



Forcing Change

April 2010

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Carl Teichrib, Chief Editor

Defining Deception: What Is Yoga, Mysticism, New Age and The Occult?

By Chris Lawson (www.spiritual-research-network.com)

Editor's Note: The following article by Chris Lawson is an excellent primer on the spiritual terms that are often encountered in our culture, and even in the church. This article is a combination of two pieces Mr. Lawson has published on the subject, and is printed by *Forcing Change* with his permission.

Chris Lawson heads up the Spiritual Research Network (SRN), which was founded in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2004, and was relocated to California in the spring of 2007. The Spiritual Research Network was established for the purpose of helping equip Christian Churches and individual believers in counter-cult evangelism, Christian apologetics, and spiritual discernment issues.

It is a pleasure to introduce Mr. Lawson to the *Forcing Change* family, and FC encourages you to access the materials provided by the Spiritual Research Network. Chris is open to doing radio interviews and speaking at conferences. His contact information is below.

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By Chris Lawson (www.spiritual-research-network.com)

“Let no man deceive you by any means... Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?” – 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5.

The word “imperative” is defined as: “A command; an order; an obligation; a duty.”¹

Applied to the world of spirituality and terminology, we would say that it is “imperative” that we define our terms. As discerning Christians it is part of our duty to know what spiritual terms mean and to stay away from those things that could lead to spiritual harm. To not do so can be disastrous.

Cult, Occult, New Age

Many Christians today have no idea what is referred to when certain terms come to the forefront. Terminology such as New Age, occult, cult, contemplative spirituality, yoga, Reiki, Word Faith, positive confession, and “centering prayer” are often used in “spiritual” conversation. Because of ignorance, undiscerning people oftentimes embrace these alternative spiritual movements and fall away from the truth. When defining terms such as these, we are not trying to belittle group leaders or pigeonhole individuals as “evil, “unkind” or “immoral.” We are simply defining terms that describe movements, teachings, groups and individuals that are involved with doctrines or practices that are generally considered to be outside the doctrines of historic Christianity.

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What Is A “Cult”?

The term “cult” is based on a farming term [Latin – *cultus*] meaning cultivation and is oftentimes used in relation to a religious structure or belief system that has meanings unique to their disciplines or group. In the Christian setting, the term “cult” can refer to **a system of religious beliefs or rituals that are polarized around one person’s misinterpretation of the biblical person of Jesus Christ.**

In many cases, inside and outside the church, the term “cult” has been used as a loaded term to describe any religious group one views as strange or dangerous. People also use the word “cult” to describe “religious leaders or organizations that employ abusive, manipulative, or illegal control over their followers’ lives.”

Christians generally consider “cults” to believe and teach doctrines that are outside the confines of the essential doctrines of the historic Christian faith. In this sense, “cults” and “cultic teachings” derive from serious deviations from the essential doctrines of classical Christianity. Furthermore, as previously stated, most “cults” revolve around the unbiblical interpretation of the person and work of Jesus Christ. In most cases, groups that claim to be Christian but have severely deviated from the central doctrines of the Christian faith (God, Jesus, and salvation) should be recognized as “non-Christian cults,” or “psudeo-Christian cults.” That is, they *say* they are Christian and appear to be Christian, *but they are clearly not Christian at all* (i.e. Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormon’s, Christian Science, Christadelphians, etc.).

Theologically, these are not Christian groups and have no place calling themselves “Christian,” as their unbiblical teachings attack the foundations of the Christian faith.

What Is The “Occult”?

The term, “occult” comes from the Latin *occultus* or “hidden.” The word “occult” is generally used to describe secret and mysterious supernatural powers or magical, religious rituals.

Throughout history, “occult” practitioners have attempted to gain supernatural power or knowledge apart from the God of the Bible. The term “occult” or occultism generally refers to the spiritual practices and secret teachings of witchcraft, Satanism, and neo-paganism. It also can refer to the various forms of Psychic activity such as astrology, séances, palm reading, etc.

God’s Word clearly condemns occultism in all its forms. The reason? Once an occult practitioner opens this door or gateway, the demonic inevitably comes through. All who dabble in the occult, including Christians, place themselves in hostile opposition to the creator of the universe. Furthermore, statistics reveal that occult practitioners across the globe oftentimes suffer the consequences of delusion, psychoses, paranoia, undiagnosable diseases, immorality – including sexual perversions – demonic possession, suicide, etc. It’s for good reason God says don’t have anything to do with such activities!

What Is The New Age?

The New Age Movement is a belief system that “encompasses thousands of autonomous and oftentimes contradictory beliefs.” New Age practitioners oftentimes utilize occult methods and techniques for ‘enlightenment’, ‘energy balancing’, and channeling. The New Age is actually ancient paganism clothed in 21st century dress.

The New Age Movement borrows its theology from pantheistic Eastern religions. Many of its practices come from 19th century Western occultism that have been brought to the West through Eastern religious leaders, cultists, yoga instructors, etc. The Theosophical Society, a group going back to the late 19th century, was instrumental in mixing Eastern religions and Western magic – and then introducing this spiritual mix to Europe and North America. The New Age Movement in its modern context was largely birthed through Theosophy.

The *Index of Cults and Religions* states that those caught up in the “New Age Movement” generally exhibit one or more of the following beliefs [of-

tentimes in conjunction with “occult” methodology]:

1. All is one, all reality is part of the whole.
2. Everything is God and God is everything (pantheism and pan-en-theism).
3. Man is God or a part of God.
4. Man never dies, but continues to live through reincarnation.
5. Man can create his own reality and/or values through transformed consciousness or altered states of consciousness.

What Is Mysticism?

Mysticism is a vast subject. Many mystics and many dictionaries define mysticism in a myriad of ways. Here is a very basic definition from the Miriam-Webster Online Dictionary:

Mysticism

One entry found for mysticism.

Main Entry: **mys•ti•cism**

Pronunciation: \ˈmis-te-,si-zem\

Function: noun

1: the experience of mystical union or direct communion with ultimate reality reported by mystics, **2:** the belief that direct knowledge of God, spiritual truth, or ultimate reality can be attained through subjective experience (as intuition or insight), **3 a:** vague speculation: a belief without sound basis, **b:** a theory postulating the possibility of direct and intuitive acquisition of ineffable knowledge or power

Here is how the *Concise Dictionary of the Occult and New Age* defines mysticism:

“The view that awareness of Ultimate Reality may be gained through a heightened state of mental perception and excitement. The mystical experience is designed to take participants beyond the boundaries of reality through a succession of physical sensations, resulting in the perception of direct communication with the inner god. The



Labyrinth as a Mystical Tool

goal is to become awakened to the deity within, thereby uniting with the universal life force. Sharing in this common objective are the Ultimate Reality of the New Age, the satori of Zen, the samadhi of Yoga, and the Nirvana of Hinduism... New Age mysticism gained its initial popularity during the 1960's. Eastern mystics promised their followers personal freedom, spiritual fulfillment, and a limitless array of innate abilities. Even today, proponents tell initiates they can achieve altered states of consciousness through self-discipline, diet, meditation, and the use of hallucinogenic drugs. They introduce these initiates to ascended masters who will guide them in their journey to enlightenment. New Age mystics report feelings of euphoria, peace, and universal oneness, as well as a renewal of energy and a greater appreciation for the earth's beauty. They assert that universal life forces have given them intuitive bursts of insight and creativity. See also: ALTERED STATES, NEW AGE MOVEMENT, SATORI, TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION.”

Note On Mysticism:

Reader, please note carefully that Christians who practice yoga, Contemplative “centering prayer”, “visualizing Jesus,” “chanting” or inwardly rehearsing “mantras” experience *the exact same thing as stated above* – “Awakened to the deity within, thereby uniting with the universal life force.”

Undiscerning Christians are taking mystical concepts, techniques and method and “*Sharing in this common* [unbiblical] *objective*” of experiencing “the Ultimate Reality of the New Age, the satori of Zen, the samadhi of Yoga, and the Nirvana of Hinduism...”

This ought to cause serious alarm to any who profess to follow the Biblical Jesus Christ, and yet are dabbling in our promoting these alternative spiritual ways.

What Is Yoga?

The *Concise Dictionary of the Occult and New Age*, written by Debra Lardie, describes Yoga this way:

“A Hindu physical and mental discipline. Hinduism teaches that the self is divine and distinct from the activity associated with the body, mind, and will. Through yoga’s system of exercises, people can train their consciousness to control the body and mind, thereby attaining a higher state of awareness...”²

“Through the regular practice of yoga, people can achieve perfect spiritual insight, tranquillity, and well-being, experiencing freedom from ignorance, suffering, and ultimately achieving rebirth.”³

This dictionary then goes on to describe the etymology of the word “Yoga.”

“The name ‘yoga’ comes from the Sanskrit term that means ‘to join’ or ‘to unite.’ This etymology fits with the underlying philosophy of yoga. Hindus claim that God is a vital energy source from which all reality emanates. People are connected to this universal life force and are archetypes of it. According to Hindu teaching, the human predicament is caused by a lack of awareness of this vital link between people and the cosmic consciousness.”⁴



Yoga

The goal of Yoga:

“The goal of yoga is to help practitioners reexperience their oneness with the universal self. As people practice yoga, a higher level of connection with the infinite Oneness will result. Their view of the world will be radically changed as a particularization of Ultimate Reality.”⁵

Several types exist:

“Several types of yoga exist. Jnana yoga refers both to the path of discrimination and wisdom, whereas bhakti yoga refers to the path of love and devotion to a personal god. Kama yoga refers to the path of selfless action, whereas hatha yoga, which is popular in the West, stresses physical postures or positions. Japa yoga requires the repetition of mantras, or sacred sounds, to enable a person to concentrate without being interrupted by external distractions. Kriya yoga enables devotees to channel cosmic energy to their souls in order to establish a harmonious union of the mind, body, and spirit, releasing innate miraculous powers. Kundalini yoga emphasizes opening psychic energy centers called chakras supposedly located up and down the spinal column. This is thought to animate the Kundalini, a cosmic force coiled at the base of the spine.”⁶

Gurus teach spiritual techniques:

“Typical exercises, such as those found in hatha yoga, are practiced under the tutelage of a guru or yogi, a personal religious guide and spiritual teacher. Gurus teach students to combine a variety of breathing techniques with asanas, or relaxation postures. In each of the postures, students must first enter the position, then maintain it for a certain length of time, and finally leave it.”⁷

And now we come to the place where this writer states very clearly how Westerners have mistaken yoga to be “*mere breathing and relaxation exercises*,” when in reality, “*The practice of yoga serves as a gateway to Eastern mysticism and occult*.”

Author Debra Lardie states:

“Some in the West incorrectly think of yoga as mere breathing and relaxation exercises to develop, stretch, and strengthen the body’s muscles, extend and align the spinal column, and enhance cardiovascular circulation. The practice of yoga serves as a gateway to Eastern mysticism and occult. Certain postures, such as the lotus position, are taken to activate the psychic energy centers. And specific breathing exercises are practiced to infuse the soul with cosmic energy floating in the air. A guru might have students gaze at a single object, such as a candle, to develop and focus concentration. The guru might have them chant a mantra to clear their minds and become one with the object in front of them. The goal is to achieve increasingly higher meditative states until reaching oneness with the cosmic consciousness. This state of being is characterized by a blank stare in which the devotee is receptive to esoteric wisdom from the Universal Mind. See also: CHAKRA; HINDUISM; KUNDALINI; LOTUS; MANTRA; YOGANANDA; MPARAMAHANSA.”⁸

Parting Words

Dear reader, anyone who promotes, teaches, practices, or endorses any type of cultism, mysticism, occultism or New Ageism is seriously mis-

led and is misleading others! The following Bible verses ought to be seriously heeded by Christians and non-Christians alike. All who place any value whatsoever on human life ought not to dabble in these dark arts. The reason? Because when one opens the door to the kingdom of darkness, the demonic realm is more than willing to come flooding through.

In Deuteronomy 18:9-14 God says:

“When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.”

It is up to you and you alone to read your Bible, discern between truth and error, and contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. (Jude 3-4)

“Prove [test] all things; hold fast [cling tenaciously to] that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil” – 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22.

Something important to remember is this: Casting aside the Biblical standard of divine revelation in order to have an “experience with God” will always end in spiritual disaster. The world of pagan [and Christian] *mysticism* and the kingdom of the *occult* do just this. They both either reject Biblical truth outright or they cleverly redefine it in order to justify having an unbiblical “direct experience” with the divine. This is done in the name of spirituality and according to the wisdom of men, not God. It must be noted that the world of satanic deception is based on one thing: *Experience!*

It's important to note that people somehow think that if they have a spiritual experience it must be of God. Which God? Jehovah, the God of truth? "*Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth*" (Psalm 31:5). Or Satan, the god of this world? "*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*" (2 Cor.4:3-4).

The heart of paganism, occultism and mysticism is to have a direct spiritual experience with the divine – but in doing so, intentionally or unintentionally sacrificing the divine revelation in the form of Biblical truth and discernment. When Biblical truth is cast aside or distorted in order to fit one's own cleverly designed spirituality, one can be sure that deception will come. This is how Satan works!

Here's the reason for defining the terms in this article: To spare Christians from becoming involved – naively or openly – with pagan spirituality that leads to spiritual darkness and despair. Christians today need to be more discerning than ever before. Let us steer clear from embracing the paganism, occultism, mysticism and New Age spirituality that is now prevalent in our world.

FC

Chris Lawson heads up the Spiritual Research Network (www.spiritual-research-network.com).

Endnotes:

¹ <http://www.answers.com/topic/imperative>

² Debra Lardie, *Concise Dictionary of the Occult and New Age* (Kregel Publications, 2000), pp.288-289.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Bloody Utopian Dreams: The New Age, Communism, and Nazism

By Carl Teichrib (www.forcingchange.org)

"Ideas grow out of history; they also shape history." – Stuart R. Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*.¹

"Power kills; absolute Power kills absolutely." – R.J. Rummel, *Death By Government*.²

Introduction

A number of years ago I wrote a three-part series titled "Bloody Utopian Dreams." It dealt with the New Age view of Communism and dictatorship, as taught by certain New Age leaders, along with the New Age roots of Nazism and the spiritual side of "population control." The article presented here is a slight revamp of this important series, with the population aspect excluded for a later date.

The question arises; why tackle this subject? Why bother with such a topic?

There's a simple yet important reason why: Today's Western culture is enamored with occult themes. Our society is bombarded by New Age concepts – and this hasn't stayed hidden behind cultural curtains, such as the make-believe world of Hollywood. Rather, *these themes now shape the ethics and morals of society*.

If that is the case, then we need to understand how the New Age views damaging political cultures. We also need to explore how one political culture, German National Socialism, had its roots in such teachings. How the New Age connects with Nazism, and its response to Communism, provides a telling statement. Thus, by better grasping this subject, we can begin to see where today's cultural ethics are shifting.

As our society moves away from Biblical Christianity and embraces a neo-Pagan framework, it's imperative that we wrestle with how this has looked in the past. And in so doing, we will be better equipped to recognize where this worldview is making inroads today.

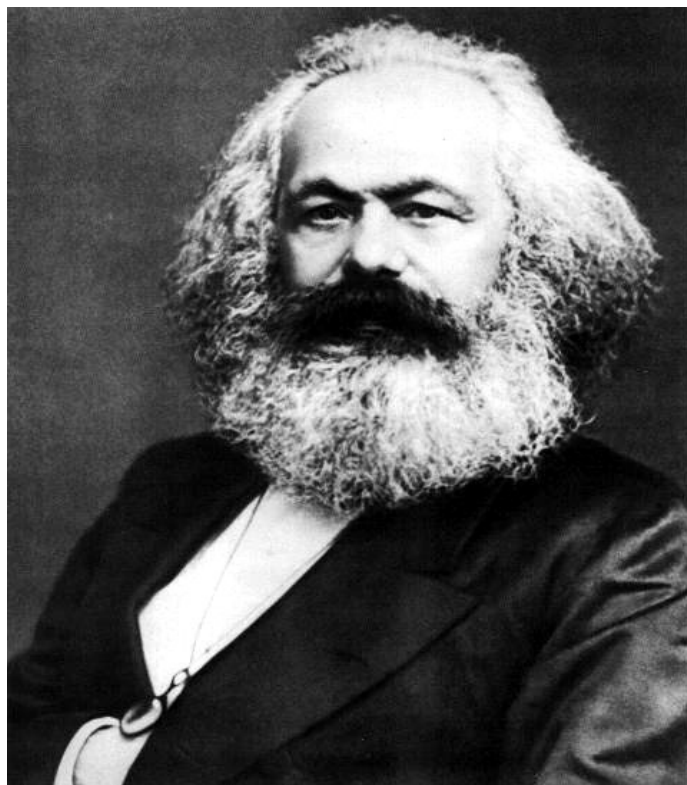
This isn't about fear, it's about knowledge; and knowledge properly applied demonstrates wisdom.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...” – Ephesians 6:10-18

Hammer and Sickle – A New Age Perspective

Ever since humanity was ushered out of the Garden of Eden for rebellion against God (Genesis 3), we have been constantly scheming and working towards unifying Man with some system of Paradise. From the mystical doctrines of the Egyptian mystery religions to the hammer and sickle of the Soviet Union, from Plato's Republic and council of “wise men” to the dreams and aspirations of a globally enhanced United Nations – mankind has sought to create the “perfect utopian” society shaped in Man's image.

The New Age Movement fits in nicely with this concept, envisioning a spiritually evolved humanity coupled with a complete global social, political, and economic system.³ It's a world where cosmic harmony and attunement motivates and permeates each group and individual, and where every nation and culture can come together in solidarity and equity. If you're thinking that all of this sounds like a blend of Karl Marx's communism and H.P. Blavatsky's Theosophical mysticism, you're not far off.



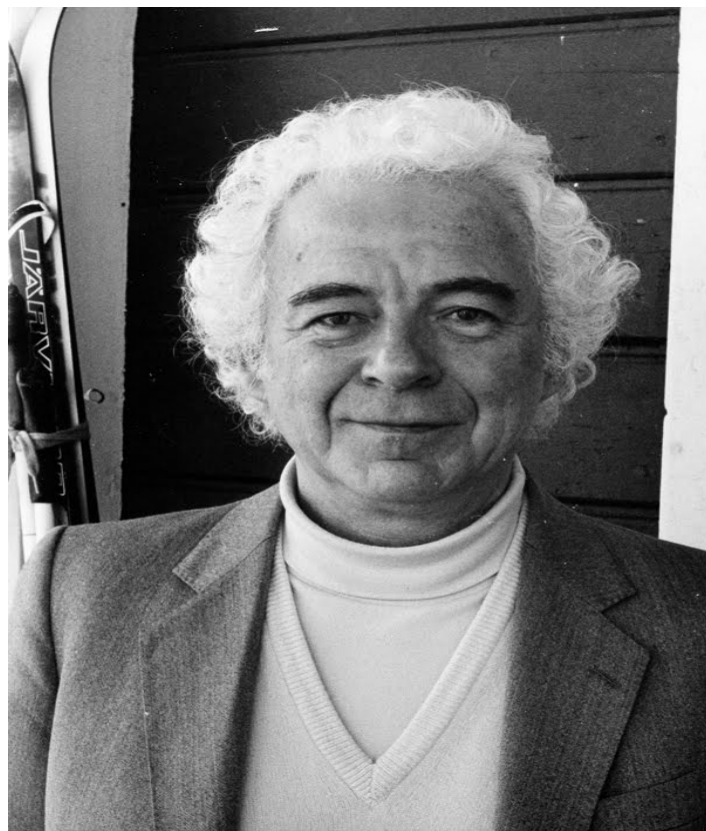
Karl Marx

Spiritually Endorsing the Great Atheist-Experiment

Marx, the founder of communism, postulated a model for state control of all economic production.⁴ His ideas, interpreted and carried forward by V.I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung, were an attempt to achieve the utopian ideal of an atheist political and economic regime. The results of this experiment in paradise-building; over 100 million dead, millions more imprisoned, vast

regions depopulated, and suffering such as the world has never before seen [for a statistical analysis of government sponsored mass murder, see R.J. Rummel, *Death By Government, Lethal Politics: Soviet Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1917, and China's Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900.*]

But never mind the mountain range of corpses, the New Age Movement and its spiritual masters have somehow managed to transcend this bloody utopian nightmare.



Benjamin Creme

Consider the following quotes from the New Age spirit master, Maitreya the Christ, as channeled to Benjamin Crème. Keep in mind; these words were transmitted during the height of the Cold War,

“Man is One. That, essentially, is what Marx is saying. Man is One, Humanity is One. Eventually, all social systems will tend towards a system which encourages that brotherhood or Oneness of man which Marx senses, as a spiritual Being.”⁵ (Author’s note: Maitreya then tells Crème that the

fault in the theory was how it was imposed!)

“In the future, the not too distant future, we will come to see that all political systems are divine expressions. There is more in common between true Democracy and true Communism than there would seem to be today. What is called communism today as it exists in Russia, China and the Communist world, is in no sense true Communism, but it is an evolving structure, moving towards a more perfect expression of the thought-form as it exists in the Divine Mind; likewise with Democracy.”⁶

In another series of New Age messages channeled during the Cold War, the spirit being calling itself “I AM” transmitted an extensive plan for a worker’s world communist paradise.

“The old world has come to its end. You know that the end only happens once. It has been prophesied all through history, and the end of fantasies comes now. Everyone waited for the end. Even the Communists who said they were Communists waited for the end. They taught that Capitalism and Socialism could coexist together. Yes, they can coexist together until the end; but Communism must begin now. Actually, everyone wants Universal Communism, which is the same as real Communism.

All the things I channeled through Karl Marx follow the same social science and economics I taught in the Bible and am teaching here...

The major religions are facing Socialism as a force they can build my Kingdom with, and they will take the initiative and introduce Communism into it. No sermon preached of any world religion that leaves out Marxism-Leninism can face the immediate reality.”⁷

This is only one small portion of I AM’s message. In fact, the entire text, titled *God - Ultimate Unlimited Mind - Speaks*, is over 450 pages in length and has, as a central theme, the literal establishment of a “New World Government” through a planetary form of “true” Communism.

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is a monthly online publication dedicated to documenting and analyzing the socio-religious transformations now sweeping our world.

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China Executions Under Communist Rule

One particular Ascended Master, the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul [in the New Age an Ascended Master is a highly evolved spiritual entity], channeled the *raison d'être* for the despots and tyrants of the last two hundred years, ascribing to them a high and beneficial role in the development of human spiritual enlightenment. Alice Bailey, one of the more prominent leaders of the Theosophical movement [Theosophy has been a key factor in the creation of today's modern New Age Movement], recorded the Tibetan's words in her book, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*,

"They [France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal] have...reacted to that force [Shamballa Force] through the medium of certain great and outstanding personalities who were peculiarly sensitive to the will-to-power and the will-to-change and who...have altered the character of their national life, and emphasised increasingly the wider human values. The men who inspired the French revolution; the conqueror, Napoleon; Bismarck, the creator of a nation; Mussolini, the regenerator of his people; Hitler, who lifted a distressed people upon his shoulders; Lenin, the idealist; Stalin and Franco are all expressions of the Shamballa force and of certain little understood energies. These have wrought significant changes in their day and generation...

We call these people dictators, demagogues, inspired leaders, or just and wise men, according to our particular ideology, tradition, attitudes to our fellowmen and our particular political, economic and religious training. But all these leaders are... in the last analysis, highly developed personalities. They are being used to engineer great and needed changes and to alter the face of civilization...

Blame not the personalities involved or the men who produce these events before which we stand today bewildered and appalled. They are only the product of the past and the victims of the present. At the same time, they are the agents of destiny, the creators of the new order and the initiators of the new civilization; they are the destroyers of what must be destroyed before humanity can go forward along the Lighted Way.”⁸

“...They are the destroyers of what must be destroyed...” Think about it! This section of *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* was written in 1939, the year World War II began. Hitler’s atrocities against his own people – particularly the infirm and incurables – was known by 1939, as was his treatment of German Jews.⁹ Mussolini’s tactics were also known, as was the executions by Franco’s Nationalists Spain.¹⁰ Lenin and Stalin’s crushing of their own people, soaking the Russian motherland with the blood of its citizens, was known too.¹¹ And the French Revolution, with its forests of guillotines, had kick started revolutionary ideologies that had bled Europe and other parts of the world over and over again.¹²

But remember, it was the master Djwhal Khul, a *spiritual entity* that can supposedly transcend time and space that basically proclaimed all of this death and destruction as good and necessary. Why? So that “humanity can go forward along the Lighted Way.”

Welcome to the Real New Age

Please understand, not every New Age leader, author, or medium speaks highly of communism or despotism. Most of the time the word “communism,” or the names of Marx or Lenin, nev-

er enters into the popular New Age lexicon. But there is a remarkably similar vision between the New Age “global society” – the ideal of a centralist system with a completely transformed humanity – and the centralist utopian visions of political tyrants, complete with their various concepts of human social transformation.

How so? The New Age Movement, like the political utopians of the twentieth century, seeks a “perfect world” balanced by economic, political, and spiritual unity and harmony. It’s the World State, where global citizenship and planetary spirituality merges into the “perfect centralized” system.

In this mystical paradise, nature, man, and God are placed on the same plane. Mankind, once spiritually evolved and recognizing its collective consciousness, *is God*. Likewise, the despot rulers of our immediate past exhibited this same ego-theism: the atheist state, a product of evolved man, was touted as God – and the Party and its leaders were the voice of this despotic-state deity.

Both ideologies, in their various forms and conceptions, sought and seek to re-create the Garden of Eden. But this Garden, be it built by Leninism or constructed by men and women who follow the teachings of other-worldly voices, cannot escape the facts of human nature – greed, arrogance, and a never ending focus on self. And the “spirit masters” pushing this centralist, New Age society exhibit qualities that parallel human fallacies. What would these channeled entities like to see destroyed so that “humanity can go forward along the Lighted Way”?

A utopian New Age, planetary community, where tolerance is enforced in the name of diversity, and mankind steered down the path of social and spiritual transformation, doesn’t sound too different from the Communist system – where the hammer crushed indiscriminately and the sickle reaped where it did not sow, all under the banner of “peace” and harmony.

The Enigma of the Third Reich

“We have to take the Nazis seriously; after all they were the authors of a regime that took the lives of some 40 million people and the destruction of most of Europe... therefore, since such people took occultism seriously, so should we.”

— David Morris, *The Masks of Lucifer*.¹³

“Political parties are inclined to compromises; philosophies never.” — Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*.¹⁴

The New Age Movement envisions a world where “old norms” are torn down and newness is embraced; and yet, in this remaking of society, ancient powers, symbols, and mythologies are heavily drawn upon.

The following words, penned by Adolf Hitler, the leader of the National Socialist German Worker’s Party, demonstrated the essential point of Nazism: a new and fundamental philosophy.

“It was self-evident that the new movement could hope to achieve the necessary importance and the required strength for this gigantic struggle only if it succeeded from the very first day in arousing in the hearts of its supporters the holy conviction that with it political life was to be given, not to a new election slogan, but to a new philosophy of fundamental significance.”¹⁵

As the mystical-political expression of this “holy conviction,” the Nazi Party’s new philosophy centered on the interlocking ideals of Blood and Soil, race and nature. Ultimately it was believed that humanity’s spiritual and cultural evolution would rest on the strength of the Germanized Aryan ideal. And then Europe burned.

It’s in the Roots

Forests of books have been published in an attempt to explain Germany’s military actions, political structures, and overall historical impact. And much thought has been given to Germany’s social and cultural setting. But one area that



Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

hasn’t seen as much literature is in the realm of German esoteric interests. There has been some items published on this subject, but it’s hard to find non-sensationalistic accounts. However, we can glean some important material that points to the philosophical roots – the “holy conviction” – of the German National Socialist ideology.

Germany’s theological roots run deep; Martin Luther’s strike against entrenched Roman Catholicism, and much of the ensuing Reformation and Anabaptist movement, are historically significant to Germany. As such, this particular nation has been looked upon for centuries as a bastion of theological thought and action. However, Germany’s spiritual history encompasses more than just the Reformation. Rosicrucian orders¹⁶ and other esoteric schools of thought emerged from the German heartland. But it wasn’t a German-born who gave impetus to the Nazi philosophy; it was a Russian-born woman by the name of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky – the founder of the Theosophical Society.

Blavatsky, in her seminal work *The Secret Doctrine*, outlines the activities of “God” throughout a number of evolutionary cycles. Each cycle, she explained, witnessed the rise and fall of “root-races,” and the pinnacle of mankind at this historical stage of the cycle was represented by the Aryan race. Furthermore, Blavatsky’s theosophical ideas also incorporated reincarnation, karma, and other Hindu beliefs. Gnosticism, Hermetic philosophies, Kabbalahism, Eastern religions, occult legends and mythologies: all of these streams of spirituality funneled into Blavatsky’s writings. And through this blending of mystical concepts, her emphasis on racial development and evolutionary hierarchy struck a cord within segments of American, Indian, English, and German high-society. It was also during this period, the late 1800s, that Social Darwinism was being culturally embraced, giving a scientific justification for the early 20th century idea of “racial hygiene.”

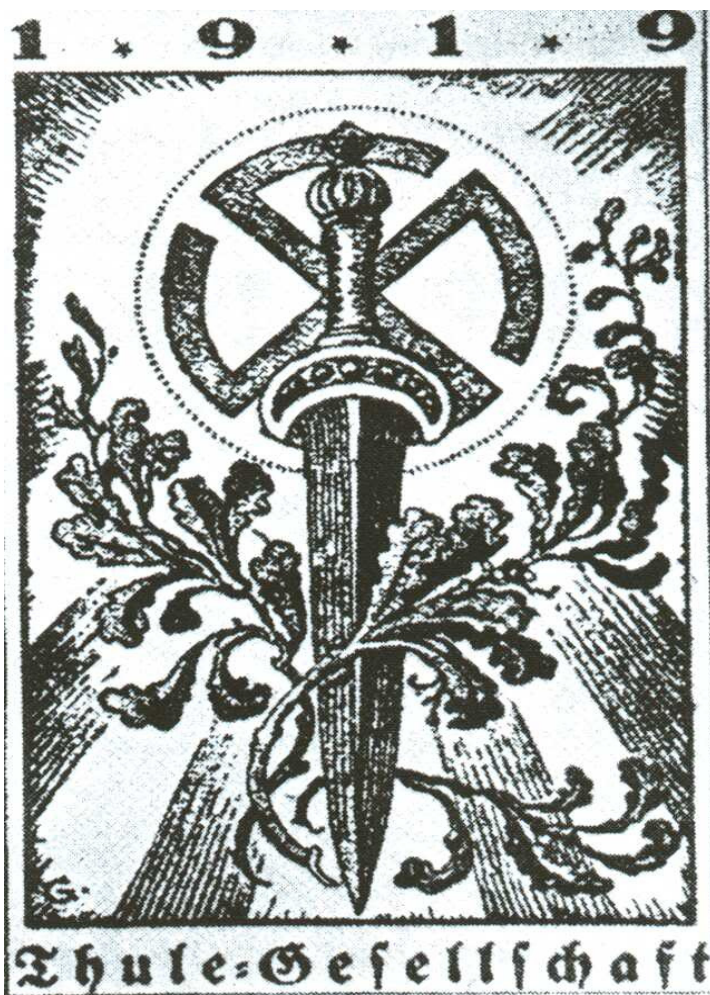
In 1884, the first German Theosophical Society was established. But because of internal stresses and outside accusations against Blavatsky, this particular organization fell apart. However, the interest in theosophy remained, and by 1896 a German national branch of the International Theosophical Brotherhood was established.¹⁷

NOTE: Much of the following information was gleaned from Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke’s academically oriented book, *The Occult Roots of Nazism* (New York University Press, 1985/1992). Goodrick-Clarke is Professor of Western Esotericism, and Director of the Exeter Centre for the Study of Esotericism, University of Exeter.

Out of this greater interest in theosophy – and the re-organized German Theosophical Society in particular – a number of splinter groups and alternative esoteric organizations were birthed, both in Germany and Austria. By the time World War I had started in 1914, German occultism and mysticism had taken on a number of forms; from the volkisch mysticism of Guido von List to Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophical Society, from “irregular” Masonic and Rosicrucian lodges to Theozology and the Order of the New Templars. It could be said that German-central Eu-

rope was experiencing an occult renaissance, and each of these movements (and others not listed) played a part in creating an undercurrent of Germanic spiritual adventurism. Moreover, many of these esoteric groups viewed Jews as being a contaminant in the Aryan evolutionary line – thinking that would later find a political foothold in National Socialism.

With the defeat of Germany in World War I, a cultural and social vacuum precipitated an even greater interest in Germanic mysticism, alternative pagan histories, and occultism. Riding this wave, Rudolf J. Gorsleben kick-started a radical Aryan movement that centered on runes and Germanic legends, creating “an original racist mystery-religion which illuminated the priceless magical heritage of the Aryans and justified their spiritual and political world-supremacy.”¹⁸



Thule Society logo



Wewelsburg Castle

The ideas of Karl Maria Wiligut also found root during this time. Wiligut, a proclaimed German sage with alleged clairvoyant skills, held to a blend of racist “Ario-Christianity” and Teutonic paganism. Later changing his name to Karl Maria Weisthor, Wiligut’s contribution to the Third Reich was his involvement in the Wawelsburg project – the complete remodeling of a castle near Paderborn into an SS-order officer’s college and pan-Germanic SS-spiritual center, complete with pagan ceremonies and rituals.

Finally, during the years between the Great War and World War II, an aristocrat named Rudolf von Sebottendorff organized the Thule Society. Drawing from earlier Germanic mythologies and esoteric groups, such as the Germanenorden – “an anti-Semitic group organized like a secret quasi-masonic lodge”¹⁹ – the Thule Society became a haven for nationalistic leanings in light of Germany’s loss in the Great War.

Thule witnessed some interesting future Nazis pass through its lodge doors: Alfred Rosenberg – who became the Reich Minister for the Eastern Occupied Territories, Dietrich Eckart – a key early member of the Nazi Party and editor of the *Völkischer Beobachter* [the Nazi Party newspaper], Rudolf Hess – the eventual Deputy of the Fuehrer,²⁰ and Ernst Rohm – who became the Reichsminister of the SA.²¹

The symbol of the Thule Society was a circular swastika mounted atop of a double-edged dagger.

The Third Reich

Adolf Hitler had come into contact with some of these arcane doctrines and teachings, and was no doubt influenced to a certain extent, particularly from Thule interests and the mystical inclinations of Guido von List – a leading figure in German esoteric and Aryan blood-and-race ideologies.²²

Mein Kampf, Hitler’s major work, indirectly linked the meaning of the swastika with the Aryan racial mythologies of List,

“As National Socialists, we see our program in our flag. In red we see the social ideal of the movement, in white the nationalistic idea, in the swastika the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man, and, by the same token, the victory of the idea of creative work, which as such always has been and always will be anti-Semitic.”²³

But of all the major Nazi Party leaders, Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, was most inclined towards mystical interpretations. The SS, short for Schutzstaffel, was originally an inner guard for the Nazi leadership but as the regime evolved, the SS took on multiple functions.²⁴

Historian Marc Rikmenspoel explains that,

“The official religious doctrine of the Nazi Party and the SS was a sort of deism, an undefined belief in God separate from any organized religion. The SS, in particular, encouraged the belief in Nordic paganism, and urged its members to abandon any Christian denomination.”²⁵

Another historian, Heather Pringle, author of *The Master Plan: Himmler’s Scholars and the Holocaust*, gives a further explanation.

“...Nazism needed a state religion. And it needed a god, or perhaps several gods, as well as suitable rituals to take the place of Mass and other



Heinrich Himmler

Christian services. Himmler was strongly inclined to borrow these rituals, and he saw no better place to look for them than in the history of Germany's ancestors – the Germanic tribes and their Aryan forebears. He believed that the old pagan gods would be capable of weaning SS men from their Christian faiths. Indeed, as he later confided to his personal physician, he intended to make every SS-Mann drop his traditional church affiliation. 'After the war,' he explained, 'the old Germanic gods will be restored'."²⁶

Certainly a large part of this mystical orientation came from Himmler's close association with Karl Wiligut. Nazi historian Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke explains,

"By virtue of his [Wiligut] alleged possession of ancestral memory and an inspired representation of archaic Germanic traditions, he became the favoured mentor of Reichsfuhrer-SS Heinrich Himmler on mythological subjects and was given an official assignment for prehistorical research in the SS between 1933 and 1939."²⁷

Adding to this, Goodrick-Clarke writes,

"Among the top leaders of the Third Reich, Himmler appears the most ambiguous personality, motivated simultaneously by a capacity for rational planning and by unreal fantasies. His zeal for order, punctuality, and administrative detail, and the pedantic impression of an 'intelligent primary school teacher,' were seemingly belied by his enthusiasm for the utopian, the romantic and even the occult. It was Himmler's idealistic imagination which led to a visionary conception of the SS and its future role: his black-uniformed troops would provide both the bloodstock of the future Aryan master-race and the ideological elite of an ever-expanding Greater Germanic Reich."²⁸

Keep in mind, Himmler was the organizer of the concentration camp system, and specific units within his SS were tasked with carrying out the "Final Solution" against the European Jews.

From the employment of runes to the celebration of the swastika sun symbol, from the racially motivated mystical philosophies of an Aryan blood-line to the esoteric teachings of a pagan-Germanic pre-history, the "holy conviction" of the National Socialist German Worker's Party – a blend of occultism and racism – culminated in one of the worst atrocities in human history.

But there is a twist. Knowing that the Nazi's ideology was fixated on arcane beliefs, the persecution of German Freemasonry, Rosicrucian orders, and even pan-Germanic mystical associations needs to be addressed. Understand, Hitler and his regime pursued these groups with a bent toward their destruction; even historically linked Germanic esoteric organizations that had helped establish the philosophical ideals of the Reich were targeted. Given the fact that the Nazi Party was the political expression of various arcane doctrines, some critics have suggested that this purging throws doubt on the esoteric foundation for Nazism. Not so.

On the eve of World War II, Hermann Rauschning, a former advisor to Hitler and president of the Danzig Senate, attempted to warn the world

of Nazism's ultimate aim by publishing his book, *The Revolution of Nihilism: Warning to the West*. Commenting on Freemasonry and other secretive societies in Germany, and their relationship to National Socialism, Rauschnig wrote,

"If we try to understand what it is that tempts Hitler again and again to dwell on Freemasonry, on the Jesuits, or on the Teutonic Order, we come close to the essential secret of the National Socialist elite, the 'mystery,' as the Teutonic Order called it, the esoteric doctrine confined to the brethren who were called to initiation. It was the piecemeal character of their initiation into secret aims, the aims and methods of a ruling class, by stages of discipline, enlightenment, liberation, that set the eyes of National Socialism in envious rivalry on such organizations as Freemasonry."²⁹

Simply put, all rivalries must be removed – no matter how close the historical associations may be, such as was the case with Theosophy. These perceived rivalries were not based on *opposing* viewpoints, but on the notion that they *competed* with the loyalty demands of Nazism.

So why is it important to understand all this complex and obscure Nazi esoteric history?

First, the simple fact is that as a movement Nazism re-forged the entire structure of Europe, and continues to have lasting social repercussions (politically and culturally, today's European Union was birthed from the ashes of World War II and the Nazi's impact on European life). This fact alone demands we examine its deeper roots.

Secondly, and of *immense importance*, is the fact that the Nazi's historical philosophies were grounded in the same ideologies that today comprise the New Age Movement. Remember Blavatsky's Theosophy and its early role in the development of Germanic mysticism? Theosophy is the root of today's New Age Movement.

Consider this statement from Cherry Gilchrist, author of *Theosophy: The Wisdom of the Ages*,

"Though its origins lie in the nineteenth centu-

ry, the theosophical perspective has much in common with that of the New Age, and, it can fairly be said, it is the impetus of Theosophy that has enabled the whole New Age movement to come into being."³⁰

Blavatsky's influence upon Germanic-pagan culture was substantial. It opened the door to the esoteric side of the Third Reich. Today the West is rapidly becoming post-Christian, and the New Age Movement has opened the door to a culturally accepted neo-Pagan worldview. The words of Hitler return: "Political parties are inclined to compromises; philosophies never."

Conclusion

The fastest growing religion in Canada by percentages is Paganism (280% growth from 1991 to 2001 census).³¹ In the United States it doesn't matter what part of the country a person goes to, these same New Age/pagan influences can be found: Just walk into any major bookstore. And Hollywood is pumping out as much occult-entertainment as possible. Indeed, it seems the entertainment industry's most prevalent themes are spiritual in nature.

Knowing how certain elements in the New Age view despotic governments, and how Theosophy induced such a system in Germany, it behooves us to take seriously the spiritual struggle now taking place in the Western world. Ideas do have consequences, and cultures are shaped by philosophies and religious convictions.

For Christians, it is time to stand firm in truth, and be ready to "give an answer" for the hope within us. **FC**

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Endnotes:

¹ Stuart R. Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (Praeger Publishing, 1963/67), p.15.

² R.J. Rummel, *Death By Government* (Transaction Publishers, 1994), p.1.

³ For some examples of this type of thinking, see Marilyn Ferbuson's book, *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (J.P. Tarcher Inc., 1980), Desmond E. Berghofer, *The Visioneers* (Creative Learning International Press, 1992), Robert Muller, *New Genesis: Shaping a Global Spirituality* (World Happiness and Cooperation, 1982/1993), Alice Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiation* (Lucis Publishing Company, 1960), Lucile W. Green, *Journey to a Governed World: Thru 50 Years in the Peace Movement* (The Uniquet Foundation, 1991), John Randolph Price, *The Super Beings* (The Quartus Foundation, 1981), Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Future of Man* (Harper & Row, 1959/1969), Peter Russell, *The Global Brain: Speculations on the Evolutionary Leap to Planetary Consciousness* (J.P. Tarcher, 1983), William D. Hitt, *The Global Citizen* (Battelle Press, 1998), and the works of Barbara Marx Hubbard.

⁴ See Karl Marx's books and tracts, particularly *Das Kapital*, *The Communist Manifesto* (co-authored by Friedrich Engels), and *Wage-Labour and Capital*.

⁵ Benjamin Crème, *The Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom* (London, England, The Tara Press, 1980), p.181.

⁶ Ibid., p.176.

⁷ Channeled through and penned by Allen Michael, *GOD - Ultimate Unlimited Mind - Speaks* (Stockton, CA: Starmast Publications, 1982), pp.245-246.

⁸ Alice Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York, NY: Lucis Trust, 1957), pp.133-135.

⁹ This text demonstrates that Khul is an entity of cruelty and coldness, and cares not whether mankind suffers. Moreover, that this spiritual entity knew of the "cleansing" taking place. Of course, Khul wasn't the only one to know of Hitler's racial cleansing ideology. Certainly some segments of the Western world knew of the Nazi party's eugenics and racial purity program, as did many German citizens (and many Germans who fought against this ideology, such as the pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer).

For more on the topic of racial cleansing and Nazi ideology, see Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, published years before Hitler came to power. See also, Hermann Rauschning's *The Revolution of Nihilism: Warning to the West* (Alliance Book Corporation, 1939) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Harper-Collins, 1990/1995). Other books of interest; Yisrael Gutman and Livia Rothkirchen (editors), *The Catastrophe of European Jewry* (Yad Vashem, 1976), Anton Gill, *An Honourable Defeat: A History of German Resistance to Hitler, 1933-1945*

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¹⁰ For a short and interesting read on Italy under Mussolini, see Francesco Nitti's book, *Bolshevism, Fascism and Democracy* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1927). For a longer work, see Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* (Mentor, 1963/69). Regarding Franco and his Nationalists, see Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (Harper and Row, 1961).

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¹² For some interesting analysis of the larger implications of the French Revolution, and totalitarian government in general, see Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism: From de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Marcuse* (Arlington House, 1974). For works that focus specifically on the French Revolution, see Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (Knopf, 1989) and R.R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of the Terror in the French Revolution* (Atheneum, 1965 - originally published by Princeton University Press, 1941).

¹³ David Morris, *The Masks of Lucifer: Technology and the Occult in Twentieth-Century Popular Literature* (B.T. Batsford Ltd.,1992), p.126.

¹⁴ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*(Houghton Mifflin, 1925/1971), p.455.

¹⁵ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p.373.

¹⁶ See Paul Foster Case, *The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order* (Samuel Weiser, 1985) for information regarding the historical emergence of Rosicrucianism.

¹⁷ See Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology* (New York University Press, 1985/1992). This particular book is probably one of the most scholarly English-language works on early German esoteric thought.

¹⁸ Ibid, p.155.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.127.

²⁰ Ibid., p.149.

²¹ Peter Padfield, *Himmler* (MJF Books, 1990), p.64.

²² See, Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism*. See also Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictatorship's Apprenticeship* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

²³ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp.496-497. See also Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, pp.209-210.

²⁴ For a well-done but older published overview of the SS as a fighting component, see George H. Stein, *Waffen-SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War, 1939-1945* (Cornell University Press, 1984). See also, Marc J. Rikmenspoel, *Waffen-SS: The Encyclopedia* (Military Book Club, 2002).

²⁵ Marc J. Rikmenspoel, *Waffen-SS: The Encyclopedia* (Military Book Club, 2002), p.252.

²⁶ Heather Pringle, *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust* (Hyperion, 2006), p.56.

²⁷ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism*, p.177.

²⁸ Ibid., p.178.

²⁹ Hermann Rauschning, *The Revolution of Nihilism: Warning to the West* (Alliance Book Corporation, 1939), p.21.

³⁰ Cherry Gilchrist, *Theosophy: The Wisdom of the Ages* (Harper Collins, The Hidden Wisdom Library, 1996),

³¹ www.religioustolerance.org/can_rel2.htm

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