

RATIONALIZATION AS A WAY OF FORMING AND IMPLEMENTING NAZI DISCOURS IN HITLER'S GERMANY AND MODERN PUTIN'S RUSSIA

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Summary

This article attempts to explore the origins, factors, and methods of establishing German Nazism in the 1920s and 1930s and the modern, modern Russian Putin Nazism. Special emphasis is placed on rationalization as a way of forming and implementing the practice of both German and Russian Nazism. It is shown that the formation of the Nazi discourse was related to socio-economic, political, historical, psychological, cultural, etc. factors.

Rationalization as a way to keep the population in submission and a means of justifying criminal Nazi policies in both Hitler's Germany and Putin's Russia was carried out through the use of school and university education, the involvement of professors in Nazi propaganda, and the active adaptation of psychological, historical, philological, philosophical, etc. theories and positions. That is, Putin's Nazism, like Hitler's, strives to be scientific.

Contradictory, double-minded thinking, which is designed to help justify V. Putin's imperial ambitions and war in Ukraine.

Hitler's Nazism and Putin's are very similar, most importantly, in essence – Nazism, regardless of the country of formation and spread, is the exaltation, elevation, and affirmation of the exclusivity of one's people, nation, and ethnicity over all others, which are declared inferior. This is violence against "alien" people and society, contempt for human lives, their destruction, in general, contempt and destruction of universal human values, therefore Nazism is dangerous. Therefore, all progressive humanity and its governments must unite efforts to overcome it in any form.

Key words: democracy, Nazism, German Nazism, Russian Nazism, rationalization, society, nation, universal human values, violence, exaltation of the nation.

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1. Introduction

The problems of Nazism are now particularly urgent. After a decade of widespread lull in the international arena, especially in the European region, after a certain lull in the international community by Fukuyama's "end of history", because liberal ideology and reality are supposed to strengthen the entire country (Prolyeyev, 2017); (Sabadukha, 2019), there was not even a Nazi surge, but a whole explosion. It turned out to be too resilient to simply vanish. The imperial ambitions and imperial mindset of various political figures in Europe and America (!) – not to mention the Asian political landscape – along with Putin's fascist-Nazi regime, have brought humanity to the brink of a catastrophe of global proportions (Stubb, 2026). Nazism is dangerous because it embodies a hatred of humanity – something of which there is no shortage in today's world. It elevates some peoples above others, divides them into less full-fledged and more full-fledged, feeds on this discrimination, creates tension and distrust in the international and

domestic space of those countries where it spreads, destroys the foundations of human coexistence. Why is it so persistent? Why has history not taught current generations to live without Nazism? – let's try to analyze this problem. It is complex, it was interpreted by various authors, in particular, the works of E. Fromm, E. Applebaum, A. Bad'yu, A. Nastas, F. Fukuyama, T. Snyder, O. Zabuzhko, I. Koval, L. Kyslyak, R. Wade etc. deserve attention (*Bad'yu, 2019*); (*Fromm, 2019*); (*Applebaum, 2023*); (*Koval, Kyslyak, 2022*); (*Nastas, 2026*); (*Snyder, 2025*); (*Fukuyama, 2022*); (*Wade, 2026*); (*Zabuzhko, 2022*). In general, Nazism is formed by a complex of factors of various levels: political, economic, social, psychological, etc. But each Nazi leader and his entourage strive to ideologically subjugate the population, trying to rationalize their aspirations for power and dominance. This rationalization is necessary, firstly, to subjugate the population, and secondly, to justify repression and discrimination, without which Nazism practically does not exist (*Fromm, 2019*); (*Wade, 2026*).

2. Rationalization of German Nazism of the XX- th century

If we turn to the origins of German Nazism of the 20th century, it is worth noting that its formation was significantly influenced by the socio-economic and political situation in Germany in the 20s-30s of the last century. It greatly contributed to shaping the mood of German society in terms of preparing for the perception and acceptance of Nazi ideology and practices. This was a time when the working class and middle bourgeoisie were very unhappy with what they believed was Germany's defeat after the Weimar Treaty of 1918. These sections of the population wanted compensation for this defeat, because their standard of living had declined, their temporary gains had been lost. So when Hitler proposed to make Germany great again, they supported him, the idea seemed tempting to them. His government began to be identified with Germany itself, so if someone did not share this Nazi ideology, it meant that he was against Germany itself, and that was already dangerous. In addition, despite his reluctance, he joined the Nazis anyway. The fear of isolation and the instability of the moral principles of a large part of the population contributed to the political parties of the Nazi cover in gaining power. In addition, in Germany in the 1920s, inflation was growing, which destroyed savings, the monarchy as a pillar of stability ceased to exist, the family for certain strata lost its previous authority. That is, the foundation under the feet of the German of this period was crumbling, reliable support disappeared. Social frustration was growing in society, which led to psychological projection, which became the source of National Socialism (*Fromm, 2019*).

The greatest resentment against the Treaty of Versailles was expressed by the lower middle classes. Their nationalist resentment was a rationalization by which a sense of social inferiority was projected onto a sense of national inferiority. This projection is very clearly seen in Hitler's own personal development. A man of "nothing", an "invisible man" with no prospects for the future – he felt this very acutely, so nationalist ideology, nationalist symbols were a consequence of the rationalization of his social position. He was especially vulnerable in national terms, because he was not a classic German, he was born outside the Reich, so the idea of a Greater Germany, a Reich, where all German sons could return, became for him a symbol of prestige, reliability, prospects, a support for growth and self-affirmation, etc.

Nazism is most often viewed as a spirit of blind submission to a leader, hatred of racial and ethnic minorities, exaltation of one's nation above all others, unfounded glorification of one's people, etc. – this has great emotional appeal for people who are not particularly educated, morally passive, offended, and socially vulnerable. They always need to find someone to blame? Hitler and his government began to form the image of the enemy who was to blame

for the socio-economic problems of the Germans – Jews and political enemies became them, so they should be fired from their jobs to give their jobs to Germans; evicted from prestigious places of residence and settled there by Germans; restricted in movement, in political, economic, cultural rights, physically destroyed, etc. These repressions, sadistic performances and Nazi ideology combined to fill the Germans with a sense of superiority over other representatives of humanity. This was a specific compensation for the Germans for the fact that their impoverishment occurred in different dimensions. In their minds, a complex of the peculiarity of the Aryan race, which should dominate the world, was formed (*Fromm, 2019*).

Hitler resorted to rationalization, putting psychological science and education in his service. In the work "Mein Kampf" he wrote that the masses love the ruler, they love to obey the strong, they like the doctrine that does not allow a rival more than the doctrine of liberal freedom. People love rallies where the strong speak, there is a feeling of unity, and they simply need a leader who leads them. All German education during the Nazi era was imbued with the idea of the superiority of the German race over others, and its purpose, as the Nazis believed, was to form in students a belief in superiority over others and submission to the Leader, the Führer, who was the embodiment of Greater Germany. Hitler and his entourage enjoyed power over the German people and at the same time taught this people to enjoy power over other peoples, motivating this with the desire for world domination (*Ryabenko, 2026*).

Hitler constantly rationalized and justified his desire to dominate others. He needed to justify his aggression and occupation of other peoples, so the belief that this was necessary was instilled into the mass consciousness by means of rationalization. His main arguments were the following: domination over other peoples is beneficial both for the Aryan race and for the conquered, because it is rooted in the eternal laws of nature, and he recognizes only these laws. He himself acts at the behest of higher powers: History, Fate, Nature, God. His desire to rule is a protection against the desire of others to rule over him and the German race. He himself seeks only peace and freedom. If the German people had such unity in the past as other peoples, they would become a ruling people and would put the world at the service of the "higher culture", that is, the German one (*Snayder, 2025*); (*Fromm, 2019*); (*Ryabenko, 2026*).

Rationalizing his misanthropic policy, Hitler appeals to the laws of nature, the "instinct of self-preservation of the species," in which he sees the root cause of the formation of human communities. It is this instinct, he believed, that leads the stronger to dominate the weaker, and the most adapted survive. For Hitler, the instinct of self-preservation is identical with power over others: the first human civilization, in his opinion, survived by using "second-rate," and therefore inferior, people. Hitler projects his sadism onto nature, claiming that she is the queen of wisdom, and the laws of nature are dictated by the necessity and right to victory of the strongest, healthiest, and therefore the best. It is clear that this is the German nation. The free play of energies is the wisdom of life, the Fuhrer emphasized. In fact, these dangerous views are vulgar social Darwinism mixed with racism.

3. The misanthropic discourse of Russian Nazism in the XXI st century: rationalism as a tool for implementing its practice

Above we have shown the factors that led to the formation of German Nazism in the first half of the XXth century. A special place among them is occupied by rationalization as a specific method of affirming this anti-human ideology and practice. This analysis allows us to draw analogies with the origins and means of formation and implementation of modern Russian Nazism. Its origins and means of embodiment are very similar to those of Germany in the last

century. After the collapse of the USSR, large masses of people in this territory found themselves in complete frustration: the state with which they identified themselves disappeared, the harmonious system in which they were embedded and felt safe and secure in it disappeared, in the sense that, first of all, there was always a minimum subsistence level. The ideological machine worked perfectly, it was scientifically proven that the Soviet state was the vanguard of social development, an advanced country in all respects, a model for all others. This was a rational basis that allowed Soviet workers and peasants to feel chosen, chosen fighters at the forefront of the struggle for socialism. And suddenly all this collapses, this reliable foundation disappears from under the feet of hundreds of millions of people. Tens of millions of people are thrown to the sidelines, into poverty and deprivation, the path to a bright future has ended in a dead end, there is nowhere to go further. The leaders have disappeared, no one leads anywhere anymore. This frustration continued under Boris Yeltsin, but then Putin appears with the idea of a Greater Russia, the doctrine of the "Russian World" from Lisbon to Vladivostok. This Russian "nobody", this person lost in a destroyed country, can join Greater Russia.

This idea, embodied in the doctrine of the "Russian World", had a tangible psychological impact, but Putin, like Hitler, took up its rationalization. He turned to historical, philological, philosophical, and psychological sciences to substantiate the idea of Greater Russia. Back in the early 90s of the last century, O. Dugin, now the main ideologist of Putinism, appeared and wrote the work "Fundamentals of Gelpolitik", in which the idea of a special geopolitical mission of Russia is presented, its exclusivity and superiority over other peoples are substantiated. Everything is exactly like Hitler during the period of German Nazism.

Already in the USSR there were many theories that embodied the idea of Russian greatness and the inferiority of all other peoples that were part of the USSR. A particularly contemptuous attitude was shown towards Ukrainians, who were called "Khokhlas" of the peoples of the northern part of the country, the Caucasian and Central Asian peoples. But with Putin's coming to power, the idea of Russian exceptionalism was brought to a qualitatively higher official-authoritarian level: the idea of Russian literature as exemplary, advanced, the only perfect one was developing.

Russian music, painting, and all Russian culture are declared to be just as exemplary and perfect. Special emphasis is placed on the "great Russian language" – wherever it sounds, there is the territory and interests of the "Russian world", and it has no borders, it is boundless. Only everything Russian is declared great (Wolff, 2026), (Wade, 2026), (Koval', Kyslyak, 2022), (Mamedov, 2024).

School and higher education are literally imbued with the ideas of Russian greatness. Schoolchildren are told about "our President, who is a great man because he saves Russia from decay." Russian schools and education are particularly active and consistent in convincing us that only Russian people are capable of saving the world from the capitalist, decaying West, which embodies evil and corruption.

Justifying his policy, Putin, like Hitler, appeals to History and Russian fate (destiny), and even to God. He repeats that since ancient times Russia has been the most advanced and strongest, because "Moscow is the third Rome, and there is no mission for the fourth." This slogan was heard in the 15th-16th centuries, when the "gathering of Russian lands" was just taking place, when centralized Muscovy was just being formed. And then the appetites spread to Siberia, the Far East, the Caucasus, the Black Sea, the Baltic, Central Asia, etc. The USSR was also a form of existence of the Russian empire, only the name masked this essence. Therefore, for Putin, Ukraine is also a part of the empire that has gotten out of hand and must be tamed. It is no coincidence that recently, at a meeting of the UN Security Council, Russian

representative V. Nibenzya called Ukraine "a project that did not take place," to which Polish Foreign Minister R. Sikorski said that this was a "project" for Nibenzya and Putin, and for the whole world, Ukraine is a sovereign independent state created by the autochthonous Ukrainian people, which has its own history, culture, language, and traditions, and this must be respected.

Putin's Nazism is contradictory, it demonstrates double thinking, contradictory rationalization. For him, the Ukrainians-"Khokhlys" are a separate, not quite full-fledged people alongside the Russians, while since the large-scale invasion of Ukraine he has constantly used the idea of a "single people" – Russians and Ukrainians, in his opinion, are not two different peoples, but one people, part of which – the Ukrainians – fell under the influence of the "Bandera regime" in Kyiv. Ukrainians are some kind of "corrupted" Russians, so they need to be destroyed, because they look more to the West than to Moscow, they are "wrong" Russians, and therefore dangerous. If they are not destroyed, they will destroy us, real Russians, by infecting us with Banderaism, Western corruption. Everything about these Khokhlovs, Banderaists, Little Russians is inferior: the language, which is a local dialect; their provincial literature; their fictional, unreal history, etc. All this is taught in Russian schools, universities, this garbage is spread by the media, social networks, Putin bloggers.

Russian professors repeat in unison with Putin that Ukraine "was invented by Lenin as a state." These professors travel around Western Europe, like, for example, O. Dugin, whom CNN recently gave the opportunity to speak, presenting him as a philosopher and professor. This is an element of Putin's hybrid war, this is the "Russian world," its poisonous fumes, which continue to Muscovite the West.

It is O. Dugin who promotes the ideas of neo-Eurasianism as a local ideology of the European "new right", which is interpreted as a form of fascism. This Putinist and his like-minded people do not deny Russian multi-ethnicity, but emphasize the idea that it is the Russian ethnos that is the "most priority Eurasian ethnos", which must fulfill the mission of creating a Eurasian empire that will occupy the entire continent (O. Dugin "The Eurasian Way as a National Idea"). It is O. Dugin who, in "Fundamentals of Gelpolitik", clearly presents the idea of "the non-existence of Ukraine".

Putin and his entourage are particularly exploiting the theory of a "single Russian language" to justify their aggressive policy, which was created by Professor Yakobzon, who turned out to be a KGB agent. The professor had to prove that Ukrainians are not separate from Russians, an autochthonous people who live on their own land, have specific national features, history, and culture, but that they are part of the Russian people, that is, there are not two different peoples, there is one people, but one part of it – Ukrainians – speaks a dialect. Back in the first quarter of the 20th century, this professor proposed the theory of the so-called "proto-Russian language", Old Russian, which is one of the two most distinct variants of the Old Slavic language. The second variant is the Serbian language. The first, called the Old Russian language, supposedly split later into three branches: Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian. That is, there are not two peoples, there is one, because they have one language – Russian, Ukrainians are Russians, but they use a corrupted language, a mixture of Russian and Polish – this interpretation dates back to M. Lomonosov. Therefore, returning this people to the right path, uniting them with the main people – the Russians – is what Putin called the denazification of Ukrainians, and is the task of a "special military operation," as Putin calls the occupation of part of Ukraine and the destruction of "disobedient," "wrong" Ukrainians who turned away from Mother Russia (Fukuyama, 2022); (Bernard-Anri, Levie, 2022); (Koval', Kyslyak, 2022); (Snyder, 2023); (Harari, 2018); (Mamedov, 2024).

In fact, this war against a sovereign state and its people is the realization of the Nazi discourse of Putin and his entourage, the embodiment of their imperial ambitions.

Another example of Putin's use of rationalization to justify his criminal activities is the whitewashing of himself and his destructive actions by creating the latest myths, filled with facts, supported by pseudoscientific propositions. Just as Hitler, who constantly repeated that he must defend himself and the Reich from others, from enemies, so Putin does not cease to emphasize that he is defending himself and Russia from the damned enemies – Ukrainians, who have turned their backs on Moscow and Russia, from the corrupt West, from NATO, who only dream of destroying Russia. NATO troops are fighting in Ukraine, if they are not destroyed, if they are not destroyed Ukrainian cities and villages, all of Ukraine, which is supposedly already in NATO, then they will destroy Russia. Captured Russian soldiers very often believe that it is not Russia that invaded Ukrainian soil, it is not the Russian army that is killing, burning, destroying, and stealing Ukrainian children, but that NATO countries have started the war, they are bombing Russian positions, and the Russians have to defend themselves. All these false ideas are spread by Putin's propaganda. Putinists are afraid of the West, to which Ukraine aspires, so it is important for them to destroy this bridge between the West and Russia, which is Ukraine. It is Ukraine that is currently preventing Putin and his entourage from conquering Western Europe and profiting from it, and their appetites are far from modest.

Putinists develop narratives of the following plan: "Ukraine is anti-Russia"; "wipe Ukraine off the map of Europe"; "us is ours"; "the West is evil"; "the USA is for the destruction of Russia"; "Russia vs the collective West"; "threats with weapons, in particular nuclear"; "the destruction of the unipolar world, oriented towards the USA and the West"; "we will eradicate Russophobia" (Snyder, 2023); (Stubb, 2026); (Fukuyama, 2022); (Nastas, 2026) (Zabuzhko, 2022).

This Nazi ideology grew out of Putin's personal sense of inferiority, hatred of life, asceticism and envy of those who live a full life. His ideological discourse is addressed to those who have a similar character structure. His Nazi ideas are accepted by a huge part of the Russian population, because they are used to hierarchical life: they are used to obeying someone, someone rises above them, the person at the very top of the hierarchy – the President, the leader, the great man who leads them into a bright future. And the President, the leader has History, Fate (destiny), Necessity, a higher power above him, in which he dissolves. From this ideology and practice, one part of the population satisfies the need for submission, and the other part, who has despaired of everything, receives guidelines.

4. Conclusions

Summarizing, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Putin and his like-minded people turned out to be good students of the German Nazis. Both German Nazism of the last century and the current modern Russian Nazism are very similar, first of all, in essence, as well as in the methods of formation and embodiment. The essence of Nazism, regardless of the country of formation and manifestation, is misanthropy, the exaltation of one's own people over all other peoples, humiliation, denial in various forms of their natural, historical, and cultural fullness;

- the formation of both the German and the modern Russian Nazi discourse was related to both socio-economic, political, and cultural prerequisites, which turned out to be very similar in Germany in the 20s-30s of the last century and in post-Soviet Russia in the early 90s of the 20th century;

– Nazism as an ideology and as a practice for its formation and implementation requires rationalization, which is necessary: 1) in order to dominate the masses; 2) to justify the criminal policy of the leader, the Fuhrer, the "great President." Just like Hitler, V. Putin uses pseudoscientific theories and positions to ensure his own imperial ambitions and justify the criminal war in Ukraine: psychological, historical, philological, philosophical, etc., as in Germany during the Nazi era, school and university education, professors, media, and social networks have been put at the service of modern Russian Nazism, with the help of which Russian fascist-Nazism has the opportunity to spread quickly and very massively;

– using rationalization as a way to affirm Nazism, V. Putin applies the method of contradictory, double thinking with which it is easier to justify the "denazification" and "demilitarization" of Ukraine, which are the tasks of Putin's invasion of Ukraine, to deny real science, to fight against European democratic narratives (Stubb, 2026).

Both German and Russian Nazism are violent power over man and society, the practice of devaluation and destruction of human life, universal human values in general, therefore all conscious people and their governments must now unite their efforts to overcome Nazism in all its forms and manifestations.

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