

THE POLICY OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN ACTION: THE EVENTS OF CRYSTAL NIGHT IN THE PUBLIC OPINION OF THE UNITED STATES (BASED ON THE "NEW YORK TIMES" MATERIALS OF 1938)

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Abstract

The article deals with the coverage of events related to the wave of anti-Jewish pogroms that took place in Germany on November 9-10, 1938 in the leading American newspaper "The New York Times". Pogroms were motivated by the murder of Ernst von Rath, the employee of the German embassy in Paris, performed on the 7th of November of the same year by the Polish Jew Herschel Grünschan, and the consequences followed for German Jews. A particular attention is paid to the reaction to these events by American

politicians, such as the former US President Herbert Hoover, and the representatives of various social circles, primarily Jewish ones, and more broadly, the influence of the materials published in "The New York Times" on the situation of Jews in Germany on the development of public opinion in the United States of America concerning this issue. The author comes to the conclusion that before the Second World War, the National Socialists did not have the opportunity to ignore the world public opinion completely, and in this regard they did not dare to turn to the "final solution of the Jewish issue", which turned out in the Holocaust.

Keywords: politics, national socialism, anti-Semitism, public opinion, Third Reich, "New York Times", press, Jews, Jewish property, arization, Germany, USA.

1 INTRODUCTION

Various aspects of the theory and practice of National Socialism belong to the category of those historical phenomena that in the foreseeable future are not destined to become the property of history alone. Over the years, the relevance of their research is increasing, although there are peak periods in this process, as in any other. One of these periods can be observed today. It is connected with the fact that globalization processes have put a number of acute political problems before the majority of states, first of all European ones, the solution of which in the framework of existing democratic systems promises to be long, which causes a negative reaction on the part of the population of these countries [1]. The latter, in particular, is conditioned by gross miscalculations of the state leadership of the leading powers of Europe and the European Union as a whole in the sphere of migration process political regulation [2]. In the situation when the policy of tolerance has become hypertrophic and, due to its one-sidedness, irrational one, from the point of view of many Europeans, the tendency to support increase from the electorate of right-wing radical parties whose programs contain the elements of neo-fascist and neo-Nazi ideology has become apparent clearly. As is known, under certain circumstances, a radical response to global challenges can present a serious temptation for the establishment of a state, and therefore the danger of the aforementioned trend is obvious [3].

Equally, one of the most important tasks faced by the researcher of the history of the Third Reich is the analysis of the reaction to the repressive policy of the Hitler regime from the public opinion of the leading world powers and the degree of its influence effectiveness on the domestic and foreign policy positions of the Nazi leaders.

In the light of the foregoing, during the year of the 80th anniversary of the tragic events of Kristallnacht, the analysis of their coverage and their consequences in hot pursuit on the pages of the "New York Times", the flagship of the American press, is, in our view, of particular relevance.

2 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study was based on the basic principles of historical knowledge - historicism, objectivity, scientific character and system nature. The work used problematic, historical-system and specific-historical methods.

In order to describe any social, including political and legal issue, it is important to analyze the macroprocesses of social life. The microanalysis of various events and everyday practices in the theoretical and methodological plan shows a clear heuristic productivity, since the deployment of certain important socio-political events and processes, their significance for the further transformation of individual institutions, social relations, political order and social outlook, very often depends actually on the situation and the depth of subject reflection in a particular situation, a specific historical and situational context [4; 5; 6]. This allows us to discover the complex phenomena of public consciousness, objectified in national state-political institutions, phenomena, the system of political relations, the legal system, and so on [7].

This article used the following leading theoretical and methodological principles of research:

1) the principle of completeness in the understanding of the specific behavior of individuals and their socio-political sphere, when, on the one hand, the existing social, legal and political institutions, structures and mechanisms largely determine human activity, its nature and direction, and on the other - the effectiveness and the sustainability of various social components of political and legal order are predetermined by the "subjective factor";

2) the principle of "understanding interpretation", i.e. the research strategy is built by the methods of understanding and explanation, which generally corresponds to the heuristic settings of post-non-classical (understanding) science. This approach allowed us to consider the scope of social everyday life, the features of public and political activity of subjects, to identify the factors of sustainable development of statehood and civil society institutions, to evaluate the criteria to determine the effectiveness of management decisions, political influences, etc.;

3) the principle of social conventionality, which means that the value-normative systems operating in society are of a specific historical and socio-communicative nature. At the same time, the knowledge of the latter is conditioned by the socio-cultural and historical context, any social and political phenomena or processes are theoretically and ideologically loaded and conditioned by socio-cultural factors and dominants.

3 MAIN PART

As is known, "Crystal Night" (this "romantic" name was introduced by the Reich Minister of Economy of the Nazi Reich Walter Funk) [8, 210], or "The Night of Broken Glasses", represented a wave of Jewish pogroms that took part in Germany on November 9-10 of 1938 (on the anniversary of the "Munich coup"), the reason for which was the attempt on the adviser of the German embassy in Paris, Ernst von Rath, committed on November 7 by the Polish Jew Herschel Grünschan. In the light of the well-known facts today, the Nazi attempt to portray pogroms as a spontaneous outburst of outraged compatriots can not be taken seriously. On November 8, the newspaper of the National Socialist German Workers' Party "Völkischer Beobachter", issued a provocative appeal: "It is quite obvious that the German people will draw an appropriate conclusion from this event" [9, 303]. The immediate inspirer and the organizer of the all-imperial pogrom was the Reich Minister of Public Education and Propaganda Paul Joseph Goebbels.

The politicians and the press of most leading world powers immediately reacted to the events in Germany, during which numerous synagogues, Jewish shops, offices

were destroyed, and the Jews themselves were detained and sent to prisons and concentration camps. In the United States, the "New York Times" became one of the main centers that accumulated and directed such protests.

On November 11, the newspaper informed readers that in the morning of the previous day, the central streets of Munich were crowded with people seeking to gaze at the consequences of the night pogrom. According to American correspondents, Kaufingerstrasse "looked like it was bombed." "Half a dozen of the best shops were turned into ruins overnight, with the splinters of mirror glass dotted the sidewalk, torn shelves and goods lying broken and trampled on the floor." They also mentioned the arson of numerous synagogues (in Bamberg, Bayreuth, Troutlingen, Landsberg, Berlin (Bismarckstrasse), Cologne, Leipzig, Lübeck, Frankfurt am Main; in the latter, the fire also destroyed "the main synagogue located in the old ghetto, near the world-famous ancient Jewish cemetery"). At the same time, the stores belonging to American Jews, with the signs saying "Jewish property!" remained intact [10, 3] (the latter circumstance indicates the planning of the majority of the pogroms and the control over their conduct by the local authorities and security agencies).

In the same issue of "The New York Times", with reference to the English "Times", it was reported about German accusations against British politicians Winston Churchill and Clement R. Attlee that they inspired the attempt on Rath sounded from the pages of the newspaper "Angrif" created and patronized by Goebbels. This, according to American correspondents, was to complicate Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, who was guided during the conduct of his foreign policy by the idea that the domestic political character of a regime should not hamper the establishment of friendly relations between different countries, the task of his course support on rapprochement with Germany by the British population [11, 2].

The "New York Times" issue of November 12, referring to the Goebbels article published on the eve of the "Volkischer Beobachter", quoted the official announcement of the Nazi minister about the events in Germany. "We are of the opinion," he stressed, "that the reaction of the German people to a cowardly murder in Paris must be explained by the heinous nature of this deed. The nation followed its healthy instincts." Besides, Goebbels made the statement to the foreign press, in which he used the method tested by time, attacking and declaring the international Jewish circles in an anti-German conspiracy. "World Jewry," he asserted, "suffered a crushing defeat this year, as its plan for the destruction of National Socialist Germany failed due to the conclusion of the Munich agreement." Therefore, "it provoked a new radical and decisive action aimed at undermining the peaceful efforts of the nation (the Germans - the remark by authors) and signaling the start of a new campaign against Germany."

Since assassinations, like the one in Paris, "reduce international politics to gangsterism," the minister continued, "it is natural that the nation of 80,000,000 took a counter-action against Jews in Germany spontaneously."

Rejecting the allegations of organized pogroms, Goebbels, among other things, cited the following argument: "If I organized demonstrations, not a few thousand would come out on the streets, but between 400,000 and 700,000 people, and the results would be completely different and more radical." The newspaper also cited a warning from the Nazi leaders to the foreign press, especially the American one, about the need for the latter to exercise restraint in the coverage of these actions, since this will determine the further treatment of Jews in Germany. "Any lie and exaggeration" will not have an effect, and German Jews will have to pay for them. The way Germany treated the

Jews living in it, was declared its internal affair. At the same time, a large-scale campaign was launched in the German press about British anti-Arab politics in Palestine [12, 1-4].

In a matter of days, passed after the German events, many prominent statesmen and public figures of the United States joined the growing campaign of protest against the next round of the German anti-Jewish policy radicalization. The harsh statements from their lips immediately fell into the editorials of "The New York Times".

In particular, the ex-President of the United States of America, H. Hoover, expressing the satisfaction over the possibility of "expressing ... resentment again and joining the public protest over the treatment of Jews in Germany," did not blame the German people, but blamed the German authorities, which, according to him, threw Germany to the medieval past in the civilizational respect. At the same time, he drew the parallel between the Nazi leaders' policy on the Jewish issue and the expulsion of Jews from Spain. "Nothing that ever happened in Germany did not cause such horror or protest as the modern attitude in it to the Jews," said the famous American writer S. Lewis, who expressed the hope that the protests caused by this policy will make the Nazis authorities to stop it.

Bishop William T. Manning foretold the fall for National Socialist government due to its own "sinfulness." Finally, a joint appeal signed by the representatives of the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Jewish Labor Committee, published in the same issue of "The New York Times", stated the following: "The world is protesting against the latest news coming from Germany. At the hour of their oppression, we bring the assurances of our deepest sympathy and understanding for our Jewish brothers in Germany. In the depths of our grief, we find consolation in the fact that the world realized that barbarism directed against Jews is the violence against all humanity. This reaction of the whole world is the recognition that here we are faced with the problem that goes beyond the persecution of a particular minority, and that civilization itself is under attack today" [13, 6].

Of course, "The New York Times" paid much attention to the appropriate reaction of American and international Jewish circles. Thus, the Rabbi H.J. Shekhtel, having assigned the responsibility for the Paris incident to Nazis, argued this as follows: "If you stretch a drugstore rubber to the limit, and it bursts with a crack, does this surprise you? Similarly, if you persecute, torture, and humiliate the dignity of human beings, leading them to the limit, and they act irrationally, should this be surprising? Let Hitler and his tormentors look in the mirror if they want to see those responsible for the crime, for hatred and insanity in modern Europe" [14, 39].

In this situation, many German Jews trusted in giving them the opportunity to leave their homeland, which became their stepmother. However, this took time. On November 14, "The New York Times" told its readers about the heartbreaking scenes taking place on the border between Germany and the Netherlands. The Jews who gathered here, trying to leave the Reich, "literally fell to their knees, begging the Dutch officials to allow them to cross the border." However, these pleas were in vain. The Dutch border guards, whose number was doubled, "received a strict order not to allow the border cross by refugees." In their comments on this issue, the representatives of "The New York Times" drew attention to the fact that although the condemnation of the anti-Jewish excesses committed by the Nazis was widely received in the Netherlands, the tone of the local press covering these events differed markedly from the materials published in the English-language press. This was explained by the fears about the possible reaction of the militant neighbor [15, 7].

However, two weeks later, "The New York Times" published information that the initiative of the Committee of the Netherlands Jews on the establishment of the Jewish colonization society receives an increasing understanding in the world. The Emissary of the Committee, a well-known businessman, D. Wolf, made a tour of Europe, meeting with the representatives of Jewish organizations and the politicians in Belgium, France, Switzerland, where he "managed to agree on private donations to the foundation of the created society worth of two million dollars "without any propaganda".

The idea of creating a Jewish colonial society was also fully supported by the head of the World Zionist Organization, Chaim Weizmann, "despite the fact that society intends to acquire land for colonization outside of Palestine", which "will remain, as far as possible, the center of organization and the cultural heart of any Jewish settlements". "The main goal of the society," the note noted, "is the resettlement of a significant number of refugees from Central Europe to a suitable region as an economic and cultural community. Mr. Wolf announced the number of 1,000,000 families. The society seeks to create the conditions that would encourage various governments to cooperate with it." Its leaders "consider that such a cooperation will take place if the Jews provide the organization with the means necessary to create a settlement benefiting the country in which it will be created." Addressing the Jews of all countries with the request to provide the necessary capital and thus participate in the implementation of the resettlement project, the leadership of the society promised to give all the donors "the guarantee that they contribute to a temporary charitable foundation and support the project that is economically sound". Further, it was reported that the project would require about two billion dollars [16, 15].

At the same time, in the overwhelming majority of such cases, the priority was given to the resettlement of Jewish refugees to Palestine. In particular, already on November 25 of 1938, the executive director of the Zionist Jewish National Foundation Mendel Fischer, who was engaged in the acquisition of land in Palestine, publicly announced that one hundred thousand Jews could be resettled on the lands that the foundation had at its disposal [17, 4].

Much attention in the American press in general, and in "The New York Times" in particular, was paid to the policy of Jewish property "arization" and new restrictive measures against the Jewish population of Germany that followed the events of Kristallnacht. In particular, on December 6 the newspaper reported on a fresh anti-Jewish decree authorizing local authorities of the Reich to compel Jews to sell their remaining property, including various types of securities. On the other hand, Jews were forbidden to "buy, sell, pledge gold, platinum, silver, precious stones ..., pearls ..., jewelry and art items worth of 1,000 marks." The restrictions were imposed on the visits of the cities of Nuremberg and Fürth to non-resident Jews. In Cologne Jews were forbidden to peddling trade. A particular attention in this article was paid to the anti-Semitic radio campaign developed in Germany.

In particular, it was reported that in many cases the news radio stations began with the narrator's talk "about some dubious case, where the guilty one was the Jew", or from citing the statements of well-known historical figures on the Jewish issue, after which the result was summed up: "That's what the Jews are!" and that Jews had no right to make donations to the funds of the national-socialist charitable organization "Winter Aid." Finally, in the economic sections of German daily newspapers, the articles were published regularly that inspired compatriots the idea that the goods in the Jewish stores that were subject to "arization" were of poor quality and that they should not be

overpaid [18, 13]. Given the peculiarities of the mentality of most Americans with their cult of individualism, such a flagrant violation of the rights of an individual, including the right to life and property, certainly could not leave most of them indifferent to the persecution of German Jews.

Of course, "The New York Times" continued to cover the policy of the Third Reich broadly, including the anti-Jewish policy, throughout its years of existence. However, we set ourselves a specific task to consider the coverage of the events of Kristallnacht and its consequences hot on the hot pursuit of the most influential American newspaper and do not intend to go beyond this task.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The pogroms of "The Night of Broken Glass", inspired by Nazi Germany authorities, became the most important step after the adoption of the infamous Nuremberg Laws towards a further escalation and radicalization of the anti-Jewish policy of the Hitler regime during the pre-war period, spurring Jewish emigration from the country. The public of most states reacted extremely negatively to these events. The protests in the USA had an especially acute form. An important contribution to the representation and the development of public opinion in this country belonged to "The New York Times" traditionally. As was shown, the wide coverage of the November Jewish pogrom in Germany on the pages of this publication brought quite tangible results, contributing to the expansion of the movement supporting German Jews, in which the representatives of various political and public circles of the United States took an active part, as well as ordinary citizens. More broadly, such support (of course, it's not about the United States alone) contributed to the fact that, despite the Nazis' threats to respond to the criticism of their actions in the foreign press by further tightening of anti-Jewish policies, they did not dare to implement "final solution of the Jewish issue" before the Second World War, which later emerged into the policy of the Holocaust.

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