez a törekvés még a fasizmus elleni fellépésében, pl. a népfrontmozgalomban is tetten érhető.

Míndez új orientációs irányok keresésére, a marxizmus további revíziójára ösztönözte a szociáldemokrácia teoretikusait. A belga Hendrik de Man a több osztály szövetségén nyugvó, „válságellenes szocializmus” nemzeti szintű megvalósításában látta a kitérés lehetőségét. Elmélete, a planisme rövid távon kevés eredményt hozott a nyugat-európai szociáldemokráciának, hosszabb távon

azonban komoly következményekkel járt. Nemcsak a szocialista doktrina és taktika válságát tette ugyanis világossá, hanem véglegessé tette a szovjet típusú internacionalizmus elutasítását, s ellenségképet rajzolt az imperialista törekvésű Szovjetunióról is.

A szociáldemokrata revízió különböző változatai, így a planisme is, eredetileg az ideiglenes jelenségnek tekintett fasizmussal szemben akartak alternatívát nyújtani. Az új stratégia keresése közben – mint azt a szerző részletesen taglalja – számos belga, holland, dán, francia szociáldemokrata vezető nézetei közel kerültek a náci állásponthez, bár egyikük sem vált fasisztává.

Kísérleteik sikertelensége a háború kitörése után a pártok bénultságát, egyes vezetők, mozgalmak dezorientáltságát, helyenként a fasizmussal való kokettálásukat eredményezte. A szovjetellenes háború kirobbanása után ezeknek a teóriáknak is az antibolshevizmusa került előtérbe. A náci propaganda, támaszkodva a különböző forrásokból származó származó szovjetellenes nézetekre és hangulatokra, összeurópai ügyként tudta interpretálni a háborút. Ez hatékonyan segítette az együttműködési készség kialakítását a megszállt országokban, pl. a gazdasági szférában. A háború második szakaszában, a sztálingrádi vereség után az együttműködés mindinkább kényszerre vált, amelyet a totális gazdaság irányítói erőszakoltak ki.

A szociáldemokrácia vezető köreinek álláspontja azonban még a német vereségek korszakában is a korábbi ideológiai fenntartásokat tükrözte. Egyes vezetők ugyan csatlakoztak az ellenálláshoz, mások azonban visszavonultak vagy kivárára rendezkedtek be. Mindez előre vetítette a nyugat-európai baloldal háború utáni megosztottságát is.