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Where does racism come from and how does it work?

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15 When fanatical xenophobes throw blacks from subway trains, attack Turks or set fire to the
 homes of refugees, responsible modern citizens from left to right agree: this is a moral aberration
 that does not fit the image of our glorious democracy and in no way reflects the attitudes of the
 "vast majority." Leftists warn of a transgression of the prevailing moral standards and evoke –
 "never again!" – the experience of Auschwitz, although the general sense of justice must recoil from
 this conclusion. The parties on the right and those in office proclaim that racism is incompatible
 20 with the democratic consensus, so that the nation and national sentiments are shielded from any
 ugly conclusions. They stress the difference between an understandable "fear of being overrun by
 aliens" and a more reprehensible "ethnic cleansing" which they only see in far away countries or the
 distant past. They insist that the transition to racism and the persecution of those from different
 national backgrounds today – which is considered fundamentally inexplicable since the end of the
 25 second world war – eludes any explanation. If one searches for reasons why normal and decent
 citizens in certain cases see the persecution of aliens and concentration camps called for, one learns
 that this can't do justice to the unique immorality of such events. One is suspected of being a
 "rationalist" who shows understanding for the inhumane and is ultimately even ready to participate
 in genocide himself.

30 Neither party is justified. Knowing the roots of racism is the prerequisite for fighting it, for
 "nipping it in the bud!" whenever it turns up, instead of fearing the next step – which is apparently
 entirely conceivable – and nostalgically considering the preceding normal citizen's mindset still
 innocent. In any case, such an explanation can not be shamed by the rules of democratic morality
 35 because it deals precisely with the relation between good morals and perverse versions of the same.

I.

40 What the advocates of the familiar social playing field do not want to accept is basically quite
 simple: the resentment towards those who do not belong here, whose endpoint is the sorting of
 humans along racial lines, postulates membership in a "we," a common identity that consists in
 more than just being subjected to a particular state, its economic system, etc.

45 a) Anyone who lives in Germany, France, the USA or anywhere else is subjected to the most
 diverse forms of constraints within which he is used. If he does not have enough money, he is
 forced to work for others, which does not exactly make him rich. The money earned is in any case
 always enough that he has to pay taxes on it. The predictable discontent sends him directly to the
 polls, where he helps the parties choose who should govern. Sometimes he is ordered to stand at
 attention as a soldier and even dies a hero's death, because defending these magnificent living
 50 conditions can hardly be left up to the small minority who actually benefits from them. And
 certainly all these conditions result in similarities as well as differences among the individuals

involved, which are based on their respective interests. But it is equally clear that this compulsory membership in an economic, legal, and political interconnection is created neither by a special feeling of “national identity” nor the need to exclude others from “our own” community. The national idea already requires that one consider the real duties of a capitalist society – which one meets because one’s existence depends on it – as moral duties which one responsibly undertakes as contributions to a general community project.

b) Certainly, the existence of this greater good to which everyone from government and business down to the “little guy” renders their more or less honorable services, only makes sense if one is wearing moralistic eyeglasses. But the notion of a “national community” or of a “common good” is productive in still another, albeit ruinous way. Needless to say, measured in terms of what one gets out of them, the real services would turn out to be negative were they not set into relation with such idealizations. False consciousness is therefore necessary to participate in this rat race.

Society needs all this as honorable contributions to the community’s success. From this society’s perspective and in the name of the community, the notion of the national community serves to justify the obvious antagonisms between the social interests, the property-related differences in the relation between pay and performance, and finally the job and income hierarchy. In any individual case, one may think that one has been personally treated unfairly. But it is beyond doubt that the national community has the task of ensuring for an order in which everyone belongs in their place. So it is unnecessary to look at the means which the different types of citizens have available to them and which results in a very peculiar form of dependence: it is all recognized as a social order with rights and duties like any functioning community needs and that its government has to ensure; what is more: like any member of the community, regardless of their status and importance, is entitled to.

II.

This sense of justice begins dividing up the world.

a) If the “differences” between rich and poor, employers and workers, landlords and the homeless are accepted in principle, then the “fate” that puts one in one group and the other in a second group, maybe sometimes in the wrong one but basically always in the right place – at least it should be that way – results in the conviction that the nationally organized selection and distribution of people into the pre-given hierarchy, from the “very bottom” up to the “elite,” is not what it actually is, but rather is defined by the claim that everyone is allotted what they deserve. All exceptions prove the rule that in a good community any person in the community should be and ultimately will be what he – “under any circumstances” – is. To reach this view, it is not necessary to have discovered the gene that makes millionaires, cobblers or politicians successful (it is sufficient that there is enormous interest in this crazy idea). The interest in the outcome is the reason that an “explanation” is searched for in the individual’s given abilities – so that the completed capitalism looks in the end like the perfect utilization of the natural diversity of intelligence and other reserves of talent.

This is the first type of racism: the interpretation of social groups as a division of the human race determined by nature.

b) Although the social world is supposed to be something like the natural order of things and people, it is still far from perfect. There is a lack of harmony everywhere in a society that is supposedly harmonious: employers bicker with unions; everyone complains about something; the parties are at odds rather than agreeing – what’s wrong? The good citizen knows the answer before the question is asked: across all ranks and strata, genders and classes, people differ in their attitude,

105 in the sense of duty with which they take their place in the social whole. Everywhere there are the good who serve the community and keep it going and the malicious who disturb the social peace with their selfishness. The redundant question why they exist is already answered with the fact that they exist: just like the ability to be a carpenter or a math whiz, so should character, as the name suggests, also reside in the blood. Crime comes from criminal energy; and either one has it or one doesn't. Unlike other abilities, however, this one is not acceptable: the subspecies of indecent people – this distinction is the second type of racism – must be forced to submit to the existing order or isolated from it.

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c) After all, even the bad guys, as a kind of genetic dregs, still belong to "us": to the community of the people which organizes itself basically harmoniously and puts everyone in their proper place. The situation is different with "the others" as spotted by faithful members of the national commonwealth – be it in the media, when visiting exotic beaches, or among "us," as the state also grants foreigners a right of residence. These foreigners are foreign – not because their attitude toward the social conditions in their home country is much different than "ours" or because they are doing something wrong or out of the ordinary in this country, but because their passports show their membership to a different people. They have obligations to that community and its values, not to "ours." There, they get what they are entitled to – and what they are entitled to is something completely different than what "our" community in this country owes its honorable members, even if it is ultimately about one and the same thing, namely, money: Even wealth in its most abstract form pales the differences in to whom it belongs when faced with the distinction between "our" money and "their" money. That's how fundamental the ideal border is between "us" and those who simply don't belong here – whether they are rich or poor, good or evil.

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It is so fundamental that, like the internal differences within the people, one doesn't have to be reminded of its real reason. If one imagines that the nation is based on a moral community, then one is far beyond the objective fact that the only reason for the distinction between natives and foreigners is the limited reach of state power. Admitting that would be tantamount to standing the whole moral commitment to the nation and its social order "on its feet," that is, rejecting such idiocy. Instead of seeing himself as a member of a compulsory community, the good citizen believes he is in an enviable, privileged position: an honorary member of an association called "the people" which no one ever established in that sense – it is the other way around: it is only the people that give meaning and purpose to the arrangement called the state. Among other things, the project of advantageous dealings with foreign peoples who are just absolutely and ultimately inexplicably "different" in nature – more than a few of whom are permitted to "assimilate" and at the very end, preferably not until the second or third generation, become "one of us." Because one must first and foremost consider such an individual as primarily an alien; and if one would prefer to look at it the other way around, he is still not the same as a compatriot for that reason – then one would also not have been fair to him and his people's nature ...

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This is racism in its third and most thorough form: whether one belongs to the people or not is the criterion that divides humankind into national species, even before subdividing them into the differently gifted and the differently good. Each person belongs to one of these natures, so to speak, as his main natural endowment. Just like curly hair, or whatever zoologists use to distinguish one Homo from the other.

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d) Even people who would not otherwise have any objection to the idea of a national community are sometimes offended by the exclusion and contempt for foreigners – because it disturbs their good image of the community. They advocate "sensible" distinctions and oppose "unjust" discrimination, which means their criticism of racism is in every respect very conditional.

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155 In hindsight, it is considered, for example, a major objection to the persecution of Jews in the Third Reich that the most skilled and conscientious German citizens were expelled and exterminated as aliens. The German intellectual elite – physicists, authors, businessmen, decorated veterans of World War I – were lost solely because of an “arrogant racial superiority.” Extremely reprehensible! What objections would these same critics make if there had been less than model Germans among the Jews?

160 Maybe they would say the same thing as those from more recent times say about the Turks and other southerners when arguing for their right to stay in the country: they do the dirty work, garbage collection and so on, that no native German wants to touch! There is also no criticism of racism in this rejection of “prejudice,” that people from other nations deserve to be despised for their skills and work ethic. It distinguishes only between an unjust and a just exclusion that they do not want to
165 criticize.

In the end, the criticism is reduced to the very abstract bit of wisdom that one mostly hears nowadays: “Foreigners are people too” or “We’re all aliens in most places in the world.” Phrases like these will seriously unsettle those who constantly see that many people are foreigners, especially in places where they believe they should not be allowed to be. And, strictly speaking, these sayings also subscribe to natural differences which should then not mean anything because of the flimsiest of all “commonalities.”

175 III.

Racism: this is the political-moral way of looking at the human race that the state has organized and sorted. It translates this into their national and moral character. It is the image of humankind created by the patriotic spirit which belongs to the typical citizen’s consciousness; it is therefore a product of the forced political association that the citizen refuses to see as such. What this outlook sees and which details it registers therefore depends on the way this moral attitude reveals its
180 polemical qualities and depends on the reasons that the citizen finds for national discontent.

a) Patriotism always takes its cues from the catalog of living conditions it is unhappy with. It gains its momentum from dissatisfaction – a satisfied materialism rarely turns people into
185 convinced patriots. And it is immediately clear that what makes people insist on devotion to duty and moral integrity is a special kind of self-entitlement that calls for action: against those who are to blame for disturbing the cooperation between governing and governed, investors and willing workers, schools and parents, etc. They can’t find any other way to explain the lack of success of good citizens and the hardships suffered by good patriots in the midst of a community that is
190 dedicated to the prosperity of its people.

b) The guilty figures which insulted patriotism invents, it also unerringly finds. In making a critical assessment of its people, it sees a widespread selfishness that distorts and falsifies the fair selection of people, those who undeservingly get their hands on state benefits without giving back the services that the community needs – and therefore it is the good members of the people, all the
195 decent citizens, who are the dupes. No social status is exempt – parasites are everywhere: in the millionaire districts there are parasitic speculators right next to job-creating investors; among the homeless, there are those who have fallen into hardship through no fault of their own as well as worthless freeloaders who do not want to work.

200 Such distinctions pale, however, next to the discovery that many a member of the national

community must make again and again: there are some who do not belong here at all. They “take over” everywhere, not because they take more space than others, but because they do not belong here. From this viewpoint, they are to blame for everything that bothers a disgruntled citizen: they take jobs, women and housing away from the locals; they bring chaos, immorality and drugs into the country; they get everything that a native born citizen either knows not to ask for or has to stand in line for a long time to get ... Such people do not have to first violate any law – but if they do, that damn well fits the nationalist image of them! – in order to be accused of having violated the first and foremost civic duty: that of being a responsible member of the national community. Without a valid membership card, i.e. without the right to be here, they are here simply and solely to disrupt the harmony among those who otherwise form a united people without actually sharing a common interest.

It’s just as well that the sensitized natives are able to recognize them instantly – by “racial characteristics” in the banal sense of random external features that have nothing to do with the political-moral content of racism: the separation of people into people’s communities. Apart from that, this criterion can be used for identifying those who “do not belong here.” That’s also why it’s not a big deal when someone misses the mark once in a while.

c) This search for those who are morally responsible for the deplorable situation in the exemplary homeland gets to the core of civic racism. Of course, the disgruntled patriot can differentiate between domestic and foreign criminals. But when it comes to the intact community, as the citizen imagines his nation, then it quickly turns out which distinction is more fundamental: one type is the scum who belong to “us” like to any nation and are treated the way they deserve; the other does not meet the fundamental condition: of belonging to us – even in its finest specimens. And is it not the case that the native troublemakers, at least those who damage the national harmony, upon closer inspection are also aliens, or at least ultimately a foreign element? How can aliens in their own country be anything but a factor for disorder – even if one might not be able to blame them personally?

d) In any case, one must blame the state for allowing foreigners to become a disruptive factor instead of responding to its disgruntled citizens’ need for harmony by conducting a thorough separation and selection process. Anyone who does not want to put up with this scandal faces a choice. Either he has a few drinks and musters the courage to take into his own hands what the state won’t resolve and palpably demonstrates with other like-minded people who is in charge and where foreigners belong, i.e. away from here. However, such an initiative is a violation of the state’s monopoly and, as an illegal act, not for everyone. The more successful way is to go into politics – because private power will never be as effective as the public power.

e) The transition to xenophobia in practice brings into circulation a criticism that questions whether it is really necessary. But the criticism of racist practice is not – like uneasiness with racist sorting – about the necessity for racists attacks, but what is necessary in the national-moral worldview and can alternatively also be rejected.

The polemic against “foreign infiltration” which spoils the natives’ experience of an intact national community and therefore makes their lives increasingly difficult can, for example, also be reversed. Critical people, especially liberals, propagate the ideal image of a “multicultural society” and contrast the narrow-mindedness of xenophobia with the idea of an enrichment through going out and experiencing foreign customs, cuisines, etc. Unfortunately, the simple opposite of a mistake is still a mistake: anyone who considers the peaceful coexistence of different national characters possible and maybe even particularly rewarding because of their indescribable otherness believes as

firmly in the myth of “ethnic identity” as the philistines whose resentment he wants to dismiss as off-target.

255 This also applies to the “multicultural” ideal which causes some people to become friends rather than enemies of foreigners. Individuals may indeed have characteristics that are agreeable to one or the other, others less so, but their foreign nationality – just like the native one – is certainly not one of these characteristics. Anyone who wants to convince himself that this is the case only proves that he finds this difference very important – not because of his alleged personal reasons, but because no
260 internationalist can bear to imagine that the feeling of belonging to a people, one’s own as well as others, is nothing other than an order to be morally unimpeachable.

What the two alternative variants of patriotism have in common is that they underestimate racism by interpreting it as a “prejudice” that lacks any objective basis and that the critics want to
265 disengage from as an example for others. That racists mistake the object of their hatred is in fact the last thing they can be accused of. When they hunt the guilty and look for invaders who are not part of the people, they don’t let their victims’ individual characteristics confuse them in any way. The error is not that racists make wrong “generalizations” that could be corrected by experiencing foreign customs or deeper insight into them. Even racist theories – and not the normal forms of
270 ostracizing strangers – assume the nation’s decision to exclude them and is not the reason for the same. If anything misses the point, there are, for example, opponents of racism who are fond of citing the achievements of modern anthropology which deny the existence of biological differences in human races.

275 IV.

The state power does not necessarily adapt its policies to the morally affirmative verses that its citizens make of it. Rather, it uses them to legitimize itself, thus ensuring the up-to-date molding of a “healthy popular sentiment.” If someone demands that politicians only live up to their belief that
280 the state’s main task is to ensure harmony in the nation – by force if necessary – no politician will reject that. On the contrary! Racism is not only a product of the state-imposed community with its political-moral community spirit, it is also an officially encouraged commitment to the state. And exactly like the discontented citizen who feels the urge to commit patriotic deeds, so a state takes on a racist practice which upholds racism and exacerbates it – when it suits it.

285 a) The politicians always lend an open ear to disgruntled citizens when their patriotism has only made them hate foreigners. They hear, and rightly so, nothing but an echo of their promises to provide more benefits to their people and show an understanding of the racism of their citizens, even when they put the breaks on it. Because, strictly speaking, the people’s discontent is guided by the “issues” that dominate national public life and what they are all about in terms of causes and
290 effects; and these in turn are mainly defined by those who have “say-so” anyway. In general, therefore, it can be more or less guaranteed that public spirit mobilizes its racism to the extent that it becomes official opinion – and rarely the reverse.

295 b) To what extent this is true and how much practical policy results from it – or even: how far one gets when one accuses the ruling of having forgotten the people and in this way encourages the ruling parties or even creates a new one – is something that is decided by the nation’s success and failure as defined by those who are appointed to carry out such things. The state’s emergencies, which they identify and instruct their people to deal with, has a dramatic impact on the living
300 conditions of the various layers of the population. It destroys the normal ways of getting by and creates discontent among the people. Precisely for this reason, the citizens are particularly well

served in these kinds of situations: particularly in “hard times” the mood in the country should not be marred by the animosity that arises when aliens are around, and the untroubled relationship between the people and their leaders must not suffer under the provocation that an unresolved “alien
305 problem” invariably represents. The more the national leaders decide to use the morale of their people to resolve the national crisis while demanding material sacrifices, the more clearly they highlight the exclusivity of the national “we” by attacking and deporting the aliens, except those whose services are essential. A state in an emergency situation must be able to rely on its peoples’ unquestioning “solidarity”; so it cleans the disturbing elements from the same national community –
310 as if belief in the incompatibility of national human species were in fact true. When the state power considers it appropriate, it practices racism in the same sense as its citizens when they are able to imagine this particular state power over them as their own “identity” – which is why the state encourages the same theoretical racism.

315 c) It is an inherent part of any modern state doctrine that the people are a people only because it consists of humans of a specific nature who, in accord with their common nature, have joined together to form a resilient community; just as firmly embedded is the conclusion that aims at the practical consequences: that a nation is only strong and can live up to the “challenge” of “hard times” if its people stick to this most basic virtue.

320 Caring for this people-idea doesn’t have to go as far as memorializing the state-building insect called Aryans in the arts and sciences. However, “awareness of history” is part of the permanent stock of political thought with its peculiar theory that the free citizen is kept forever on a leash by the necessities, rules or prohibitions of the past. This awareness gets by entirely without knowledge,
325 but not entirely without commemorations, history museums, etc. – arrangements that explain (away) the sequence of exploitation and war in the past, as if it were the biography of the decent people’s community that has spanned generations and is still alive and kicking. National ideology refers everything the state power currently does to this fictitious people-individual as its inalienable and exceptional historic right: the more militant the project, the more it is treated as a historic
330 mission.

And the aliens’ otherness gets its specific traits all the more – complementary to the image of one’s own good people. The alien is often unfortunate enough to stand in the way of a national upheaval; whether because they are here and not where they belong; or whether because their state
335 makes disruptive claims on “history.” Then one knows for sure which mediocre human species needs to be purged so that the good people can once again be completely itself. And if it is directed against foreign countries, then a state always has all sorts of tangible strategic reasons for its hostility toward other states, but in all its abstractness, strategic thinking already provides everything that the enemy image
340 then makes out of it: a “fateful struggle” between freedom and socialist subhumans, between Western culture and Islamic terrorism, between European morality and Balkan-Slavic ethnic hatred ...

d) To give just one example of how effortlessly the politicians talk about the sentiments of the people as they invoke them, their mentoring of the same, and the incitement to radicalization, which
345 they interpret it as. Germany’s Federal Minister of Finance and former Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble in the Süddeutsche Zeitung: 1. he knows about the natural human propensity to segregate themselves according to “national identity”: “people need an identity which is always related to a community that needs to be defined (!). They have a need to belong to one or another (!). This stands in contrast to the universalist starting point.” 2. He appreciates the people’s sense of a
350 common bond because it is an indispensable basis for his politics. “The rational commitment to common constitutional values is inadequate as a bond for the community. Since many decisions are

based more on emotion than intellect, we need an emotional bond: that is just knowledge (!) on the basis of the community cohesion – one can then choose to call it a fatherland or a nation or a common history.” 3. in this respect he can feel the strain which this “feeling” experiences when confronted with people who belong to other “communities.” “One must not stir up the fear of many people that we are being flooded by foreigners, but this fear can’t be denied if we want to counteract it.” 4. That’s why he wants to avoid a “discussion of exclusion” by leading it himself. “If I let people be overstrained, I have to be aware that people can’t take it ... so in the end I will have achieved the opposite of what I wanted.”

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V.

All this, of course, has nothing to do with the racial delusions of the Nazis. Or does it?

a) If one decides to become a politician and compete for state leadership, then one hasn’t applied for just any job. Statesmen love their people – in their own special way: They will make the people into something greater. Of course, this includes the belief that the people have what it takes. That’s why national leaders like to say they “believe” in... America, for example, or Germany; but Serbia, China, Israel or Palestine can also be the cause this kind of person believes in. Certainly, the belief must already be very strong if the people are in a bad way: impoverished, divided, humiliated, bullied by external powers – and the opposite of the grand designs of the leader.

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Hitler believed in the German people’s right and ability to be a world power – “or no power at all!” as his radical alternative announced; and in this belief, he was distraught about a reality in which Germany – according to his patriotic view of things, which he shared with most of his competitors – was subjugated after World War I by the victorious powers, exploited by international finance capital and unable to find the strength to defend itself because the country was undermined from below by the class struggle led by communists and attacked from above by intellectuals who believed they knew higher values than the “natural” people’s community. More precisely: Hitler was close to despairing over his people – had he not discovered the solution which he propagated in his famous bestseller so unmistakably clearly that the currently popular theory of the “incomprehensibility” of Nazi anti-Semitism almost arouses suspicion that the primary sources have not been studied. According to all the rules of civic racism, he searched for those who were to blame for the miserable domestic situation in Germany, and he found a suitable cast for this role – after all, he already had a clue as to what he had to look for and couldn’t go wrong: the exploitation of the Germans by the finance capitalists as well as the domestic subversion by the intellectuals and Bolsheviks – it was nothing but Jews at work. Of course, bankers and communist class warriors pursue rather conflicting goals – and literati still quite different ones also. But from the perspective of national solidarity, it doesn’t make any difference, if one doesn’t have either a criticism of banking or of wage labor, but is angry with all parties about the same thing: the envisioned damage they cause Germany. Hitler was not going to let himself be misled by the many non-Jews among the human parasites and pests, nor by the many useful, even patriotic Jews – no different than a German Interior Minister today is going to let non-foreign criminals or law-abiding refugees deter him from fighting crime by deporting foreigners who abuse the right to asylum. In principle, Hitler saw the people’s enemies as alien to the people and, vice versa, saw aliens as enemies of the state. It gave the good Germans on their way to Gröfaz [note: German soldiers’ derogatory acronym for Größter Feldherr aller Zeiten, a title initially publicized by Nazi propaganda to refer to Adolf Hitler during the early war years; literally, the “Greatest Field Commander of all Time”] renewed faith in their people: the people were good and able by nature; one must only eliminate the harmful influence of the non-German elements.

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So far, essentially not that different from the racism of perfectly normal citizens.

405 b) The strategic assessment of the internal enemy – Hitler was well aware that Germany could
only become a world power through war, and it was the most important part of his redemption
message to his people – presented the peculiar image of a people without a state who, barely
distinguishable, had settled into their “host nation” and were busy primarily “sucking it dry” and
“decomposing” it. That the character of the Jewish race implies this was for Hitler complementary
410 to the belief in his people from the outset and, besides, he could prove it by means of history’s
authority, which showed that this people has had a hard time everywhere they went for 2000 years
as nothing but “newcomers.” So it was also clear that it was necessary to have a national cleansing
program in which one is no more entitled to ask what individual wrongdoings have been committed
against the German people’s community than – to once again make a parallel to the present – the
415 purge of “economic refugees” from the new German nation entitles one to ask what damage these
people have caused the Deutschmark.

The process was then escalated in the well-known manner. In order to prepare the people’s
community for the upcoming “people’s struggle,” first the domestic enemy of subversive intrigue,
that is, class struggle and intellectualism, had to be fought. Communists and other dissidents were
420 persecuted and the imagined “filth” among the people, the “Judentum,” were identified, isolated and
segregated as a born nursery of anti-German activities and subjected to bans on employment and
marriage to “Aryan” Germans. The new people’s war was started before the attack on Poland with
the terrorizing and deportation of the eternal “5th column” in the country – very logical for a state
that was preparing to clobber the neighbor countries in its way and not only conquer “room” in the
425 east, but also clear it for German “living.” Such a state therefore also needs a hardened morale
among its masses in order to get them to create millions of victims for German greatness and accept
it. Equally logical was the decision to use the height and turning point of the world war for a radical
settlement once and for all with the internal enemy on the “home front” which had been greatly
expanded through conquest: The bureaucratically organized genocide was the domestic component
430 of a “war of liberation” against all those who stood in the way of the good German people’s march
toward the world domination to which, of course, it was appointed. In addition to many other
mountains of corpses, this program also created Auschwitz. With all its national megalomania, this
was quite transparent and all too clear to patriots!

435 c) The racism cultivated by the state that talked about the Germans’ natural rights and their
enemies’ evil was practiced so consistently that it was also theoretically radicalized by being
elaborated into a nationally mandatory worldview. In a matter of months or a few years at most,
whole cultural and scientific sectors agreed that the people’s community was far more primal and
more intrinsic a part of its members than any social background – though even that is already
440 genetically anchored! The absolutely pre-social and pre-state community character of the people
must therefore be found among the human species’ natural properties and indeed on the level of
“race.” Of course, the same applied to the predestination of the Jews to disrupt the legitimate
triumphal march of the good Germans who, of course, always like – thanks to their “Aryan” nature,
as now was known – to line up as brutal henchmen for their leader’s heroic adventures. It was not
445 before this discovery and as a justification for it that they began making professional measurements
of human skulls, but in the end as an amusement for the overzealous. Because this racism has
nothing to do with human-zoology; but more with the popular and common error of bourgeois
thinking: to “explain” attainments in the world of states and results of capitalist competition with
the “talents” of the affected people. An entire intellectual elite was accustomed to this completely
450 normal racism and participated in its new achievements – and anyone who did not join in was
quickly labeled “impossible”! It took the state’s ideological metaphor about “national heritage”

literally and came up with or accepted a quasi-biological genetics as an ideological universal solution for the cultivation of the traditions which all states practice.

455 One cannot accuse the national socialists' "racial theories" of a biologism that went loopy; and even less of proceeding in Auschwitz and other places to "incomprehensible" deeds. The nation's duty-conscious and patriotic intellectual elite only took the message which is contained in the gospel of "national identity" to its logical conclusion – in parallel to and compatible with the honorable community's political will to ensure the Germans their ancestral right to victory.

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d) The political parties in Germany are worried that too many foreigners could overstrain their citizens' love of country and civic esprit de corp. So one must ask whether the many public ceremonies in memory of Auschwitz are not a clear example of overstraining. Who then, given these kinds of shameful national acts, wants to be identified with his homeland, possibly even in the emotional area? Who would like a national identity which can count a veritable genocide among its inalienable traditions? Even worse: who generally wants to be included in the national collective named "the people" when what this collectivism includes is so obvious?

470 German politicians are not racked by such worries. Rightly so. Their commemorations do not pillory the German people, nor the stupidity and dangerousness of a patriotic community spirit. On the contrary: they are acts of faith in the – already again – good German people. Because they integrate Auschwitz into this tradition: as the monstrous exception to the rule; as a stain that won't go away on an otherwise entirely clean record; as a black-out for German politics, and hence basically neither German nor political. They are nothing but a strained attempt to deny any 475 similarity between the former and the current patriotism. They are about declaring today's mainstream racism and its slightly more hawkish variant from the 30s and 40s are extreme opposites. It does not even need many words, and it certainly does not need a theory which is in some way "falsifiable." In order to subsume the extermination of the Jews as an incident that almost excludes itself from the indomitably good German character, the national consternation that is 480 solemnly staged at designated events suffices.

What if the case itself was dealt with even a little bit instead of avowals to its alleged "incomprehensibility"? Right: then something else would result from it than the "message to us today," which is what it is always about when traditions are cared for, and this is what the 485 negatively cared for tradition of Auschwitz commemorations are also about: that Germany today is better and that Auschwitz is a "call" – to what exactly? To precisely that which this nation is doing and planning today anyway; the leading ladies and gentlemen give assurances that this doing and planning is out of respect for the victims of those times. Auschwitz, as "the continuing admonition of the dead to the living," is subsumed into the national traditions and constantly useful as a 490 justification for current German politics: a sure guarantee of the ethical qualities of the new German state, its leaders and those who let themselves be led.

In reality, nothing results from Auschwitz. Nothing that Germany is doing today is done because of the Nazi's extermination of the Jews or because of horror over it – neither the freest market 495 economy that has ever existed on German soil or the cleansing of undesirable aliens from this soil, neither participation or non-participation in the war in the Balkans. The official commemorations of Auschwitz are not even a result of Auschwitz. They are a result of the nation's current need to take credit for distancing the German state from the genocide of the Nazi state.

500 This "Auschwitz denial" is not justified when used as a critical mirror to reproach the nation. The use of "coming to terms with the past" as a measure of today's Germany and its inhabitants

505 measures nothing but the hypocrisy that the state's actions take place in memory of Auschwitz. It
sees national demoralization or "reassuring signs," depending on how much the expert appraiser
takes this hypocrisy at face value. Cases of "budding Nazism" that have to be "nipped" by "the duty
to remember" always depend on the front that the authors of these slogans want to open – Christian
Democrats, for example, quickly go from the "Auschwitz concentration camp" to the abstraction of
"violence" and thus primarily mean everyone they perceive as left-wing. The way Auschwitz is
invoked now is just a hypocritical way of defending positions that have nothing to do with
Auschwitz.

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So leftists would be better off sticking to Max Horkheimer's maxim: he who does not want to
talk about capitalism should remain silent about fascism! He also must now and then talk about
capitalism's civic morality and how it is officially supervised. But instead the whole nation talks so
excitedly about how the extermination of the Jews is presented in "Schindler's List" that a single
515 word of criticism about the reasons for this extermination are no longer heard. "After Auschwitz" –
the citizen's everyday racism has never before denied its own consequences so easily.
