

NAZI INFLUENCE OUTSIDE GERMANY BEFORE AND DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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This article is basically aimed at evaluating Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers' Party's (NSDAP) popularity outside Germany. The study will throw light on the growth and influence of the 'Hitler myth' as being one of the most important reasons for the large-scale acceptance and attachment people felt towards 'the Fuhrer'.

In the conditions prevalent in Germany during the last years of the Weimar Republic, in which the state, run by a 'functional' impersonal leadership was becoming totally discredited, the only way to salvation that appeared possible was in a leader who had personal charisma and strength and who was prepared to take full responsibility. The powerful leader would sweep away all the fatuous bureaucrats as well as the wretched system over which they presided. Hitler fit into the long-standing quest of the German people for a 'heroic leader'. The conditions in Germany were ripe for Hitler to build a leadership cult around himself. With each success of the Nazi movement, the veneration for Hitler grew.

Adolf Hitler came to be seen as synonymous with every achievement of the German nation, whether it was the uplift of the economy, any other aspect of governance or the invasion of nearby European countries. As this mythical image of Hitler grew, driven mainly by a very efficient propaganda machine, but also, as already pointed out, by some extraordinary personal qualities of Hitler, it started to provide for a charismatic base of authority in Germany. A great majority of the German people began to perceive Hitler as a unique person without parallel, even equating him with a deity; they were therefore willing to submit themselves to all his dictates, believing that he possessed incredible insight into the truth and could never go wrong (all his successes backed up this belief). The people were convinced that the order he wanted to establish in Germany was in their best interest and that of the country.

In examining the main aspects of the popular image of Hitler and their blending into a leadership 'myth' of remarkable resilience, the contrast between the image created by propaganda and the real person is striking. The 'mythical' content in the propaganda was unmistakable.

The uniqueness of Nazism

The terms 'Nazism' and 'Fascism' are often used interchangeably, but in fact these are two distinct ideologies. Nazism was a unique phenomenon, as each nation converting to the Nazi ideology launched its own particular *sonderweg* (peculiar way of advancement), and in this manner produced a unique kind of cultural tradition on which extreme-nationalism followed. According to some scholars the main differences between the Hitler and Mussolini regimes were as follows:

- The basic premises on which the Nazi concept of nationalism was built was race, while in the Fascist view of nationalism, the political and social aspects dominated. In this way "Nazism tended towards revolutionary exclusivity, on the other hand Fascism was more syncretic in its very nature".¹
- Mussolini was inclined to incorporate elements of conservatism, liberalism, and even socialism in his ideology, while Adolf Hitler dismissed every established principle and doctrine. According to the Nazi perspective, an individual, under the Nazi system, would be a 'new man' based upon biological and cultural features, while the Fascist ideology perceived their 'new man' as being a product of intensified teaching of Fascism in school.²
- Nazism is comparatively more anti-Semitic than Fascism, as the latter was racist only in the conventional sense. Towards the end of his rule Mussolini turned against the Jews only to please his ally, Hitler.³

¹ S.G. Payne, *Fascism: comparison and definition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 101-102.

² L.T. Sargent, *Contemporary Political Ideologies: A Comparative Analysis*, 11th edition (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), 194-195; A. Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 158-162.

³ L.P. Baradat, *Political Ideologies: Their Origins and Impact* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall International, 1997), 269-271.
A. Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies*, 159.

- Hitler's foreign policy transcended the traditional German expansionist aims, endeavouring a progressive racial reconstruction of Europe⁴. Mussolini aimed for colonial expansion in Africa and control over "Mare Nostrum", the Mediterranean Sea area.⁵
- The National Socialist Workers' Party undoubtedly played a significant role in Germany in the Nazi era, while Mussolini's Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF), enjoyed only very limited autonomy. To a great extent, it morphed into a sub-class of the state's administration.⁶
- A clear-cut authority clique, i.e., a leadership cult focused on Adolf Hitler as the Fuhrer, was developed in Germany. As a result Fuhrerprinzip (Fuhrer principle) as the basis for the Fuhrerstaat (Fuhrer state) played a paramount role in Nazism and it is hard to imagine the hero worship of Hitler without it. His rule's inherent dynamism is a very perplexing as well as heterogeneous phenomenon.⁷
- On the other hand, the Mussolini regime, to a great extent, remained a state based on formal law and part pluralism. This placed considerable restrictions on Il Duce's leadership role itself and the regime's potential for fanaticism and absolutism. Despite the fact that it was Mussolini who formulated the totalitarian principle of Fascism, he was never really able to expand and practice it to the degree that Hitler was able to. It was this feature which emboldened Mussolini's opponents inside the state to overthrow him easily.⁸

It ought to be clear that the Third Reich was not just an attempt to establish the ideal type of totalitarianism as far as state control is concerned, but rather, it was a massive effort to restructure society. However, the Nazis did not entirely succeed in annihilating the old societal order.

⁴ L.P. Baradat, *ibid*, 277-278.

⁵ J. J.Spielvogel, *Hitler and Nazi Germany: A History*, 2nd edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992), 208-214.

⁶ L.T.Sargent, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, 191-193.

⁷ J. J.Spielvogel, *Hitler and Nazi Germany: A History*, 130-134.

⁸ A. Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies*, 165.

The main thrust behind Nazism was not just a new type of agnosticism or cultural disarrangement, but rather a mix of extreme-nationalism combined with racism, imperialism, and additionally a wide range of features ranging from realism, occultism to technocratic and even scientific fantasy.⁹

The end of the Third Reich came, not because of despair amongst its pioneers, but simply because it was overpowered and vanquished by the sheer size and resources of the Allied powers ranged against it. Indeed, even the near demolition of Berlin and other cities and large scale loss of life was unable to shake the staunch Nazi loyalists' faith in the Fuhrer and his ideology.

Nazi influence outside Germany

Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP had a great deal of influence outside Germany even before Hitler became chancellor. Some political parties mimicked the NSDAP, and the National Socialist programme. The charismatic appeal of Hitler helped him and the NSDAP to gain popularity outside Germany. Some of the many political parties that were inspired by Hitler's vision and the NSDAP manifesto are briefly discussed below.

Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei (DNSAP-Austria)

At the beginning of the 20th century, a Pan-German movement began in Germanic Austria, referred to as the Austrian National Socialist movement. It led to the formation of the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (German Worker's Party), which was setup in Aussig, an Austrian town on November 15, 1903. In May 1918, the German Worker's Party changed its appellation to the German National Socialist Workers' Party (Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei DNSAP) at a party meeting in Vienna, and there a national socialist programme was presented. It is thought that this programme influenced the later manifesto of the German NSDAP.

Alfred Proksch met Hitler in his early years, and became his loyal follower. He launched the Nazi movement in Austria and served as a Gauleiter (leader of a regional branch of the NSDAP). He also founded the party newspaper, *Volksstimme*, besides the NSP-Verlag publishing house. In 1928, he was appointed as the Stellvertreter-Landesleiter (Deputy

⁹ R.Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge,1993),110-111.

Landsman) and from 1931 to 1933 held the post of Landesleiter (Landsman).¹⁰

However, Theodor Habicht, who joined the NSDAP in 1926 held real power, and a number of local journals were launched by him. He also served as an assembly member of Hesse-Nassau and was leader of the NSDAP's Wiesbaden council. In 1931, he was sent by Hitler as a Landesinspekteur (Land Inspector) to Austria with instruction to supervise the reorganization of the DNSAP. The DNSAP continued to work in Austria till early 1938.¹¹

Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei (DNSAP-Czechoslovakia)

The Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei (DNSAP) was established in Duchcov in November 1919 by Hans Knirsch, Hans Adolf Krebs, Rudolf Jung, Josef Patzel, and Adam Fahrner. It was referred to in the Czech language as the Nemecka Narodne Socialisticka Strana Delnicka. By May 1932 it had 61,000 members as well as 1,024 local chapters.¹²

As opposed to its sister party, i.e. Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei (DNSAP-Austria), which could just play a minimal role in Austrian politics, the Czechoslovak version managed to muster a great deal of votes owing to the sizable Sudeten (German Bohemian) population in Czechoslovakia. In elections, it worked well alongside the Deutsche National Partei (DNP). The DNSAP was banned in October 1933.¹³

Svenska Nationalsocialistiska Partiet (SNSP-Sweden)

The Svenska Nationalsocialistiska Frihetsförbundet (SNSFF-Swedish National Socialist Freedom League) was the first National Socialist Party in Sweden. It was founded by Birger Furugard and his two brothers Gunnar and Sigurd at a meeting in Alvdalen on August 12, 1924. The party was formed as a result of the 1923 meeting of Sigurd and Gunnar with Hitler

¹⁰ P. Rees, *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right Since 1890* (New York:Simon & Schuster, 1991), 306.

¹¹ Ibid,169.

¹² Klimek A., *Vítejte v První Republice* (Praha: Havran, 2003),219.

¹³ Sebek J., *Nemecké Politické Strany v CSR 1918-1938. In Pavel Marek; et al , Přehled Politického Straničství na území Českých zemí a Československa v letech 1861-1998* (Olomouc: Katedra Politologie a Evropských Studií FFUP, 2000),270.

and Erich Ludendorff. This group also began publishing the newspaper *Nationalsocialisten*, and Sigurd served as its editor.¹⁴

In 1925 its nomenclature was changed to Svenska Nationalsocialistiska Bonde-och Arbetarpartiet (SNBA) (Swedish National Socialist Peasants and Workers Party), but it remained confined to Varmland. In 1930, the party merged with Sven Olov Lindholm's National Socialist People's Party of Sweden, thus becoming the Svenska Nationalsocialistiska Partiet (SNSP) (Swedish National Socialist Party). Birger Furugard became the party's Riksledare or national leader. Its headquarters was at Goteborg.¹⁵ The whole edifice of the party was modeled after the NSDAP.¹⁶ Furugard had total control over all party affairs just like its German counterpart¹⁷ and close connections were maintained with NSDAP.¹⁸

Furugard visited Germany on many occasions, and even spoke at the election campaign rallies of the NSDAP. He also succeeded in developing personal links with Hitler and other important figures in NSDAP.¹⁹ The symbol of the party was the Swastika. It continued to function until 1936, when it was dissolved.²⁰

Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail (Romania)

The Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail (Legion of the Archangel Michael) or the Miscarea Legionara (Legionary movement) was launched as a far-right movement by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu in Romania on July 24, 1927. Its headquarters were in Bucharest.²¹

Its philosophy is known as 'Legionairism' or the 'Legionary Doctrine'. This political movement, which was later transformed into a political party, is

¹⁴ D.S.Nordin, *A Swedish Dilemma: A Liberal European Nation's Struggle with Racism and Xenophobia, 1990-2000*(Lanham, MD: University Press of America),20.

¹⁵ B.Schon , *Svenskarna Som Stred for Hitler: Ett Historiskt Reportage* (Stockholm: BokforlagetDN,1999),56.

¹⁶ T. Edvard, *Sveriges Politiska Partier*(Stockholm: H. Geber,1933),115-116.

¹⁷ H. Tingsten, & Nils, B. E. Andren, *Parti Och Politik* (Karlstad: Utbildningsforlaget, 1970) ,46.

¹⁸ T. Moller, *Svensk Politisk Historia 1809-1975* (Lund: Studentlitteratur,2005),123.

¹⁹ B Schon, *Svenskarna Som Stred for Hitler: ett historiskt reportage* (Stockholm: Bokforlaget DN,1999),56-57.

²⁰ H. Carlsson, *Nazismen i Sverige: Ett varningsord* (Stockholm: Trots allt, 1942), 92.

²¹ S. G Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*(New York: University of Wisconsin Press,1995),394.

commonly known as the Garda de Fier (Iron Guard). Anti-capitalism, anti-communism, and extreme-nationalism were its tenets. Since its members wore green uniforms, they were commonly referred as the 'Greenshirts'.²²

However, Codreanu's thinking was different compared to the hardcore Nazi ideology. He did not advocate the creation of a glorified 'superhuman' like the NSDAP. Neither did the Legion have any clear-cut economic programme, though it condemned and rejected capitalism as being overly materialistic, and upheld the idea of a communal as well as a national economy. The Legion continued to function till 1941.²³

Norges Nasjonalsocialistiske Arbeiderparti (NNSAP-Norway)

The Norges Nasjonalsocialistiske Arbeiderparti (National Socialist Workers' Party of Norway) was a minor Norwegian political party founded in 1930 by Adolf Egeberg. It played the role of an extra parliamentary opposition.²⁴

Egeberg, a journalist, was working as a correspondent for the newspaper, *Nationen* in Germany in 1930.²⁵ He took training in the Sturmabteilung (paramilitary wing of the NSDAP) in Munich, and the Schutzstaffel (paramilitary organization of the NSDAP) in Berlin.²⁶

The ideological model for NNSAP was the NSDAP, and it supported the wave of pan German nationalism.²⁷ Egeberg and many of his colleagues in the party had organizational and personal liaison with the NSDAP and the Schutzstaffel.²⁸

The NNSAP was set up as a Nazi cell, and Eugen Nielsen financed it. An architect by profession, Nielsen was also a political activist. In 1932, he

²² R.G.Waldeck, *Athene Palace: Hitler's "New Order" Comes to Rumania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013),182.

²³ S. G Payne, *A History of Fascism: 1914–1945*, 277-289.

²⁴ S.Garau, *Fascism and Ideology: Italy, Britain, and Norway* (Italy: Routledge, 2015),160-163.

²⁵ H. F Dahl, *Den norske nasjonalsosialismen: Nasjonal Samling 1933-1945, i tekst og bilder* (Oslo : Pax Forlag.1990),71.

²⁶ T.Emberland, & Bernt, Roughtvedt , *Det Ariske Idol: Forfatteren, Eventyreren Ognazisten Per Imerslund* (Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co. 2004), 197.

²⁷ T.Pryser, *Arbeiderbevegelsen og Nasjonal Samling: Om Venstrestrømninger i Quislings Parti* (Stockholm: Tiden Norsk Forlag, 1991), 116.

²⁸ J. R.Kyllingstad, *Measuring the Master Race: Physical Anthropology in Norway, 1890–1945* (Oslo: Open BookPublishers,2014),207-208.

started publishing a biweekly newspaper, *Fronten* (The Front). The NNSAP was dissolved in May, 1940 after the invasion of Norway by the German army on April 9, 1940.²⁹

Danmark Nationalsocialistiske Arbejderparti (DNSAP-Danmark)

The Danmark Nationalsocialistiske Arbejderparti (National Socialist Workers' Party of Denmark) was formed by a former captain of the Danish Hussars Guard, Cay Lembcke. It was the largest Nazi Party in Denmark, and was founded on November 16, 1930 after the German Reichstag elections held in September the same year, in which the Nazis gained great success. Earlier in 1910, Lembcke had established the Det Danske Spejderkorps (Danish Boy Scouts Organization).

The Danish Nazi party was almost a carbon copy of the NSDAP, for it even used the swastika and the Hitler salute. It even named its paramilitary force as 'SA'. The party also adopted the translated version of the Horst Wessel, the NSDAP anthem from 1930 to 1945. The DNSAP continued to function till the final day of World War II, i.e., May 8, 1945.³⁰

Nationaal-Socialistische Nederlandsche Arbeiderspartij (NSNAP-Netherlands)

The Nationaal-Socialistische Nederlandsche Arbeiderspartij (National Socialist Dutch Workers Party) was a minor national socialist party established at the Hague on November 16, 1931. The founders were Adalbert van Smit, Albert van Waterland, and Ernst Herman van Rappard Ridder. The NSNAP's headquarters was in Amsterdam.³¹

The NSNAP drew inspiration from the NSDAP, and formed its own 'Storm Trooper' battalion, emulating the Sturmabteilung. The party also launched its youth programme, 'Holland Youth', which was patterned after the 'Hitler Youth'. The German Nazi emblem, i.e., the black swastika in a white circle on a red background was used as the party's emblem.³²

²⁹ S. Garau, *Fascism and Ideology: Italy, Britain, and Norway* (Italy: Routledge, 2015), 160-163.

³⁰ M. E. Geisler, "In the Shadow of Exceptionalism Germany's National Symbols and Public Memory after 1989". In Michael E. Geisler (ed.), *National Symbols, Fractured Identities: Contesting the National Narrative* (London: University Press of New England, 2005), 71.

³¹ H. H. Geerken, *Hitler's Asian Adventure* (Germany: Books on Demand, 2015), 80.

³² D. Littlejohn, *The Patriotic Traitors: A History of Collaboration in Germany Occupied Europe* (London: Heinemann, 1972), 86.

In the summer of 1932, the NSNAP splintered into three small groups. In April 1932, van Rappard publicly declared that the Netherlands should become a province of Germany, but Smit did not agree with this idea of van Rappard, and quit the party. Later, van Rappard began to perceive Albert van Waterland as his rival, and thus van Waterland was forced to leave the party. Smit and van Waterland formed separate parties, but shared the same appellation, i.e., NSNAP.

However, the most staunch follower of Adolf Hitler was Ernst Herman van Rappard, whose group was called the NSNAP-Van Rappard group. He firmly believed that the Dutch and Germans had a strong racial bonding, which was why they were one nation. He later changed the name of his group to NSNAP-Hitlerbeweging (Hitler Movement).³³ This party was dissolved on December 14, 1941.

Movimiento Nacional-Socialista de Chile

The Movimiento Nacional-Socialista de Chile (National Socialist Movement of Chile) was formed on April 5, 1932 as a far-right political movement in Chile by Carlos Keller, (who was the ideologue of the group), General Diaz Valderrama and Jorge Gonzalez von Marees. Jorge Gonzalez became its first leader. El Jefe (the Chief) was his equivalent of the Fuhrer in Spanish. The party replicated the ideas of NSDAP. The members were referred to as the Nacistas.³⁴

The Chilean party strictly adhered to the ideology of Nazism. It got financial assistance from the German community in Chile and quickly enrolled 20,000 members. The movement laid emphasis on the need for one party rule, and unity between the social strata. It also established its own paramilitary wing, the Tropas Nacistas de Asalto. The National Socialist Movement of Chile was dissolved in 1938.³⁵

Partidul National-Socialist din Romania (PNSR-Romania)

The Partidul National-Socialist din Romania (Nationalist-Socialist Party of Romania) was a political party established in April 1932 by Colonel Stefan

³³ D.Littlejohn, *The Patriotic Traitors* (London: Heinemann, 1972), 86.

³⁴ M.P. Friedman, *Nazis & Good Neighbours* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 52.

³⁵ S.G Payne, *A History of Fascism: 1914-1945* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press), 341.

Tatarescu, a retired colonel of the Romanian Air Force, and the brother of Gheorghe Tatarescu (who later served twice as the Prime Minister of Romania).³⁶

Scholars often refer to the party as a replica of the Nazi party, because of its programme, and structure. The PNSR also printed a newspaper, the *Crez Nou*. The PNSR received financial support from his German counterpart, and Tatarescu was formally received by Nazi officials in Germany. The party's popularity slowly dropped and in 1936 it was dissolved.³⁷

Magyar Nemzeti Szocialista Part (Hungary)

The Magyar Nemzeti Szocialista Part (Hungarian National Socialist Party) was setup in the 1920s, but failed to muster any influence or popularity. Nevertheless, this party remained intact till the 1930s.³⁸

A breakaway group, the Hungarian National Socialist Workers' Party (NSZMP) was founded by Zoltan Boszormeny on May 2, 1932, and a meeting with Adolf Hitler the same year, further convinced Boszormeny of the advantages of Nazism.

Owing to the party's emblem the movement soon became known as the 'Scythe Cross'. The group toed Hitler's line, adopting the brown shirt and the swastika. It published the newspaper *Nemzeti Szocialista* (National Socialist). As leader of the movement, Boszormeny commanded that his followers call him Vezer (great leader) in imitation of Hitler's 'Führer'. A word-for-word translation of the Nazi Party's National Socialist Programme became the manifesto of NSZMP. This party remained active in Hungary until 1945.³⁹

³⁶ A.Heinen, *Legiunea 'Arhanghelul Mihail': o contribuție la problema fascismului internațional*(Bucharest: Humanitas,2006),173, 217.

³⁷ F. Veiga and Istoria Garzii de Fier, *1919-1941: Mistica Ultrationalismului* (Bucharest: Humanitas,1993), 133.

³⁸ S.G.Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945* (Wisconsin :University of Wisconsin Press,1995),270.

³⁹ F.L Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (London: Methuen & Co,1974),173.

Natsional Sotsialisticheskata Bulgarska Rabotnicheska Partiya (NSBRP-Bulgaria)

The Natsional Sotsialisticheskata Bulgarska Rabotnicheska Partiya (National Socialist Bulgarian Workers Party) was a Nazi outfit set up in July, 1932 by Dr. Hristo Kunchev, with its headquarters in Sofia, the capital of the then Kingdom of Bulgaria. Various groups had emerged in Bulgaria, such as the Union of Bulgarian National Legions (1936) and the Warriors for the Advancement of the Bulgarian National Spirit (Ratniks) after the triumphs of Hitler in Germany. The Bulgarian National Socialist Workers Party, however, was the first in Bulgaria to openly support Adolf Hitler, even before he became the chancellor of Germany.⁴⁰

Kunchev, who had studied medicine in Berlin, was greatly inspired by Adolf Hitler. The Bulgarian National Socialist Workers Party was a replica of the NSDAP, for it espoused the National Socialist Programme, the swastika and other symbols of the Nazi Party.⁴¹ Kunchev also launched his own programme with the title "My Programme".

The party also began publishing a newspaper called *Ataka!* (Attack!) in 1932 which resembled Joseph Goebbels' newspaper *Der Angriff*. The *Natsional Sotsialisticheskata Bulgarska Rabotnicheska Partiya* (National Socialist Bulgarian Workers Party) was banned in 1944 by the Bulgarian Communist Party which had dominated the Fatherland Front coalition that took power in 1944. Later, the Bulgarian Communist Party established the People's Republic of Bulgaria in 1946.⁴²

Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP-Syria)

The Syrian Social Nationalist Party (الحزب السوري القومي الاجتماعي) was set up in Beirut on November 16, 1932 by Antoun Saadeh, a Lebanese philosopher, politician and writer. This party is still functioning in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan, and boasts more than 100,000 members.⁴³

⁴⁰ G. H. Haskell, *From Sofia to Jaffa: The Jews of Bulgaria and Israel* (Detroit :Wayne State University Press,1994),111.

⁴¹ R. Butler, *Hitler's Jackals* (Barnsley, Leo Cooper,1998),44.

⁴² Ilchev and Bistra Rushkova, *The Rose of the Balkans: A Short History of Bulgaria* (Sofia: Colibri, 2005), 44.

⁴³ R.,Irwin, "An Arab Surrealist", *The Nation*, 3 January 2005,p.24.

Saadeh, the founder of the party, moved to Brazil in February 1921, where he learned German. In Brazil he formed a secret society in 1924, the main objective of which was the unification of 'Natural' Syria. In his view 'Natural' Syria included Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, southern Turkey, Transjordan, Palestine, and the Levant. However, the following year his secret society was dissolved.⁴⁴

He returned to Lebanon in July 1930 and began to teach German at the American University of Beirut in 1932. The same year he secretly established the SSNP. According to Reeva S. Simon, Saadeh was a great admirer of Hitler and was deeply influenced by Nazi ideology. The SSNP's symbol was a reversed swastika and its anthem was the Arabic version of 'Deutschland iber alles'. The party, like its German cousin stressed on the glorification of the 'supreme' leader.⁴⁵

Ehud Ya'ari and Nordbruch Goetz claim that the SSNP greet their leaders with a Hitlerian salute.⁴⁶

Elliniko Ethniko Sosialistiko Komma (Greece)

The Elliniko Ethniko Sosialistiko Komma (Greek National Socialist Party) was a National Socialist far-right party founded by George S. Mercouris in December 1932 in Athens. It stood out in Greece as a staunch supporter of Hitler, and copied the NSDAP in structure and ideology.

Mercouris served as the Member of Parliament from 1915 till 1929. He also held the portfolio of the Minister for Food and Supply from 1915-1922 in the cabinet of Petros Protopapadakis. From December 1926 till August 1927, he was Minister of National Economy in Prime Minister Alexandros Zaimis' cabinet. In 1927, he was also sent as the Greek representative to the League of Nations. In September 1932, he was re-elected to the parliament, and was made vice-president of the People's Party, but after a clash with Panagis Tsaldaris, the party's leader, Mercouris left it in

⁴⁴ D.Peretz, *The Middle East Today* (Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1994), 384.

⁴⁵ M. W.Suleiman, *Political Parties in Lebanon* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1965),134.

⁴⁶ E.Yaari, "Behind the Terror", *The Atlantic* (June, 1987) available from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1987/06/behind-the-terror/376326/> ;see also N. Goetz, *Nazism in Syria and Lebanon: The Ambivalence of the German Option, 1933-1945* (London: Routledge, 2009).

November 1932. The next month, i.e., December 1932 he set up his own party, the Greek National Socialist Party, which continued to work until 1943.⁴⁷

Conclusion

Hitler very successfully projected and utilized the NSDAP in Germany and in Europe and elsewhere. The NSDAP not only established its paramilitary wings, i.e., Sturmabteilung and Schutzstaffel, but also permeated all spheres of German society. It set up student, women, and youth wings. A number of nominally autonomous organizations in Germany had their own legalized systems, yet the Nazi Party had a say in their running.

Even before he became chancellor, Adolf Hitler's influence had spread outside Germany. Some far-right political parties copied the NSDAP, including the National Socialist programme. The NSDAP/AO worked for the Nazi party outside Germany, serving as its foreign organization branch. Its objective was to evoke amiable sentiments for the Germans and Germany in the rest of the world. Thus, the Nazi Party managed to convince persons and groups susceptible to influence that Nazism was the best option for Germany. It was even able to persuade some persons in other countries that their own salvation lay in espousing the Nazi ideology. When the NSDAP came to power in 1933, the total number of NSDAP members was over two million.

⁴⁷ S.G. Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 320.