Julius Evola’s Political Endeavors (H.T. Hansen)

by Federico Utiarraga on July 30, 1970

The relationship between Evola and Raphael Spann … further indicates the existence of a loose, primarily Catholic, resistance movement against so- called “biological racism,” to which Evola also belonged. … It is possible that there was something of a revolutionary conservative front against the racist beliefs of National Socialism, which were then provoking world wide protest, and against Alfred Rosenberg …

THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS POLITICS

.. Evola wrote his first real political essay at the behest of his friend Count Giovanni Colonna di Cesaro, who was a deeply committed democrat … [S]o the essay [State, Power and Freedom] came about … In this context, Evola portrayed Fascism as a ‘mere caricature’ and a ‘grotesque parody, if one looks at the type of ruler and the state that ought to embody the principle of freedom.’ He further elaborated that the Fascist movement ‘in no way posseses a cultural and spiritual root’ Only after ‘purely material strength’ had brought success did Fascism turn to the task of creating this root, ‘just as a newly rich man later tries to buy himself an education and noble title.’ ..

In the same article Evola also strongly condemns violent acts against politically different thinkinfg people, in the case of the parlamentary deputy Matteoti who was murdered by the Fascists because he wanted to annul the elections of 1924 due to terrorist influence. …

These attacks [on Evola’s ability to publish] reached a climax with the publication of Evola’s highly polemical first political book, [Pagan Imperialism]. A storm of outrage broke loose against Evola … making the author famous overnight.

In this book, … he attacked not only the Catholic Church, but also Potestantism, lashed out equally against the Soviet Union and America, and above all indicted the faults of Fascist regime …

In 1929, Evola’s famous essay [Americanism and Bolshevism] appeared in the magazine Nuova Antologia. Following the ideas in [Pagan Imperialism], this piece reveals the danger of a division of the world between America and the Soviet Union, by which Europe would only lose. Both powers strive to enslave man, although with different methods and towards different goals. …

SUMMARY OF EVOLA’S RELATIONS TO FASCISM

Taken as a whole, one can look at Evola’s attitude toward the historical phenomenon of Fascism in the following time sequence: first a great hope; then an imediate sobering that is nevertheless supported by the hope of being able to make corrections of a traditional ind; and finally the recognition that everything is lost … Finally comes apoliteia, the apolitical stance that betrays a total disillusion. … In countless essays he mentioned the totalitarian state, the bureaucracy, the populist elements … that brought with them demagoguery and a primitive emphasis on outward things, the pedagogic urge of the state, the campaign for population increase, the ‘virtuous’ attitude towards sexual morals, the absurd continuing existence of the part …, with its pathetic election spectacles, the politicizing of leisure time, the Fascist corporative concept, the Catholic influence, and so on.

These ‘degeneration’, as Evola terms them, were of course exactly the components that made up the political success of Fascism and National Socialism alike. The emphasis on bourgeois though patterns … aroused his decisive opposition …

For Evola, the bourgeoisie is identical with the destruction of true spiritual values in order to increase one’s own profits, as well as the failure to recognize quality and the subsequent introduction of quantity as the sole criterion. …

Another aspect that brought Evola into conflict with the ruling Fascism was his disapproval of the nation concept as a creation of the French Revolution, which had led to an impermissible rise of the ethnic concept. For him, nation and folk wer concepts roots in nature, and thus subversive and anti-traditional. …

Evola led a special struggle and the ‘bolshevist’ tendencies in ascism — that is, the opinion of some that commuunism had to undergo only a few positive developments in order to turn into Fascism. The communist idea, with its collectivsm, was for Evola the most radical negation of his idea of the personality … This ‘anti-bolshevism’, as he often called it, was also the reason for his decisive opposition to all similar tendencies in National Socialism, which also approached communism, in that among other things it wanted to abolish private property and dreamed of the inroduction of the Russian mir. That is why he opposed National Bolshevism more and more …

Official Fascism was eqally unhappy about Evola’s public agreement with the thesis of the ‘philosophers of crisis’ — Spengler, Benda, Massis, Guenon, Keyserling and Ortega y Gasset — that the world was in the midst of a decline. This amounted to a denunciation of the modern age, where to be modern and progressive was the declared goal of Fascism. …

EVOLA AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM

.. Evola early on had expressed reservations about National Socialism, as in an article in Vita Nova with the title [Current Problems], in which he uses an article in the Europaische Revue about the Third Reich as a pretext to present his arguments. Beneath the already challenging subtitle “Counterrevolution or Reaction?” he writes: “The inferiority of National Socialism is obvious ..”

Even earlier he had polemicized against Alfred Rosenberg … Evola’s dislike was based mostly on the fact that Rosenberg valued modernity so much. Another article against Rosenberg was [A Curent Paradox: Racist Paganism = Liberal Enlightenment] … stated abut Rosenberg that ‘he lacked any understanding for the transcendental dimensions of the sacral.’

The absence of any transcendental background was, of course, one of Evola’s moain objections against National Socialism. … This lack of reference to transcendence also leads to the other points criticized by Evola, such as National Socialism’ great attachment to nature (the Volk as guiding principle) the Fuhrer principle that answers only to the people and had no legitimation from above, and the resulting demagoguery; as well as populism and purely biological racism.

Evola also spoke out against the Anschluss of Austria into Germany … In “Orrizonte Austriaco” we even read: “National Socialism[,] … being nothing but a semi-collectivist nationalism and equalizing in its centralism, it has not hesitated to destroy Germany’s time honored division into duchies, counties, and cities that all enjoyed a measure of independence.”

Evola did not hesitate to go further. In an essay of November 1940 … he attacked one of the main slogans of National Socialism and declared: “One of the cathphrases that is especially dear to National Socialism and is expressed in the words: ‘Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Fuehrer’ … is already outdated.” ..

Two exceprts from Evola’s postwar work about Faascism .. should also illustrate his feelings in that period: “For Hitler, the people were the principle of legitimacy. No higher principles existed or was tolerated by him …”

And, “When one took a look at the masses of ‘Aryan’ folkish comrades of the FdF and the arrogance of the ‘de-proletarinaized’ modern berlin worker, one could only shudder with revulsion at the thought of a future Germany that would develop in this direction.” …

The SS was interested in Evola and began to maintain a file on him. All his lectures after 1937 were attended, summarized, and archived. …

Especially important to this study is the final report on Evola’s June 1938 lectures, kept in the handwritten files of the personal staff of the REichfuehrer-SS (file AR/126). …

“[Evola’s lectures] confirm the intitial German impression: that we are dealing with a ‘reactionary Roman’. …

“In conclusion, there exist no grounds for National Socialism to place itself at the disposal of Baron Evola. … Since Evola is only tolerated and barely supported by Fascism, it is tactically not necessary to acconomdate his tendencies from our side. It is therefore recommended to:

“1) Not support Evola’s current efforts …

“2) Curb his public activities in Germany …

“3) Prevent his further penetration into leadig office of the part and the state.

“4) Observe his propaganda activity in neighboring countries.”

In a short letter (AR/83) dated Augustu 8, 1938, it then says laconically: “The Recihsfuehrer-SS has acknowledged the report regarding the lectures of Baron Evola and is in full agreement with the thoughts and recommendations stated in the last paragraph thereof.” …

Another document from Himmler’s personal staff should be mentioned here .. because it shows that Himmler personally received and collected information about Evola. … The opinion of the chief of the Sicherheitshauptamt (main security office) is given:

“Evola possessed no understanding of the German folkish past, whereby it must be noted that he is a foreigner and probably does not know Germany’s historical conditions to really grasp the origins of our folkish history … Evols shows [a] basic lack of understanding of National Socialism and Germanic values ..”

EVOLA AND RACISM

..The purely biological element is not enough for Evola. This is especially clear in the following quotation …: “In a cat or thoroughbred horse the biological element is the deciding element, and thus the racial observation can be restricted to this criterion. This, however, is no longer the case when dealing with humans …”

In July of 1931 Evola writes in Vita Nova: “the error of some extreme ‘racists’ who believe that the return of race to its biological purity ipso facto equals its rebirth as a people consists of exactly this: they treat the human being as if he were a purebread car, horse, or dog. … It would be too convienient if the simple fact that one belongs to a pure race were to bestow, without further ado, a ‘quality’ in the higher sense.”

As early as 1933, Evola stated to criticize the racial attitudes of the National Socialists …

In the already mentioned article against Rosenberg (“A Paradox Of Our Time ..” it further states: “Is it the spirit that gives shape to the race (especially to the nation), or is it the race that gives shape to the spirit? Or even more to the point: Does determnation come from above or from below.”

..

As can be seen upon investigation, Evola’s racial teachings reveal that he understands ‘race’ differently from what is generally the case. …

Evola fought vehemently against a purely physical racism because of its superficiality, and he ranted several times against skull masuring and siimlar practices. Because of his emphasis on the spiritual, his rejection of what Trotsky calls ‘zoological materialism’ was only natural. …

Just as Evola’s definition of race veers from customary delineations, so also does his use of the term “Aryan”. … In his book about Buddhism, [The Doctrine of Awakening], he deals with this term in detail. In so doing, he mentions that arya is very hard to translate, because several meanings are hidden in the word. …

In 1952, when Evola was standing trial, he stated in his famous Self- Defense: “It must be realized that in modern racial studies, ‘Aryan’ and even “nordic’ do not in fact mean ‘German’; the term is synonymous with ‘Indo- European’, and is correctly applied to a primordial, prehistoric race, from which were derived the first creators of the Indian, Persian, Greek and Roman civilizations, and of which the Germans are only the final adventitious branches.” …

EVOLA’S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE JEWS

In the above mentioned polemic, Grimaldi characterized Evola as a “Jew-lover”. It goes without saying that this misses the mark by a long shot and merely reflects the anger of the attacker. There are so many comments against the Jews in Evola’s work, ranging from simple criticisms to truly painful ones, that there can be no doubt about his basic attitude. … But here a distinction has to be made. His writings never spoke out against orthodox, religious Judaism. On the contrary … Evola even names operative Kabbalah as one of the few paths that can still be followed successfully in the West today.

Evola’s attacks are more often directed against the Jews as a symbol of the rule of economic-materialistic individualism and the hegemony of money. In others words: in the Jews, he is fighitng materialism. … Thus he speaks of the groveling hypocrisy, the Mammonism of the Jews, and their desire to dissolve hierarchal societies, as well as of a “Jewish threat” in general. These are the same acusations that Martin Luther brought up, and which Karl Marx presents in his track [Concerning the Jewish Question] …

In light of all of Evola’s well known anti-Jewish remarks, how could he have ever been called a “Jew lover”? … Since Evola set supreme importance on the spiritual attitude, a Jew could of course also espouse “Aryan” thought … In Vita Italiana … he write verbatim: “For example, can an ‘Aryan’ have a Jewish soul or inner race and vice versa? Yes, it is possible …” And Evola noticed that especially in Germany some Jews felt more “Aryan” than many Germans, and this was not only in intellectual circles In exactly this sense one must assume that Evola did not at all regard the Jews Weininger and Michelstaedter, to who he owed so much, as “Jews”, independently of their heritage. That an opinion like this was a danger to mass propaganda could not go unnoticed by the political observers of the day. Basically, Evola did not indict the Jewish people (although naturally there were exception), for he did not even acknowledge them as a “biological” race, due to the miscegenation that they themselves admitted: it ws Jewry as an idea and a “spiritual race” that had been forged together by a common, strictly preserved body of thought ..

Even in his introduction to the norotious Protocols of the Elders of Zion, .. he writes …: “We want to mention right away that we perosnally cannot follow a certin fanatical anti-Semitism that sees the Jews everywhere as a deus ex machina …”

In [Categorization of the Jewish Question], he writes … “A serious formulation of the Jewish problem cannot overlook that which concerns the ‘Aryan’ peoples themselves: The Jew must be prevened from becoming a scapegoat for everything that in reality the non-Jews also have to answer for.”

In 1942, Evola writes in his above mentioned essay “The Misunderstanding of Scientific Racism”: “Because it is useless to try to hide it from oneself, people today are often wondering if the Jew idn’t ultimately a kind of scapegoat. The cases are so frequent in which the characteristics that our doctrine attributes to Jews are fully and brazenly exhibited by ‘Aryan’ specualtors, profiteers, upstarts and – why not – even by journalists, who do not hesitate to use the most twisted and disloyal means for polemical ends.” …

Evola also confirms his values in his book [On Fascism] …: “One must realize that with Hitler anti-Semitism has the role of a veritable obsession, whereby it is not possible to fully explain the causes of this anti-Semitism in its lmost paranoid aspect, which had such tragic consequences.” Then Evola adds: “Hitler’s anti-Semitism had a forced, fanatcial character and points to a lack on inner control. This has led to a stain of infamy on the Third Reich that will be very hard to wash away.” …

The attitude of Evola to the Jews that we have sketched here — that is to see “Jewishness” as a certain spiritual attitude, an idea derived from Weininger — was anything but singular or rare. …

Tags: H.T.-Hansen