

# The Convictions of Adolf Hitler's '*THE LEBENSRAUM*'; and the Global Discontent against the German expansionist Perspectives during the Second World War

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**Abstract**—The advent of the 'extremist socialism' in Germany, with the rise of Nazi supremacy under the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler propagated the notion of conquest and dominance as a motive of imposing their ideology on the world. The 'identity' of Hitler as an 'objective correlative' to Germany becomes a significant study into the German collective consciousness during the Second World War. Sometimes an act of aggression and extremism owes its origin from an isolation, a disillusionment; a withdrawal of faith from the existing system. In this context, this paper will focus into the reasons that led to the rise of Hitler and how post-Nazi Germany had to face global disrespect and was consequently subjected to political and administrative isolation.

As a representation of the German identity, Hitler and the policies he believed in made Germany the cause of discontent in the post world war scenario. This paper will contextualize the 'German living space' (the lebensraum), the extension of Hitler's idea on German totality in terms of geographical space and ideology. The extermination of the Jews to create an absolute identity for a Nazi state is the product of a staunch and dystopian perspective that had taken its rise from the existential crisis of Hitler himself. Hence this analysis will concentrate into the psycho-social and politico-administrative convictions of Adolf Hitler to create a Germany which originated from his own 'lacuna' in identity.

Inconsideration and violence belongs to an injured sensibility that was once stable and understanding. If the proverb, 'every saint was once a sinner' is true then it can also be considered that every 'anarchist' was once an 'idealist'. When it comes to the matter of identity, the existence of an individual is marked by the duality of self; the 'doppelganger' rests in a singular consciousness where the one or the other remains latent. The dominant nature of a human's expression is selected in the most usual way; the 'personality' which helps an individual to coexist and understand his society and circumstances will be his identification quotient. The latent personality will be marginalized to the periphery of the person's consciousness because he is comfortable without expressing it and neither is there any external force that provokes the unleashing of the same.

Adolf Hitler was an idealist by choice but he was an anarchist by the challenges of time and the inappropriateness of his survival with respect to the 'collective consciousness'. He was a victim of iconoclasm that paved his way to a crisis in existence and ideology.

"The nineteenth century dislike of Realism

Is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass"

&

"The nineteenth century dislike of Romanticism

Is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in the glass"[1]

Adolf Hitler was the outcome of the latter situation, that bruised his consciousness. He was great and gigantic in his weltanschauung(worldview) but somewhere he was not in accord with the zeitgeist of the 21<sup>st</sup> century(spirit of the age). His convictions to become an 'absolute' rose from his grievances of being deprived from opportunity and the compromises he made with his own morality in order to survive in Vienna.

As an 'idealist' he was prone to the idea of 'power', not only a power that create but 'controls' and 'influences'. He was disappointed by the restrictions that were imposed on Germany by the 'Treaty of Versailles'. He was a corporal in the German military during the first world war. He served with dedication and later became a part of 'the Socialist Party in Germany'(Nazi Party).

The concept of 'lebensraum'(living space) was a brain child of Hitler and it was a hypothesis, which was later turned into action based on the theory of 'harrenvolk'(superior race). These two theories were interconnected and after much analysis it was rendered that the former and the latter shared a causal relation. Hitler's policy of conquest dealt with a two-fold perspective; the first was internal, within the nation and the second was external, outside the German boundaries.

Extermination of the Jews was an instance of expanding the German non Jew living space within the nation. This idea of 'erasure' was a successive development on the belief of racial superiority and hence the overweening pride of race(harrenvolk) was the cause of the death of millions of Jew inhabitants. Naturally, Hitler felt the same about the German racial superiority against the entire world. So, the conquest of Poland, Austria and France were the instances of external lebensraum where these countries were occupied for creating the greater extensions of the Nazi German territory.

The dictator's intention to expand and conquer Poland and how this act could create German living space can be traced in his 1939 'Obersalzberg address':

"I have issued the command-and I will have anybody

Who utters but one word of criticism executed by a firing

Squad-that our war aim does not consist in reaching certain

Lines but the physical destruction of the enemy. Accordingly

I have placed my death head formations in readiness

For the present only in the East-with orders to them to send

To death mercilessly and without compassion men, women

And children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus

Shall we gain the 'living space'(lebensraum) which we need." [2]

The initiative of 'lebensraum' was an instance of Hitler's conviction to extend the bio-geographic and ethnographic influence of Germany on the neighbouring nations. Friedrich Ratzel in 1897 propounded the 'organic state theory' which contains the discourses regarding the anthropo-geography of the state and how it represents a biological organism. Ratzel refers to Charles Darwin's explanation about "survival of the fittest" while deducing his idea that the existence of a state is fundamentally based on the process of 'exclusion'. Thus, in order to exist, a state must conquer and occupy another state. This act of annexation will be a source of nourishment to the state. [3]

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler echoes the idea of Ratzel when he emphasizes on the factor that the nation's emancipation and progress lies in its capacity to conquer and occupy.

An 'imposition' is a conscious act of the power structure. Germany was imposed with a considerable amount of restrictions after the First World War. The League of Nations forfeited 13 percent of the German territory (more than 27000 sq. miles). Germany lost one tenth of its population. Clause 231 in the Treaty stated Germany accounted for the war and

she was held responsible for the 'war guilt'. The country had to pay 6600 million euro 'reparations' which barely left anything for their own self development and economic infrastructure. The country faced a national humiliation when Alsace Lorraine was given back to France. Hence if the analysis is diachronically pursued, the Treaty of Versailles was responsible for the growing national identity crisis of Germany.

The individual life crisis which was faced by the Hitler during his childhood was an accumulation of his desire to become an artist and how he ended up as a dispatch runner in the German military. His hard times in Vienna and the later days in prison which induced in him a contemplative rebellion that were laid down in his *Mein Kampf*. His idea of the state and the fundamental necessity of an 'exclusive dominating existence' made him introduce the anti Semitist approaches to exterminate the Jews. Syllogistically, the crisis of Hitler's identity was transferred to the identity crisis of the Jews. Adolf Hitler attempted to lift Germany from the impositions of the Treaty of Versailles. He believed Germany was betrayed and deprived. So in order to rescue Germany he rose to be a dictator. Interestingly, his conviction to resolve the country's identity crisis in turn created a separate, an 'alternative' crisis in identity for the Germans after the fall of Hitler and the defeat of the 'Axis powers'.

He deconstructed and reoriented the German Parliament and created the 'Nazi Third Reich', the symbol of power and glory. He dictated the policies of the National Socialist Party and emphasized on the propagandist approach of controlling the nation. The study of Hitler proceeds beyond the established parameters of character analysis. He is a modern man with the traits of a nihilist; the features of an idealist who is bent on to create through destruction. The question of identifying Hitler as the catalyst of the second world war can be taken into consideration but the fact that he was a downright nihilist can only be left to the perspectives of the allied powers. The absolutists claim that the world is already hollow and to correct it is to further the complications of effective existence. So to create a new world, a new hope all that is existing must be perished and demolished to the core. Christopher Nolan in his *Batman Begins*[4] highlights the 'league of shadows' whose sole purpose is to destroy the existing civilization only to create a better and an ideal world. The character of Hitler is that of a 'self imposed transformer'; an evolutionist to put forward the verdict of a new world order.

Colonel Claus Von Stauffenberg, the commander of the 'Valkyre Initiative' [5] which was constructed to protect Hitler from internal enemies was held responsible for conspiring to assassinate Hitler. Colonel Stauffenberg was against the policies of Hitler and he believed that the German people are distracted and the perceptions of Hitler cannot be the representative of the 'collective consciousness of the people of

Germany'. During Hitler's dictatorship, the German mass consciousness and sensibility became pro fascist and they celebrated in the glory of a morbid reality that was going to bring nothing but doom to their own life. Hitler was successful in relating to the discontent of the German people after the country faced numerous impositions under the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler was recognized as a Samaritan, and he himself believed his policies to be a salvation for his own as well as the nation's identity. Unfortunately, Hitler's subjective struggle was not justified to be paralleled with a global sensibility that has its own motion and understanding. Thus the radical convictions of Hitler could not substantiate and materialise in a world which believed in moderation.

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#### **REFERENCES**

- [1] *Picture of Dorian Gray*(preface) by Oscar Wilde
- [2] *Mein Kamph* by Adolf Hitler
- [3] *Lebensraum*(essay) by Friedrich Ratzel
- [4] *Batman Begins* by Christopher Nolan
- [5] *Valkyre* by Ryan Singer.