Formation of the national socialist educational policy during the Third Reich

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Abstract. This article is devoted to the study of the formation of the National Socialist educational policy during the Third Reich in Germany (1933-1945). The author examines the ideological roots and goals of this educational policy, its impact on curricula and teaching methods, as well as on the younger generation. The article highlights how the National Socialist ideology played a key role in shaping the educational system under the control of the regime, emphasising nationalist and racist ideas. Changes in the curriculum and censorship of educational material brought education to positions that were in line with national socialist ideology. The article also draws attention to the mass indoctrination and propaganda that turned students into supporters of the regime. The study of this period emphasizes the importance of preserving academic freedom and the independence of education from political pressure and ideological manipulation. The conclusions of the article question the effectiveness of using education to implement political ideology and emphasise the consequences of this influence on society and young people.

Keywords: national socialist ideology, Third Reich, educational policy, educational programmes, indoctrination, propaganda, nationalism, racism, educational institutions, youth, academic freedom, ideological control
Introduction.

In the second half of the 1930s and early 1940s, Germany lived through a period of history that left incalculable marks on the social, political and cultural context. The era of the Third Reich, led by Adolf Hitler, was marked by intense nationalism and radical changes in many aspects of German society. One of the key areas that had a significant impact on the life of the nation was the National Socialist educational policy. This article is devoted to the study of the formation and implementation of this policy in the school education system during the Third Reich. The aim of the study is to highlight the ideological and pedagogical influence of the National Socialist regime on the education of young people and their preparation for the service of nationalist and racist ideas. Understanding this historical context helps us to understand important aspects of the interaction between politics and education in modern societies.

Educational policy has always been a key tool for any regime to shape the identity and beliefs of a nation. In the case of the Third Reich, a national socialist regime led by Adolf Hitler, the education and indoctrination of the younger generation played a critical role in achieving the regime's political goals. This article examines the formation of the National Socialist educational policy, its main principles and consequences for German youth during the Nazi regime (1933-1945).

Ideological roots and goals of the National Socialist educational policy

The National Socialist regime emerged in 1933 after the National Socialist German Workers' Party came to power under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. This regime presented itself as nationalist and authoritarian, and advocated the "reset" of German society with nationalist and racist ideas. Education and education policy became important tools for achieving these goals.

One of the key ideas was the belief in the existence of a "racial hierarchy", where the Aryan race was considered superior and other "races" were discriminated against and recognised as less valuable. The education of young people was characterised by an emphasis on patriotism, emphasis on
"Aryan purity" and anti-Semitism. Teachers were obliged to educate "correct" German citizens and use pedagogical methods that reinforced nationalist ideology.

Nationalism: One of the key ideological components was radical nationalism. The National Socialists believed that the Germans were the "master race" and were entitled to world leadership. This led to an emphasis on German patriotism and a sense of superiority over other nations. The education of young people was aimed at cultivating nationalist ideals and supporting the regime's leader, Adolf Hitler, who acted as a symbol of national unity.

Racism and racial hierarchy: One of the most pernicious ideas was the belief in the existence of a "racial hierarchy". The National Socialists viewed the Aryan race as superior and believed that other "races" were less valuable. This led to anti-Semitism and violent acts against Jews and other minorities. The education of young people included indoctrination into these ideas and was aimed at "cleansing" the Aryan race from other "unpromising" races.

Imperialism: The National Socialists dreamed of creating a great imperial Germany that would be a world leader. The education of young people was aimed at preparing them to serve this empire, in particular through military training and the education of young "soldiers" for the Third Reich.

Centralised control and censorship: The National Socialist government always aimed to control education centrally. This meant censoring curricula, books, and materials that did not conform to the regime's ideology. All educational institutions were obliged to serve the National Socialist ideology, and teachers were required to propagate these ideas among students.

Social engineering: The National Socialists believed that they could significantly influence society through education and upbringing. They reformed curricula, textbooks, and teaching methods to create the "right" citizens who would serve the regime's interests.

These ideological roots of National Socialist educational policy shaped the harsh, authoritarian, and anti-Semitic nature of education during the Third Reich. The National Socialist government used education as a tool to achieve its
ideological and political goals, which had a devastating impact on society and the younger generation.

Censorship of curricula and teaching methods was an important tool of the National Socialist educational policy in Germany during the Third Reich. Here is a detailed examination of this aspect:

Curriculum rewriting: The Third Reich government began a radical process of curriculum rewriting aimed at adapting education to the ideological goals of the regime. Any educational material that contradicted nationalist or racist ideas was removed or changed. The National Socialist ideology required a thorough revision of all academic subjects.

Changes in textbooks: The new textbooks were designed to emphasise "German greatness". They contained material aimed at fostering nationalist ideals and support for the regime. Any content that could have created a critical view of the Third Reich or exposed its crimes was hidden or refuted. Textbooks became an instrument of indoctrination, instead of independent educational material.

Ideological control of all subjects: All subjects were subject to ideological control. For example, the history of the German people was subject to manipulations that tried to smooth out or invent historical facts that contradicted national socialist ideas. Literature was limited to nationalist and racist works that promoted these ideas. Changes also affected biology, where "scientific" concepts of "racial purity" and "racial improvement" were introduced.

Censorship of foreign language materials: The Third Reich government also took measures to control foreign language materials. Foreign books and translations were censored, banned, or distorted to conform to the regime's ideological lines.

The censorship of curricula and teaching methods was aimed at creating an unambiguous information environment that would facilitate the indoctrination of students in the ideological ideas of the National Socialist regime. This approach was aimed at forming "correct" citizens who would support the regime's policies and not pose a challenge to authoritarian rule.

Mass indoctrination and ideological dissemination were
important aspects of the National Socialist educational policy in Germany during the Third Reich. Here is a detailed examination of this aspect:

Student indoctrination: Much attention was paid to the indoctrination of students in educational institutions. National socialist ideology was systematically introduced into subjects such as history, literature, biology and social sciences. Students were taught to accept nationalist and racist views, which contributed to the formation of a patriotic spirit and loyalty to the ideology of the Third Reich.

National Socialist Youth (Hitlerjugend): The Hitlerjugend organisation became a key instrument of youth indoctrination. Its members received ideological training and education aimed at supporting the regime. They participated in a variety of activities, including military training, political meetings, and pioneer camps, where they reinforced national socialist ideals.

Religious organisations and educational institutions: Religious organisations and educational institutions were subject to indoctrination and control by the regime. The National Socialists tried to change the faith and spiritual life of the nation in accordance with the regime's ideology. This resulted in the subjugation of the nation's spiritual life to the ideology of the Third Reich and caused conflicts with traditional religious communities.

Propaganda and mass media: Propaganda was an important component of indoctrination. Large publications, radio, and cinema were used to spread the ideology of the Third Reich. This allowed the regime to shape the perceptions of the population in accordance with its ideological goals.

Mass indoctrination was an important means of forming and maintaining ideological control over the population. It was aimed at creating a single information space where the National Socialist ideology prevailed over any other beliefs. The process of indoctrination began in schools and continued throughout the lives of German citizens under the Third Reich.

The ideas of nationalism and racism were systematically promoted in schools and educational institutions. Students were taught to consider the Aryan race superior and other
people, including Jews, Roma and other minorities, discriminated against and less valuable. All textbooks were subject to ideological control and censorship, and any material that did not conform to nationalist ideas was removed. Teachers were obliged to educate students in the spirit of national socialist values and pedagogical methods were used to reinforce these ideological views.

A separate aspect of indoctrination was the creation of the National Socialist Youth, known as the Hitlerjugend. This organisation became a key tool for indoctrinating young people. Its members received ideological training and education aimed at supporting the regime. The ideology of National Socialism penetrated every sphere of life, from entertainment and sports to religious beliefs, and became an integral part of the psychology of citizens.

Religious organisations and educational institutions were also subjected to indoctrination. The regime sought to subjugate the spiritual life of the nation and subordinate it to the ideology of national socialism. This resulted in many religious leaders and spiritual teachers being forced to work for the regime and propagate its ideology.

Mass indoctrination deeply affected the German population and contributed to the formation of a social environment in which the National Socialist ideology prevailed over any other beliefs. This indoctrination played a key role in maintaining ideological control over society during the Third Reich.

Conclusion.

The development of National Socialist educational policy during the Third Reich was marked by radical content and ideological control, which contributed to the maintenance of the authoritarian regime and indoctrination of the younger generation. The National Socialist ideology was based on nationalist and racist concepts, and education became an important tool for achieving these goals.

The Third Reich government controlled curricula and teaching methods, changing textbooks and emphasising "German greatness" and the Aryan race. Educational institutions became a platform for systematic indoctrination of students, emphasising nationalist views and anti-Semitism. Mass indoctrination included propaganda through a variety of media...
and organisations, including the Hitlerjugend and religious communities.

Through indoctrination, the regime created a social environment in which national socialist ideals were supported and maintained. However, this policy also led to spiritual subjugation and the destruction of democratic and humanistic values.

An understanding of the history of National Socialist educational policy reminds us of the importance of protecting academic freedom and independence in modern societies. Just as the sensitivity to political influence on education and ideological indoctrination remains relevant, the historical experience of the Third Reich should serve as a reminder of the need to preserve academic freedom and diversity of opinion in education.

The history of the Third Reich serves as a reminder of how education can be used to support authoritarian regimes and how important it is to keep education independent of political pressure and ideological change.

References: