

THE NAZI IDEOLOGY OF ALFRED ROSENBERG

A STUDY OF HIS THOUGHT 1917-1946

A THESIS SUBMITTED

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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TO
THE REVEREND AND MRS.
SIDNEY NORTON
OF
162 BANBURY ROAD
WITH
GRATITUDE FOR THEIR
FRIENDSHIP AND HOSPITALITY
DURING
THE AUTHOR'S TIME
IN
OXFORD

Die Lüge ist im Leben der Völker
eine ebenso starke Macht wie die Wahrheit—
wenn an sie geglaubt wird.

Alfred Rosenberg
Der Weltkampf, 1.7.1924

Im grossen Experimentiersaal der Geschichte
kommen und gehen die merkwürdigsten Gestalten....

Des Herrgotts Tiergarten ist gross,
und die Möglichkeiten einer revolutionären Zeit
sind vielgestaltig....

Die Tiere sind doch besser als die Menschen....
(Ernst Rühm to Alfred Rosenberg, June 1934)

Alfred Rosenberg
Letzte Aufzeichnungen (1945-1946)
(204, 217, 223)

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Sometime in the future I hope to publish, on the basis of the research underlying this thesis, a study of broader scope under the title Hitler's Heretics: Alfred Rosenberg, An Intellectual Biography. The work would depict Rosenberg as a tragic figure in the intellectual and political history of the 20th century, emphasizing in particular his views on religion, Nazi religious revolution, and controversy with Christianity and the Churches.

There are, however, two good reasons for not attempting this in the present dissertation. First, it is impossible to do justice to the subject and the sources within the confines of an Oxford D. Phil. thesis. Second, I have not been able to consult certain sources more or less necessary for a definitive intellectual biography; for instance, the 'lost' sections of Rosenberg's diary, which have not yet been located, and the papers of Dr. Alfred Thoma, his counsel at the Nuremberg Trial, including Rosenberg's own handwritten reactions to the Trial (see Bibliographical Essay). The available sources are, however, more than adequate for a thorough study of his ideology.

Of the many people who have made possible my study in Oxford, or been helpful in the preparation of this thesis, I should like to single out the following, whose assistance was absolutely essential, for a special word of appreciation:

Professors Gordon A. Craig and Kenneth Scott Latourette (deceased), formerly of Princeton and Yale Universities respectively, who kindly wrote the recommendations enabling me to study at Oxford.

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Mrs. G.P. Hutchinson, formerly of Winter Haven, Florida, who endured much to enable me to write this thesis and to whom no expression of appreciation would be adequate—some debts of gratitude can be paid, with others one must remain a debtor.

George P. Hutchinson
Oxford, England
6 June 1977

NOTE TO THE READER

The reader especially interested in the primary and secondary sources relevant to this study is advised to consult, first, the Bibliographical Essay; and, second, the General Bibliography, where full bibliographical information on all the published sources cited in the footnotes is found.

The author has endeavored to keep the footnotes to a minimum, while still providing adequate documentation, and clarification of the text where necessary. To keep the notes fairly brief, a number of abbreviations have been employed, a list of which follows. Normally the first reference to a source gives sufficient information to identify it, for example the place and date of publication of published books. Subsequent references are abbreviated; for instance, place and date of publication are omitted, and titles are often shortened. The author's surname is given except in the case of the familiar works of Rosenberg and Hitler. In this connection 'Diary' always refers to Rosenberg's diary. The titles of articles in periodicals are normally omitted unless deemed helpful for understanding the text. Archival sources are identified usually by the source's type or title rather than by its author, but where necessary the author's name is given if not otherwise clear. If the date of a source is not clear from the text or otherwise, it is usually provided. All dates are cited in the German fashion (e.g., 10.5.1940). The speeches of Rosenberg and Hitler are cited in terms of place, date, and source—for example: Nuremberg, 6.9.1938 (Domarus, Hitler, 893f). The abbreviation p. or pp. is not employed except where absolutely necessary.

In both the text and the footnotes German and other foreign expressions are italicized (i.e., underlined), except those which have been integrated into the English language or which occur very frequently in the literature on National Socialism (e.g., Fuehrer). Sometimes German or other foreign

words or expressions are included in parentheses where it is thought that these might be helpful. The abbreviated expressions 'Nazi' and 'Nazism' are sometimes used in English translations of quotations, even though they never occur in the original German sources. Finally, although there has been an attempt to avoid unintelligible or particularly offensive Americanisms, there has been no endeavor to mimic British English but rather to follow American spelling and the best American idiom.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AGD</u>	<u>Auf gut deutsch</u>
<u>APA</u>	<u>Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP</u>
<u>BA</u>	<u>Bundesarchiv (Coblenz)</u>
<u>B&E</u>	<u>Rosenberg, Blut und Ehre (4 vols.)</u>
<u>BVP</u>	<u>Bayerische Volkspartei</u>
<u>CDJC</u>	<u>Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (Paris)</u>
<u>DAP</u>	<u>Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</u>
<u>DNVP</u>	<u>Deutschnationale Volkspartei</u>
<u>DVFP</u>	<u>Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei</u>
<u>DVP</u>	<u>Deutsche Volkspartei</u>
<u>EA</u>	<u>Erste Aufzeichnungen 1917-1919</u>
<u>ERR</u>	<u>Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg</u>
<u>HJ</u>	<u>Hitler-Jugend</u>
<u>KBDK</u>	<u>Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur</u>
<u>LA</u>	<u>Letzte Aufzeichnungen</u>
<u>NA</u>	<u>National Archives (Washington)</u>
<u>NCA</u>	<u>Nazi Conspiracy and Agression (10 vols.)</u>
<u>NS</u>	<u>Nationalsozialistisch, Nationalsozialismus</u>
<u>NS 8</u>	<u>Kanzlei Rosenberg (Bundesarchiv, Coblenz)</u>
<u>NS 15</u>	<u>Der Beauftragte des Führers, etc. (Bundesarchiv, Coblenz)</u>
<u>NS 26</u>	<u>Hauptarchiv der NSDAP (Bundesarchiv, Coblenz)</u>
<u>NSDAP</u>	<u>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</u>
<u>NSDB</u>	<u>Nationalsozialistischer Dozenten-Bund</u>
<u>NSDSB</u>	<u>Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studenten-Bund</u>
<u>NSFO</u>	<u>Nationalsozialistischer Führungsoffizier</u>
<u>NSKG</u>	<u>Nationalsozialistische Kulturgemeinde</u>
<u>NSLB</u>	<u>Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund</u>
<u>NSMH</u>	<u>Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte</u>

<u>PHKV</u>	<u>Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher (42 vols.)</u>
<u>PO</u>	<u>Parteiorganisation der NSDAP</u>
<u>PT</u>	<u>Das Politische Tagebuch Alfred Rosenbergs</u>
<u>R 6</u>	<u>Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete (Bundesarchiv, Coblenz)</u>
<u>SA</u>	<u>Schutz-Abteilung der NSDAP</u>
<u>SD</u>	<u>Sicherheitsdienst der SS</u>
<u>SPD</u>	<u>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</u>
<u>S&R</u>	<u>Rosenberg, Schriften und Reden (2 vols.)</u>
<u>SS</u>	<u>Schutz-Staffeln der NSDAP</u>
<u>TMWC</u>	<u>Trial of the Major War Criminals (42 vols.)</u>
<u>VB</u>	<u>Völkischer Beobachter</u>
<u>VJHZG</u>	<u>Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte</u>
<u>WK</u>	<u>Der Weltkrieg</u>
<u>WL</u>	<u>Wiener Library (London)</u>
<u>WLB</u>	<u>Wiener Library Bulletin</u>

1. INTRODUCTION: NAZISM AND ROSENBERG

By no means least among the problems arising from the history and historiography of the Third Reich is that of interpreting the complex phenomenon of National Socialism itself. The purpose of this study is to comprehend the Nazi ideology of Alfred Rosenberg, the philosopher of Nazism and chief ideologist of the Nazi Party, with a view to shedding light on the enigma of Nazism. This endeavor raises several significant questions: What is the problem of Nazism? What was Rosenberg's role in the Nazi Movement? Why study Rosenberg in order to understand the Nazi phenomenon?

THE ENIGMA OF NAZISM

The various interrelated problem areas pertaining to the interpretation of National Socialism as an historical phenomenon may be summarized in the form of general questions regarding its nature, origin, and appeal.

What was the nature, or essential character, of Nazism? As an undeniably dynamic force in history, what was it really at bottom? To Marxists, whether Social Democrats or Communists, Nazism had to be interpreted in fundamentally economic and social terms as nothing more than reactionary monopoly Capitalism masquerading as a revolutionary political party in order to survive. The Party's middle-class, Fascist ideology was simply a counter-revolutionary substitute for a real social revolution. The classic Liberal approach, while not overlooking economic and social factors, has been to see Nazism primarily in ideological terms as a negative reaction to the ideas of the Enlightenment. The Nazi phenomenon represented a sort of neo-Romantic obscurantism in reaction to the march of modern ideas; to Liberalism, Democracy, and the universalistic ideals of Western civilization. A common answer, first put forward in Conservative circles, but popular elsewhere, has been that Nazism was nothing but Nihilism. That is, the Nazi Movement was a force essentially negative and destructive, a naked drive for totalitarian domination devoid of any ideological commitment. Nazism was a purely political movement for the sake of movement alone, a genuinely revolutionary movement but, according to the influential

formulation of Hermann Rauschning, a Revolution of Nihilism. Finally, Christian observers have seen Nazism in religious terms as basically a secularized Christianity, a substitute religion resulting from the decline of traditional Christianity and the consequent religious crisis of modern Europe.¹

These summary interpretations, presented in grossly oversimplified form for the sake of brevity, are by no means mutually exclusive. Nazism was an exceedingly complex phenomenon, and there is doubtless a grain of truth in them all. The present study represents the Christian or religious viewpoint and contends that Nazism was, far more than is commonly realized, a substitute religion.

Of special significance are questions pertaining to the role of ideas and ideology in the Nazi Movement. Some have denied the importance of Nazi ideology, maintaining that it was simply a clever façade which few, including Party leaders, took seriously; whereas others have stressed the doctrinaire character of the Movement, contending that Nazi belief was essentially dogmatic. Did the Nazis really believe their own ideology? How is one to understand the enigmatic relationship between ideology and practice, dogmatism and pragmatism, in Nazism? What was the relationship between Nazism as an ideology and Nazism as a political phenomenon? In brief, this study suggests that answers to these

¹The literature on National Socialism is vast. For a brief introduction to that which is most pertinent to this study, see the Bibliographical Essay. For a survey of attempts up til 1957 to interpret the Nazi phenomenon in broad historical perspective, see A.G. Whiteside, 'The Nature and Origins of National Socialism', Journal of Central European History, 17 (1957), 48-73. The above summary is grossly oversimplified for the sake of brevity. Examples of the Marxist approach would be F. Neumann, E. Niekisch, and G. Lukács (plus of course Soviet historiography). The general Liberal line which covers a multitude of variations, would be best represented perhaps by G. Mosse, A. Bullock, and K.D. Bracher. The Conservative interpretation would be illustrated by H. Rauschning, G. Ritter, and perhaps F. Meinecke. Though many historians pay lip service to the religious dimension of Nazism—by mentioning its religious character, origin, and appeal as a surrogate religion (e.g. Niekisch, Lukács, Mosse)—few have followed up the religious approach to understanding the Nazi Movement, perhaps because of their own lack of religious conviction and background. The present study is an attempt in the direction of remedying this by exploring the Nazi phenomenon from a more religious perspective.

questions may be found in the character and content of Nazi ideology itself.

Obviously the question of the origin of National Socialism is closely related to that of its nature, but nonetheless logically distinct. Whatever the nature of Nazism, where did it come from? What are its sources and roots? Questions of historical origin are exceedingly difficult; but, from the nature of the case, they are rather important for distinctively historical understanding since history implies development—and development, origins.

In endeavoring to face this question, some have stressed continuity with the past, attempting to find roots in German history in particular or European history in general; whereas others have emphasized discontinuity either with Western civilization or German history. National Socialism is for them something essentially new, a fundamental breach with the past. But, even so, the question of historical origin is still relevant since the Nazi phenomenon did not just appear on the stage of history.

Those emphasizing the non-ideological, pragmatic character of Nazism naturally have tended to stress discontinuity and had little time for searching for intellectual origins. But they still face the question as to the sources of Nazi ideology, which even they admit had a propaganda role. Those emphasizing the importance of Nazi ideology, on the other hand, have stressed continuity and thus diligently searched for the sources and fore-runners of the so-called Nazi Weltanschauung. The present study stresses the importance of ideology in understanding the Nazi phenomenon and, properly understood, a certain continuity with European, and especially German history.

The origins of Nazism have been sought, for example, in the economic and social conditions brought about by industrial Capitalism in Germany. Others have appealed to the distinctive political history of the German people. Still others have appealed to German intellectual history: for example, to the German Enlightenment, to German Idealism and Positivism, or to völkisch¹

¹This almost untranslatable word is often left untranslated in this study. When translated, it is rendered most often 'ethnic', sometimes 'racial'.

and racial thought in Germany. Those stressing religious roots would appeal to the religious history of Germany, for instance, the character of Catholicism and Lutheranism, or developments within these traditions such as Christian anti-Semitism, in the light of the long-standing process of secularization. The present study suggests that the roots of Nazism are to be found in the distinctive religious and intellectual history of the German people.

A third question concerns how one is to explain the appeal of National Socialism. Despite a close connection there is, at any rate, a logical distinction between the sources of the phenomenon itself and the factors or conditions leading to its success. Why did Nazism achieve and maintain power and popularity? That it was genuinely popular among broad sections of the German people, is an undeniable fact. Even more striking is the fact of its appeal to the educated classes, perhaps greater than its appeal to the uneducated masses. But even the masses in Germany had more formal education than elsewhere. What was the secret of this monstrous movement's dynamic appeal to, and hold on, so many educated and otherwise normal people? This perplexing question has received various replies. That of the present study is, in brief, to suggest that the distinctive religious and intellectual history of modern Germany, in conjunction with the emotional shock of World War 1, produced a certain mentality receptive to the Nazi appeal.

The problem of Nazism has been a perplexing one to contemporary observers and historians alike. This perplexity is indicated by the tendency to explain the Nazi phenomenon in terms of some sort of conspiracy. Such simplistic views are ominously reminiscent of the Nazi outlook on history itself and reveal a marked lack of historical understanding. The bewilderment is also revealed by that ridiculing, condescending attitude toward Nazism often found among historians, who thus repeat the costly mistake of those contemporaries who refused to take the Nazi Movement seriously. Condescension is commonly a substitute for comprehension: one tends to ridicule what he does not

understand.

Friedrich Meinecke's frustration in trying to explain the German catastrophe provides another illustration. The dean of German historians, after discussing various possible explanations (e.g. arrogant bourgeois Nationalism, revolutionary proletarian Socialism, incorrigible metaphysical inclinations), eventually introduces 'the demon chance'. Ultimately Nazism was one of the insoluble riddles of world history, an irrational and thus at bottom inexplicable phenomenon.¹

ALFRED ROSENBERG (1893-1946)

The by no means uneventful career of Alfred Rosenberg may be conveniently divided into four basic periods: his early life in Russia (1893-1918); his participation in the Kampfzeit of the Nazi Party in Munich (1918-1933); his involvement in the Third Reich in Berlin (1933-1945); and finally his trial and execution at Nuremberg (1945-1946).

Alfred Ernst Rosenberg was born and raised in Reval, the provincial capital of Estonia, then part of the Russian Empire. Born on the same day as Hermann Goering (12 January 1893, 31 December 1892 by the old Russian calendar), he, like several other Nazi leaders, spent his early life outside the mythical and prestigious Reich. According to church records Rosenberg's ancestors were Lutheran by religion, middle class according to occupation, and ethnically Baltic Germans.² His mother died shortly after he was born; and his father, a merchant, when he was eleven. Thus he was raised as an orphan by two paternal aunts. His only brother, to whom he was never close, died in 1928.

Nevertheless Rosenberg seems to have been well cared for, enjoying a happy

¹ F. Meinecke, Die deutsche Katastrophe (Wiesbaden, 1955), 87ff, 93, 104.

² Attestatum Pastorale, 8.9.1934 (Bundesarchiv Coblenz: NS 8/1, 2f; hereafter BA).

home and according to his memoirs a 'carefree youth'.¹ This allowed the serious-minded boy to pursue his own interests, primarily painting and reading. The deep interest in art was to remain with Rosenberg to the very end of his life when he was wistfully to regret that he had not spent it as an artist. An avid reader as a youth—indeed, all his life—he was stimulated by the works of Houston Stewart Chamberlain at the age of sixteen and read widely in mythology, history, philosophy, and, of course, art. He also took a lively interest in school work, finishing the Realschule in 1910 with the regret that he had not enjoyed the humanistic training of a Gymnasium.

The years 1910 to 1915 were spent studying architecture at the technical university in Riga, the chief city of the Baltic region. The young would-be architect liked the artistic but not the technical side of the training. Thus his time was taken up less by formal studies than by artistic and philosophical interests. Trips to Bavaria in 1911 and Paris in 1914 furthered these interests. An important aspect of student life was membership in the fraternity Rubonia, where Rosenberg had the reputation of a 'philosopher' among his technically-minded peers. Often called upon for a talk, his first one dealt with the Jewish Question, an omen of things to come.

The spring of 1915 brought marriage to Hilda Leesmann, boyhood sweetheart and intellectual companion. The marriage was not a fortunate one. After a brief period of happiness together, Hilda contracted tuberculosis and extensive periods of separation ensued. Final separation and divorce, with the husband declaring himself the guilty party, took place in 1923. Not long afterward Hilda died.

When war came to Russia in 1914, Rosenberg was allowed to continue his

¹ A. Rosenberg, Letzte Aufzeichnungen (Göttingen, 1955; hereafter LA), 80. The only available account of Rosenberg's early life is his own: these Nuremberg memoirs, the unpublished memoir Wie der Mythos entstand, Nov. 1935 (BA: NS 8/22), and a few scattered references in his writings. Additional information may still be extant in the USSR. But there is no reason to doubt the essential accuracy of Rosenberg's own account, which is the basis of this summary. For biographical details see R. Cecil, The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology (London, 1972), Chap. 1 and passim.

studies since students were exempt from conscription in Czarist Russia. Due to the German advance Riga's technical university was moved to Moscow in the summer of 1915. Moscow was an alien environment to a lover of all things Germanic, and Rosenberg escaped to his painting and literary studies in a villa in the surrounding forest and, during the summer of 1917, in the Crimea. Given the revolutionary situation, he did not return to Moscow in the autumn; but rather home to Reval, hoping that the Germans soon would arrive. But when 1918 dawned and nothing happened, he made the difficult decision to return to Moscow for his final examination lest he have nothing to show for seven years of study. The examination went well, and, with plans for a crematorium to be built on a hill in Riga, he received a first class diploma as an architectural engineer as well as an invitation to remain in Moscow as a professorial assistant. But the young architect wanted no part of Bolshevik Russia, leaving that very night for Reval, where German troops arrived two weeks later. Had he left Moscow twenty days later, he speculated in his memoirs, he would have been buried in Soviet Russia forever.

With little inkling of the outcome of the Revolution or the War, Rosenberg took a job as a drawing instructor in a Gymnasium. The news of the German defeat came as a great shock, and he wept when he read the terms of the armistice. The die was finally cast! On the evening of 30 November 1918 Rosenberg left Reval for Berlin. He was not to see his homeland again until his return in triumph 24 years later. As he put it at the end of his life: 'War and Revolution throw men and their destinies to and fro'.¹

Rosenberg's action involved, however, not only a reaction to the chaotic events of the Russian and German Revolutions but a deliberate decision with no turning back. Why then did the young Balt leave home to make his way in the Reich? Various factors were involved. First of all, he had long cherished the dream of living and working in what had always been for him the center of

¹LA, 47ff.

culture, art, and science. Then there was the fear of Bolshevism in the light of the German defeat; he wanted to live no longer between the fronts—the call of a homeland soon to be in alien hands again no longer had any appeal. Moreover, he wanted to participate in the fate of the Reich, his spiritual home. Lastly, he thought that he might be able to contribute to the work of saving Germany from the revolutionary experience of Russia by enlightening the German people on the Jewish Question and Bolshevism; or, as he put it in his request to become a German citizen, to point out 'the dangers of the East'. Rosenberg summed it all up in his Nuremberg cell:

I abandoned my homeland in order to gain for myself a Fatherland....Thus I entered the Reich—originally a man completely devoted to art, philosophy, and history, who had never thought of ever getting mixed up in politics.... Thus life drew me on and I followed it. I saw myself in the play of forces with all their confusing phenomena.

The young Balt had come to Berlin ostensibly for an interview with Peter Behrens, the well-known architect, who had responded favorably to a letter of inquiry. But Rosenberg was never to work as an architect. Berlin seemed too gigantic, cosmopolitan, and alien, and he soon left for provincial Munich, where he had certain contacts, likewise refugees from Russia, who afforded initial assistance. Also, Munich was more of a center of German art and culture. Immediately Rosenberg availed himself of the treasures of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, feverishly pouring over volumes on Indian philosophy, Jewish history, and the philosophy of art.²

In January 1919 he met the erratic völkisch poet and publicist Dietrich Eckart, soon to exercise a significant influence on one Adolf Hitler. Rosenberg asked Eckart if he could use a warrior against Jerusalem, whereupon the latter laughed, Certainly! This encounter led to Rosenberg's regular contributions to Eckart's new weekly Auf gut deutsch. His first article,

¹LA, 65. Stadtarchiv, Munich: Einbürgerungsakt 1922/121(5).

²BA: NS 8/22, 52f; LA, 69-71. Cf. Behrens to Rosenberg, 10.8.1918 (BA: NSDAP/143).

entitled 'Die russisch-jüdische Revolution' appeared in February.¹ Between remuneration supplied by Eckart and his daily visit to the Volkstische he managed to keep body and soul together. In April 1919 the red cloud of the Räterepublik hung over Munich. On one sunny afternoon Rosenberg was among the milling crowd on the Marienplatz. Suddenly, so he claimed, he found himself atop the enclosure of the Mariensäule exclaiming: 'Are you crazy? Don't you know what Bolshevism means? I know, I come from Russia'.²

In May the young would-be author came into contact with Anton Drexler's newly founded Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (DAP). This began the transition from a withdrawn life centered in himself to one rooted in a political community. Later that autumn there occurred the first fateful meeting with Adolf Hitler at Dietrich Eckart's. At the end of 1919 Rosenberg joined the Party, soon to become known under Hitler's leadership as the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP).

Although Rosenberg was deeply engrossed in his personal studies and literary work, he did not hesitate to become involved in the practical political activities of the Party. He had no part in the formulation of the Party Program, but was present when it was enthusiastically proclaimed by Hitler in February 1920 and later published a treatise explaining it. Evenings were often taken up with speeches to small groups in and around Munich. Rosenberg participated in the legendary march on Coburg in October 1922. The fact that he obtained German citizenship in early 1923 made him feel more comfortable in taking an active part in politics. He participated in discussions planning the infamous Putsch of November 1923. Pistol in

¹Auf gut deutsch (AGD), 21.2.1919 (120-123). Cf. Rosenberg, Dietrich Eckart (Munich, 1938), 45.

²F.T. Hart, Alfred Rosenberg—Der Mann und sein Werk (Munich, 1933), 41. Rosenberg apparently gave this information to the author, a youthful admirer. Whether or not it is true, the alleged heroism portrays what Rosenberg fancied himself doing. The account is confirmed by his undated fragment (written not long after 1933) on the beginnings of the Nazi Movement (BA: NS 8/20, 7f).

hand Rosenberg entered the Bürgerbräukeller with Hitler on the night of 8 November. The next day, despite grave doubts as to the success of the venture, he faithfully marched behind the Fuehrer to the Feldherrnhalle, but managed to escape unscathed in the shooting mêlée, though the man next to him was killed outright.

After the failure of the Putsch Hitler surprisingly asked Rosenberg to lead the Nazi Movement during his imprisonment. The Nazi journalist had little success since various personal enemies in the Party refused to accept his authority. Only Hitler could hold its diverse human elements together, and the Fuehrer later forbade anyone to speak in his name. In the interim Rosenberg did manage, however, to establish the principle of the legal route to power by successfully involving the Party in the 1924 elections. But his personality was not adapted to charm the motly conglomeration of human resources available to the NSDAP. Renegade Nazi Kurt Ludecke provides a personality portrait of Rosenberg during this period, stressing the offensiveness of his intellectual superiority and icy reticence among the rowdy Bavarian Party comrades.

Though a young man, he was already mature, a balanced personality, showing fine erudition and judgment in intellectual things, but little human warmth.... His arrogant reserve and coldness were insulting, a strain on any relationship; but when he spoke he revealed himself at once as a thinker, expressing original thoughts in a fine form and with the inner assurance that marks a high intellect....The same scruples that set him above his enemies made him impotent to deal with them. Never so much a man of action as a man of thought, he, now showed himself a Hamlet, procrastinating while he weighed the issues.¹

In line with his interests and personality, Rosenberg's major contribution to the NSDAP was his journalistic and literary activity. This involved regular contributions to Auf gut deutsch and, from 1921 on, to the Völkischer Beobachter as the official Nazi newspaper. In March 1923 he replaced Eckart as editor-in-chief since the latter had little inclination for regular work and he himself had long carried the burden of it anyway. The VB was banned

¹K.G.W. Ludecke, I Knew Hitler (New York, 1937), 83,243.

after the 1923 Putsch, but shortly after publication resumed in early 1925 Hitler persuaded Rosenberg to take the position again. Thus from 1925-1933 the daily grind of editing the VB was Rosenberg's main work. He managed, despite almost insuperable difficulties, to make the VB a significant factor in the rise of the Party, especially in the critical years when Hitler was banned from all public speaking. As editor he was the object of several lawsuits and did two not entirely unpleasant stints in jail. Once he was to be the object of an assassin's bullet, but his assailant wounded racial theorist H.F.S. Günther instead.

Rosenberg's literary activity was not limited to the VB. In 1924 he founded an anti-Semitic monthly, Der Weltkampf (WK). This he edited until 1930 when he founded, and for a time edited, an official Party journal devoted to intellectual issues, the Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte (NSMH). To these journals he was a **regular** contributor. At the same time the young author still found time to publish some 20 separate books or booklets during his stay in Munich. Many of these were either not very extensive or based upon previous articles; nevertheless, taken together they illustrate Rosenberg's dedication. As Hugo Bruckmann, the well-known publisher who originally inspired Chamberlain's famous Grundlagen, wrote: 'Your output above and beyond all the other work which is daily required of you is astounding'.¹

Most of these works dealt with the Jewish Question and the Nazi political ideal. Rosenberg's major interest, however, concerned his views on the philosophy of history, art, and culture. These he elaborated in his chief work, Der Mythos des XX. Jahrhunderts (1930), best known for its spirited assault on traditional Christianity.

Besides his literary work the Nazi ideologist found time to make other contributions to the Party's image such as organizing public meetings and

¹Bruckmann to Rosenberg, 2.12.1927 (BA: NSDAP/143).

Party congresses, founding the Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur at home, and attending anti-Semitic congresses abroad. He had always had a deep interest in German foreign policy and with the Nazi success at the polls in September 1930 became the Party's spokesman on foreign affairs in the Reichstag. This led him to visit London in the fall of 1931; and Rome in November 1932, where he delivered, at an international congress of politicians and scholars, a striking address which drew the favorable attention of Mussolini and the Fascist press.

During these years Rosenberg's concern for keeping the Nazi idea pure led him into lively polemics against various ideas seeking recognition in the NSDAP: such as feminism, the philosophical universalism of the disciples of Othmar Spann, and the socialism of the Strasser brothers, especially Otto Strasser. This gained him the reputation of, as Ludecke put it, a 'Nazi fundamentalist'.¹

In January 1925 the Nazi journalist and author remarried. His second wife, Hedwig Kramer, bore him a son who died in infancy. A daughter, Irene, was born in 1930. Rosenberg was always reticent about his family and tried to keep his private life separate from his political life.

When the Party came to power in early 1933, Rosenberg moved to Berlin. He had been under the impression that Hitler would appoint him Foreign Minister but was pacified to some degree when he was authorized to establish the Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP (APA), a sort of Nazi Party counterpart to the Foreign Office. Shortly after this appointment he resigned as editor of the VB, though still remaining technically responsible for it as publisher, to devote more time to the APA and questions of Nazi foreign policy, especially the cherished ideal of rapprochement with Britain. This led to a trip to London, in May 1933, to convince the British of the common interests between

¹Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 440.

the two powers and to enlighten British officials on the character of the Nazi Revolution. The trip turned out to be a fiasco: British officialdom remained unconvinced, the House of Commons was in uproar, banner-carrying demonstrators plagued the Nazi representative, and a swastika-adorned wreath laid at the base of the Cenotaph was thrown uncereemoniously into the Thames.

In June 1933 Rosenberg was appointed to the newly-created Party office of Reichsleiter and in this capacity held important speeches throughout the land. In these speeches and in VB articles he put himself forward as the interpreter of the Nazi Revolution as applied to all areas of German life, not simply the political sphere.

In early 1934 Hitler appointed Rosenberg his commissioner for supervising all ideological indoctrination in the Party (Der Beauftragte des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NSDAP!). To this end an elaborate office was created, but its chief was relatively unsuccessful in his attempt to exercise control over all matters of intellectual import and ideological education in the Party. It was, indeed, an impossible task given the feudal constitution of the Third Reich, the prerogatives of Hitler's vassals, and the personality of the shy yet vain Baltic intellectual. At any rate the attempt led to bitter internal power struggles with Ley, Goebbels, Himmler, and others, in which Rosenberg almost invariably lost.¹

Nevertheless Rosenberg did exercise considerable influence in the NSDAP and the Third Reich in purely ideological matters. Moreover, the ideological struggles with the Churches seemed to be going his way. Countless speeches, elucidating and defending the Nazi viewpoint on almost every conceivable subject, received enthusiastic outward response. At the annual Nuremberg Party Congresses only he and Hitler spoke twice, and at the Kulturtagung the

¹Cf. R. Bollmus, Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner (Stuttgart, 1970).

two spoke together. At the 1937 Kulturtagung he was the first to receive the German National Prize for Art and Science which Hitler established to take the place of a Nobel Prize. Throughout the Third Reich Rosenberg enjoyed the public reputation of Hitler's philosopher, the foremost exponent of the Weltanschauung of the Fuehrer, and the uncompromising advocate of consistent and ideological National Socialism in the face of Christianity, Conservatism, Liberalism, Marxism, and even an ignorant or cynical Nazism.¹

But despite this exalted reputation without, there was for the ideologist of the Third Reich much turmoil within as evidenced by Rosenberg's diary and recurrent health problems. Constant activity would not suppress the fretful feeling that despite all the spectacular successes something somehow was going wrong. The Fuehrer was being influenced by the wrong people. He, Rosenberg, was being left out in the cold and his ideas unappreciated. The Movement, under the influence of Goebbels and Himmler, was degenerating into a mere propaganda show and a base power struggle devoid of real content and unable to generate abiding forms. There needed to be more emphasis on the Nazi Weltanschauung, on principle. As he put it to Darré: 'I would stand for a position irrespective of whether someone was for or against it, if I felt deeply that it was right for the Movement. This I would do even if in the end I remained alone'.²

This confession, belied by Rosenberg's self-compromising reaction to events, revealed more about his self-image and persecution complex than about his character. Despite successes in foreign policy the would-be Foreign Minister lamented that he had no control over it. To him it was, taken as a whole, haphazard and shallow. England had been progressively alienated by such stupidities as Streicher's and Goebbels' attacks on the Jews and Ribbentrop's

¹See Chap. 2 for evidence of Rosenberg's influence in Party and Reich.

²Diary, 7.5.1940 (Das politische Tagebuch Alfred Rosenbergs, Munich, 1964, 136; hereafter PT). Cf. LA, 181.

bungling arrogance. Then came the shattering news of the Nazi-Soviet pact! With the coming of war, however, Rosenberg managed to stifle his doubts and justify it as the necessary spiritual struggle which eventually would have come anyway.

After victory in the West in 1940 Rosenberg received permission from Hitler to remove Jewish (and Masonic) archives and libraries from occupied territory to the Reich with a view to furthering research at the various branch institutes of the Nazi university (Hohe Schule) which he was in the process of establishing. These materials were to provide concrete evidence of the Jewish conspiracy against the peace and prosperity of Europe. Jewish-owned art treasures were also confiscated to adorn the Reich at Hitler's discretion. During the War the Nazi intellectual took it upon himself to collect books for small libraries among the troops and by 1944 had managed to accumulate some 45 million volumes! But his most important contribution to the war effort was the numerous speeches to troops, Party gatherings, and people in general throughout Nazi Europe. In these addresses he held forth as the apologist of Nazi policy and the interpreter of the New Order.

With the invasion of Soviet Russia in 1941 Rosenberg's hour had finally come. Hitler appointed him Reichsminister responsible for the civil administration of the occupied East. At last the historic crusade against Bolshevism had begun, and the Party ideologist was officially a member of the Government. He had received a gigantic responsibility but not the full authority to carry it out.¹ Having once fled the East as a refugee, he returned a conqueror in 1942 and 1943. But economic matters were in Goering's hands, police powers belonged to Himmler, and subordinate Koch's claims to administrative autonomy were supported by Bormann and Hitler. Rosenberg's policy was never really implemented, and he had to stand by and behold a disaster of gigantic proportions.

With the impending collapse the frustrated dreamer was forced to behold

¹Diary, 2.4/1.6.1941 (Frankfurter Rundschau, 22.6.1971); 16.7.1941 (Der Monat 1, 1949, 36; hereafter Monat).

all his dreams shattered: the Reich in ruins; Bolshevism advancing on Europe's heartland; plans for future books and the Nazi university, to which he had hoped to devote his old age, abandoned. Everything had to be left behind in Berlin for the flight north to Flensburg. There, sick and barely able to walk, Rosenberg decided not to commit suicide, but to give himself up; whereupon he wrote, in mid-May 1945, a letter to Field Marshall Montgomery and was subsequently arrested by British military police. He tried, somewhat unsuccessfully, to see himself as if another: 'Now we want to see how you, Alfred Rosenberg, finish the adventure of life'.¹

The future held in store temporary internment in Luxembourg and then removal to Nuremberg for trial as a war criminal. After the seemingly endless pre-trial interrogations, the Nuremberg Trial began. The defendant Rosenberg, along with others, was indicted on four counts: crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and participation in a conspiracy, or common plan, to commit such crimes. Along with Goering and the others he plead not guilty in the sense of the indictment. The prosecution, especially the Russians, endeavored to show that Rosenberg was responsible for the crimes occurring under his administration in the East, and that he played a leading role in preparing the German mind for the Nazi Regime and Nazi ambitions. 'We submit that the contributions which Rosenberg made through formulation and dissemination of National Socialist ideology was fundamental to the conspiracy'.²

The main stress of the prosecutors was upon Rosenberg's role as Nazi ideologist, on the damnable content of his thought, and on the connection between ideas and action, theory and practice. At the same time the prosecution tried to deny that Rosenberg was being prosecuted for his thought. But in his final speech justice Robert Jackson maintained that Rosenberg's

¹LA, 308-312.

²Trial of the Major War Criminals (TMWC, Nuremberg, 1947-1949) 5, 50,66 (9./10.1.1946). Cf. TMWC 1, 70f; 2, 297.

doctrine gave the impetus for the annihilation of the Jews, and then added a new charge: 'His woolley philosophy also added boredom to the long list of Nazi atrocities!'.¹

In response to these accusations the defendant did not try to deny his influence in the Third Reich, but maintained that others had instituted policies which were not an implementation but rather a degeneration of the noble idea of National Socialism. He admitted human shortcomings but denied that his service for the Nazi Weltanschauung was a conspiracy or his actions criminal.² Rosenberg appealed to the superficiality of the Western prosecutors' conspiracy charge and the hypocrisy of the Communists' accusing anyone of crimes against humanity. He wrote in his cell: 'National Socialism was the content of my active life. I have loyally served it despite all mistakes and human shortcomings. To it I will remain true as long as I live'. According to Albert Speer, no uncritical observer: 'Rosenberg in contrast to others made an impression of honesty and consistency. All the efforts of his lawyer, in public and behind the scenes, to persuade him to recant his so-called Weltanschauung came to nothing'.³

The defense counsel, Dr. Alfred Thoma, tried to point out the inconsistency of the prosecution's position: Rosenberg was being condemned, like a Medieval heretic before the Inquisition, for his beliefs not his crimes, despite the attempt of some prosecutors to distinguish between the two. As for the connection between theory and practice, Rosenberg was no more guilty of the criminal excesses of the Third Reich than Voltaire or Rousseau of those of the French Revolution. Many of his ideas corresponded to those of other intellectuals of his generation. He was the victim of an uncontrollable

¹ TWC (26-28.7.1946) 19, 416, 517, 599; TWC (15.4.1946) 11, 449.

² Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher (PHKV, Nuremberg 1947-1949) 22, 435f (31.8.1946).

³ A. Speer, Erinnerungen (Berlin, 1976), 517; LA, 272. Cf. Cecil, Myth, 219.

process of historical degeneration. The Nazi ideologist was simply an idealist with no intention of inspiring anyone to criminal action.¹

On 1 October 1946 General Nikitchenko read, in a language Rosenberg knew only too well, the tribunal's verdict: guilty on all four counts. Shortly thereafter sentence was pronounced: death by hanging. Dr. Thoma's appeal invoked Rosenberg's alleged incompetence and insignificance in the Third Reich. 'He desired what was good, if not objectively, nevertheless subjectively; for the objectively good he lacked depth and breadth of perspective. His morality was less bad than relative'.² But the appeal was to no avail. Shortly after midnight, 15 October 1946, Alfred Rosenberg was led to the gallows. After refusing pastoral counsel his last words were that he had nothing to say.³ He who had so much to say in life had nothing to say in death. His remains were cremated in the Dachau ovens and the ashes strewn on the Isar River.

WHY STUDY ROSENBERG?

Thus ended a most extraordinary career. Given Rosenberg's high positions in the NSDAP, his life-long acquaintance with the Nazi Movement, and reputation as the philosopher and ideologist of Nazism, one would presume that a serious study of his thought would be a worthwhile undertaking. On the face of it it is somewhat surprising that no such study exists. There are, however, various reasons for this lack of interest.

There is, first of all, the objection that ideology was really not very significant in the development of the NSDAP and the Third Reich. Nazism was an anti-intellectual, pragmatic, nihilistic political movement bent on power for power's sake. Its so-called Weltanschauung or ideology was a front, mere propaganda never taken seriously by the Nazi leaders. Thus, even if we

¹PHKV (10.7.1946) 18, 124f, 133, etc.

²Antrag, 3.10.1946 (Archive of the International Court of Justice, The Hague). TWC (1.10.1946) 22, 588, 539-541.

³B.C. Andrus, I Was the Nuremberg Jailer (New York, 1969), 160, 151.

take the trouble to understand Nazi ideology, we are no closer to understanding Nazism as an historical reality since Nazi ideology had little to do with the Nazi political phenomenon as such.

In answer to this objection it may be urged that even if National Socialist ideology were pure propaganda as far as Hitler and the leading Nazis were concerned, it does not follow that Nazi ideology was unimportant. The very existence of Nazi ideology indicates that the leaders thought it important, indeed necessary; that they expected that the masses, including Party members, would take it seriously. Certainly the Nazi phenomenon, taken in its totality, was more than the NSDAP's allegedly cynical leaders.

Moreover, not only did a Nazi ideology exist, but great stress was laid upon the ideological side of the Movement. The notion of a purely pragmatic, nihilistic Nazism without intellectual interest or commitment was certainly alien to Nazi self-understanding. Despite all the fashionable talk about the Nazis being anti-intellectual, there never was a more intellectual mass movement—at least in the formal sense that intellectual issues, ideological questions, matters of Weltanschauung, were constantly emphasized and under discussion in the Third Reich. For instance, under what other regime in history could a political leader like Rosenberg address thousands on the philosophy of life, history, culture, and religion?

Furthermore, there is ample evidence that Nazi ideology was taken seriously, or at least certain aspects of it. This has led reputable historians to emphasize the ideological or doctrinaire character of the Nazi Movement. And even those who have strongly emphasized the nihilistic, non-doctrinaire character of Nazism have been forced to qualify this: by denying the possibility of an ideology of complete deception; by maintaining that ideology, though not essential to Nazism as such, did have a significant function in the Nazi Movement; or by admitting that Nazi policy was to some extent, ideologically determined. As one historian admitted: 'Ideology and political programs, even if their originators intended them for purely propagandistic purposes, become reality to the extent to which they are held to be true, are believed,

and are taken seriously as principles'.¹

Finally, this objection may reflect an a priori approach which assumes that because we cannot take Nazi ideology seriously, the Nazis themselves could not have done so; or which tends to interpret Nazism in terms of an alien Anglo-Saxon political pragmatism. At any rate, it would seem that a serious attempt to understand Nazi ideology might possibly contribute to an understanding of the Nazi phenomenon as a whole.

A second objection is that Rosenberg was not particularly influential in the practical sphere of determining the policy of the NSDAP or the Third Reich. Like other old Nazis he ended up a forgotten man whose idealism got lost in the shuffle of the Nazi Movement. In the ideological sphere his ideas were not taken seriously, his so-called philosophy was one of the many oddities of Nazism, and his works, including the much-publicized Mythus, were scarcely read. Thus, even if we succeeded in understanding Rosenberg's thought, we would be no closer to understanding the Nazi phenomenon as such, since Rosenberg exercised little real influence on its development.

In reply, it is not entirely true that Rosenberg made no substantial contributions to Nazi policy. For instance, he was probably responsible for committing the NSDAP to its 'legality' policy in 1924.² This development transformed the political character of the Movement; without it the Party would never have come to power. In addition, Rosenberg played a significant role in influencing Hitler to occupy Norway in 1940.³ On the whole, however, it is true that Rosenberg had little say in determining Nazi policy on the highest level.

¹M. Broszat, Der Nationalsozialismus (Hannover, 1960), 35. Cf. H. Rauschning, Die Revolution des Nihilismus (Zurich, 1964), 56, 233. Rauschning would not include Rosenberg's brand of Nazism in the category of Nihilism (305ff). Historians emphasizing Nazi ideology are, e.g., H. Holborn, A. Dallin, G. Mosse, E. Jäckel, D. Orlov. Evidence for the significance of Nazi ideology as represented by Rosenberg and Hitler is given in Chap. 2, 6, 8, and 9.

²This, at any rate, is Rosenberg's claim (LA, 190) confirmed by his political memorandum of 1.5.1924 (BA: NSDAP/143). For the content of this document, see Chap. 8.

³Cf. H.-D. Looock, Quisling, Rosenberg und Terboven (Stuttgart, 1970), 222ff. Hitler valued Rosenberg's evaluation of Quisling (Looock, 222) and based his

But even if the premise is granted, it does not follow that Rosenberg's thought is unworthy of study unless one defines Nazism solely in terms of Hitler's policies. In this case the objection would preclude paying attention to anyone other than Hitler. Who but Hitler ultimately determined the policy and destiny of the Nazi Movement? But Nazism as an historical phenomenon cannot be understood simply in terms of Hitler's policies. As central as he is, Hitler himself, indeed the whole Nazi phenomenon, is inconceivable apart from the mentality of those who followed him.

In addition, there is a real possibility that Rosenberg may have influenced Hitler ideologically in the early years of the NSDAP, and thus indirectly his fateful decisions. For instance, the crucial identification of racial and spacial (Lebensraum) considerations in Hitler's mind probably came from Rosenberg. At the very least the young Baltic intellectual most certainly confirmed Hitler's convictions regarding race, the Jewish threat, and Bolshevism as a Jewish conspiracy. And these convictions, without a doubt, determined the basic character and course of the Nazi Movement. That Rosenberg exercised considerable influence on Hitler's ideology was the view of contemporary observers of the Movement. Various historians share this view, even those who would maintain that Rosenberg's influence later dwindled to nothing.¹

Furthermore, it simply is not true that Rosenberg and his ideology were not taken seriously at all. On the contrary, there is abundant evidence to refute this notion. (See Chapters 2, 6, and 8). As a matter of fact, the Nazi ideologist had a following and was influential in molding opinion in the Party. But even if this were not the case, as contended, his thought

decision on Quisling's warning through Rosenberg, or so he told his ideologist on 25.4.1940 (Rosenberg, Die politische Vorbereitung der Norwegen-Aktion, 15.6.1940—PHKV 25, 34. PS-004).

¹W. Laqueur, Russia and Germany (Boston, 1965), 53ff. Cf. Cecil, Myth, 30ff, 45. Examples of contemporaries are: O. Strasser, Heiden, Ludecke, Rauschnig, Niekisch, Hanfstaengl. The evidence for, and issue of Rosenberg's influence on Hitler is discussed in Chap. 8 (in conjunction with Chap. 9).

would still be a matter of interest as a classic example of the mentality of an educated Nazi, who for some inexplicable reason enjoyed the reputation of being the philosopher of the Third Reich.

Then third, there is the objection that Rosenberg's thought has no validity in its own right, no value for its own sake, and therefore does not merit serious attention. After all, his ideas are supposedly those of a half-educated intellectual charlatan at best. Who should be interested in wading through such nonsense? The intricacies of this warped, muddled, and unoriginal mind are not worth understanding.

In response, even if Rosenberg's thought have no validity, it does not follow that it is not worth studying. For it is a mistake to suppose that only those authors are historically significant whose thought is respectable to the educated scribes of their own or a subsequent era. Who would dream of excluding from intellectual history all those whose ideas are considered invalid by the contemporary intellectual climate of opinion?

Moreover, Rosenberg's thought merely reflected, to a considerable extent, the intellectual climate of the late 19th and early 20th centuries: for instance, neo-Kantian Lebensphilosophie, biological and racial thinking, intellectual anti-Semitism, Wagnerian aestheticism. These trends were epitomized in Houston Stewart Chamberlain, out of whose thought Rosenberg's ideology grew. But Chamberlain, despite the charge of dilettantism, was acclaimed a profound thinker in his day by many who considered themselves intellectually avant garde.

Perhaps there is no better illustration than George Bernard Shaw's laudatory 1911 review of the English version of Chamberlain's celebrated Grundlagen des XIX. Jahrhunderts. Chamberlain was acclaimed as a great generalizer as opposed to a mere specialist and accumulator of data. He was right in protesting against 'the lumping together under the general name of "Humanity" of people who have different souls'. Shaw identified himself and the Fabians with Kant, Wagner, and Chamberlain in opposing the

respectable, bourgeois, superstitious, imperialistic, and chauvinistic Englishman.

This very notable book should be read by all good Fabians....It is a masterpiece of really scientific history. It does not make confusion: it clears it away. It will show many Fabians which side they are really on....Whoever has not read it will be rather out¹ of it in political and sociological discussions for some time to come.

Furthermore, this condescending attitude, common to contemporaries and historians alike, has been a positive hindrance to understanding the Nazi phenomenon, especially the ideas underlying it. There are various examples of this. For instance, French prosecutor at Nuremberg, Pierre Mounier, sure that Rosenberg's philosophy was a jumble of nonsense, exclaimed: 'the mind is baffled by the true significance of the ideas of National Socialism'.² Or, we have the tragic spectacle of Friedrich Meinecke trying to explain the Nazi phenomenon while exhibiting that he had never taken the trouble to understand Rosenberg.³

Lastly, contrary to the common caricature, Rosenberg was not an ignoramus or a totally uninteresting thinker, as this study will try to show. Those who repeat the caricature obviously have not taken the trouble to read and understand what he wrote. To be sure, much of Rosenberg was unoriginal and superficial. But the problems which haunted his mind were not superficial. In evaluating Rosenberg as an author, it must be kept in mind that he did not enjoy a humanistic education at a Gymnasium or university, and that almost all he wrote was written or dictated in the haste of a very active

¹Fabian News 22 (June 1911), 52f.

²TWC (7.2.1946) 7, 80.

³Meinecke, Die Deutsche Katastrophe, 59f, 92. More recent examples of this condescending ignorance are: Cecil, Myth, 144f. R. Pois (ed.) Alfred Rosenberg: Selected Writings (London, 1970), 23ff (Introduction). Both Pois and Cecil reveal that they have not taken the trouble to understand Rosenberg at certain points, though both insist on his influence on the Nazi Movement (Pois, 30f; Cecil, 30ff).

political life. Accused of dilettantism like his mentor Chamberlain, he did not enjoy Chamberlain's library and leisure. Yet he did manage to read widely all his life and was by no means an uneducated man by ordinary standards.

In addition, there are other questions and considerations arising from Rosenberg's life and thought which support the contention that a serious study of his thought would be an interesting and worthwhile undertaking.

For instance, we often read that Nazism was a pathological, nervous reaction to modernity. But Rosenberg, like Chamberlain, always stressed continuity with the intellectual development of modern man. All his life he professed allegiance to human autonomy, intellectual liberty, and personal morality along with opposition to everything dogmatic. How was this man the philosopher of the Third Reich?

Moreover, there is evidence from Rosenberg's life to indicate that all this was not simply idle talk. For example, there is no evidence that he used his position for personal gain.¹ He refused to take personal revenge on his political enemies, including his would-be assassin, after 1933. He likewise refused to persecute religious opponents, defending Niemoeller in private and desiring to give adversaries opportunity for a change of heart. Several of his subordinates have testified to his rationality, tolerance, and humanity. On occasion he even intervened to save individual Jews and others from the concentration camps.² Among many Gauleiter, within the SA, and to the consternation of the SS he could attain during the War the reputation of a 'defender of the rights of man'.³ How did it come to pass that this shy man, with a reputation for reasonableness, fairness, and

¹J. Billig, Alfred Rosenberg dans l'action idéologique, politique et administrative du Reich hitlérien (Paris, 1963), 123.

²Cf. Cecil, Myth, 116, 122f, etc. LA, 124. For the testimony of subordinates, see (besides Cecil, 2, 212): H. Hürtle, VB, 10.1.1943 (BA: NS 8/5, 56). C. Stamati, Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte (VJHZG) 6 (1958), 79. O. Bräutigam, So hat es sich zugetragen (Würzburg, 1968), 624.

³Berger to Himmler, 10.10.1942 (H. Hühne, The Order of the Death's Head, New York, 1971, 472f).

kindness was condemned for crimes against humanity?

Another factor should be taken into consideration. Rosenberg was intimately acquainted with the Nazi Movement from beginning to end. He knew Dietrich Eckart and Anton Drexler before Hitler and was the only defendant at Nuremberg who had been with the Movement from the very beginning. All things considered, it could be justly maintained that no one, with the exception of Hitler, knew more about the Nazi episode than Alfred Rosenberg. Moreover, he was not only an active participant but an interpretative and critical observer. Thus it would seem worthwhile to study Rosenberg's understanding of the Nazi phenomenon. After all, the first step to distinctively historical comprehension is to grasp the self-understanding of the participants in the history under investigation. To understand the historical phenomena of any era, one must begin with the self-interpretation of the human beings involved.

Finally, it is generally conceded by all that, while other Nazi leaders may have been cynics, Rosenberg was not. The tragedy of Alfred Rosenberg was, in part, that he really believed in the so-called Nazi Weltanschauung. Flying over the rubble of Germany, he was asked by a British captain, who had read the Mythus, if he still believed it. The reply: 'To be sure some things are time-worn and out-of-date; the basic ideas, however, I still hold to be correct'.¹ In view of the compass of the human interest and tragedy involved, surely it would not be too much to ask that history record it for posterity.

The purpose, then, of this monograph is to give an account of the Nazi ideology of Alfred Rosenberg. It is not a political biography, not even an intellectual biography, but a study of his thought. Moreover, it is not a study of his thought as a whole, but only as it relates to Nazi ideology.

¹LA, 311. Cf. A. Bullock, Hitler (Harmondsworth, 1962), 80n. Laqueur, Russia and Germany, 78. J. Fest, Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches (Munich, 1969), 193. Bollmus, Ant Rosenberg, 24.

That is, it is not a catalog of Rosenberg's opinions on every last subject, but rather an attempt to understand his mind in relation to the Nazi Weltanschauung as he understood it. Lastly, the purpose of this study is not to examine Rosenberg's ideology for its own sake after the manner of political science. It is, rather, an historical study endeavoring to understand Rosenberg's thought historically with a view to shedding light on an historical problem, namely the enigma of Nazism.

There is certainly no dearth of sources for studying the mind of Alfred Rosenberg. Indeed the historian is tempted to complain with Hjalmar Schacht at Nuremberg that Rosenberg wrote too much!¹ It is of course necessary to interpret his writings in the light of their historical context and chronological order. For the following presentation, however, it is advisable to follow a basically thematic order, both for the sake of clarity and in the light of the fact that Rosenberg's mind experienced little essential development over the years. Thus, after Chapter 2 discusses Rosenberg's reputation as the ideologist of the Third Reich, Chapters 3-7 deal with his views on philosophy, history, politics, religion, and foreign affairs respectively. Chapter 8 discusses his relationship to Hitler, and Chapter 9 Hitler's ideology in relation to Rosenberg's. In conclusion, Chapter 10 endeavors to summarize results and suggest answers to the Nazi enigma. Within each chapter the presentation is sometimes thematic, sometimes chronological, depending upon what seems the most effective way of presenting the material.

The major thrust of the thesis is that Rosenberg and his ideology is not irrelevant to understanding the Nazi phenomenon. On the contrary, his ideology was vitally related to the Nazi Movement and provides valuable insights into its nature, origin, and appeal. Most important, the religious element in Nazism must not be overlooked or underestimated. Nazism was, in

¹G.M. Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (New York, 1961), 250 (17.4.1946). Cf. the Bibliographical Essay and General Bibliography.

part, a distinctively religious phenomenon with a religious origin and a religious appeal. Nazism was, far more than is usually understood, a secularized substitute for Christianity. Its origin lay, ultimately, in the spiritual history of Germany, in the religious character of the German people, not simply in political and economic developments between 1914 and 1933. By relegating historic Christianity, indeed all religion, to the realm of myth, while at the same time maintaining the psychological and social necessity of religion or myth, certain dominant and distinctive developments in German religious and intellectual history created a mentality of religious propensity and gullibility receptive to Nazism.

To support this thesis, Chapter 2 contends that Rosenberg the ideologist was taken seriously in the Third Reich. Chapter 3 suggests that Rosenberg's concept of myth throws light on the Nazi mentality and ideology. Chapter 4 maintains the religious significance of race in Rosenberg's Nazi ideology. Chapter 5 indicates that Rosenberg's specifically political ideology basically corresponded to the actual character of the Nazi political phenomenon. Chapter 6 demonstrates the religious character of Rosenberg's Nazism as a substitute for historic Christianity and as the heir of the Christian era. Chapter 7 shows that Rosenberg's ideology, with some exceptions, was consonant with the actual course of Nazi foreign policy. Chapter 8 maintains Hitler's regard for Rosenberg and his racial ideology as essential to the Nazi Movement. Chapter 9 demonstrates that Hitler's ideology was, with few exceptions, essentially that of Rosenberg, including the important religious dimension. Finally, Chapter 10, in summing up the thesis, suggests further that Nazism was, for some nominally within the Protestant tradition, a secularized Pietism.

2. THE IDEOLOGIST OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Throughout the 25-year history of the Nazi Party Alfred Rosenberg enjoyed the reputation of being the ideologist of Nazism. Unquestionably he provided the Movement with whatever ideological justification it ever had. Thus, on the face of it, it would seem that his thought should cast light on the Nazi phenomenon.

There is, however, the objection that there was little real connection between Rosenberg's ideology and the Nazi political phenomenon as such. After all, it is alleged, his thought, as expressed in the Mythus, was one thing and Nazism as a political movement, quite another. His books, despite their extraordinary sales, were scarcely read. Rosenberg had no real power or influence in the NSDAP and on the Third Reich. His claim that multitudes were being inwardly revolutionized by the Mythus was mere wishful thinking or, more likely, psychological compensation for political failure. In brief, Rosenberg was a Nazi oddity, a strange appendage to the Third Reich.¹

The contemporary evidence, however, yields a somewhat different picture. It is the purpose of this chapter to adduce enough of this evidence to counter the objection that Rosenberg was unimportant to the Nazi Movement. The main point to be established is not Rosenberg's personal political power, or even his influence in general, but merely the fact that he was taken seriously in the NSDAP and in the peculiar atmosphere of the Third Reich. This is not to deny a significant element of truth in the view that Rosenberg's influence was oddly overestimated by contemporaries. But this is only one side of the story; the point to be established here, is that there is another, namely Rosenberg's significant role in what was, once upon a time, the Nazi

¹Cf. J. Fest, Gesicht des Dritten Reiches, 193ff. Broszat, Nationalsozialismus, 10ff. Broszat's likening Rosenberg's role in the Nazi Movement to that of Gottfried Feder is very misleading.

euphoria.¹ To this end, it is necessary to portray his public image, stature in the NSDAP, significance in the Third Reich, and finally the importance of the Mythus.

ROSENBERG'S PUBLIC IMAGE

The picture of an antithesis between Rosenberg the ideologist and the Nazi political movement is totally foreign to his public image in the NSDAP and during the Third Reich. True, the Party did make a convenient distinction between its official ideology and its official ideologist's private anti-Christian religious beliefs. But this was for tactical reasons and had little or no effect upon his public reputation as the Nazi ideologist. Thus it is not surprising that most contemporary observers were convinced of Rosenberg's influence and significance as Party ideologist. Ernst Niekisch, for example, affirmed his influence on Hitler and the NSDAP, claiming that any disassociation was not to disavow Rosenberg's ideology, but simply to pacify those upset by his anti-Christianity. 'Rosenberg formulated philosophically and ideologically what Hitler had to do politically'.²

Rosenberg's exalted public image, and the consequent fact that many took him seriously, is confirmed by contemporary sources, especially extensive evidence in his files captured at the end of the War. Certainly those most familiar with the Rosenberg documents would hesitate to affirm that no one took him seriously, or that he was a non-essential accessory to the Nazi.

¹ Thus, this chapter is not intended as a full, balanced discussion of the issue of Rosenberg's influence. The available evidence for this question is vast indeed, and such an inquiry were far beyond the scope of the present study. The discussion of Rosenberg's relationship to Hitler is reserved for Chap. 8 and 9. Additional evidence is mentioned in other chapters, especially Chap. 6.

² E. Niekisch, Das Reich der niederen Dämonen (Hamburg, 1963), 57f. Other contemporary observers could be cited, e.g., O. Stresser, Heiden, Ludecke, Rauschnig, Hanfstaengl. Cf. Cecil, Myth, 45.

Movement.¹

Although Party leaders on occasion could disassociate the NSDAP from Rosenberg's Mythus theoretically, practically all the means at the Party's disposal were used to publicize Rosenberg and his work. His works were continuously recommended and his ideology was lavishly praised in the mass media. One or two typical examples will suffice to illustrate what the average German read in the Nazi press during the Third Reich.

In early 1934, after being commissioned by Hitler to supervise all ideological education in the Party, Rosenberg initiated his activity with a programmatic speech. The Völkischer Beobachter reproduced various reactions in the German press, beginning with the following on page one:

There is good reason why our Fuehrer entrusted no less a person than the creator of the Mythus with this mighty task, certainly the most difficult of our Revolution bar none. Alfred Rosenberg has been for us National Socialists for many years not a name, but a meaningful idea (Begriff). As a true follower of his Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, he has been for a decade now the uncontested intellectual theoretician (Programmatiker) of the Party. He has ideologically underpinned, disseminated, and deepened the great epochal idea of our Fuehrer, above and beyond its political significance, and thus given the impetus for that great 'revaluation of all values' anticipated by Nietzsche. Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts is, alongside Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf, the foundational work of the National Socialist Weltanschauung....

The religion of the blood—which, above and beyond dogmas and confessional institutions, is to fulfil the great, overwhelming longing of our time for inner reality and nearness to God—has found its incomparable scientific and prophetic formulation in Rosenberg's Mythus. True religion is for the best and profoundest men of the present no longer dogma, no longer confession; the divine secret reveals itself to us in the eternal concepts of blood, race, and soil. He who denies these values or seeks to weaken their eternal effect denies life and thus God. Our religion would not be if our blood were not. This is the great mythical meaning of Rosenberg's work.²

¹Cf. Billig (Rosenberg, 19-23), who has catalogued the Rosenberg documents at the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC) in Paris: 'L'influence de Rosenberg a été prépondérante dans la formulation de l'ensemble de l'idéologie nazie.... Dans l'équipe des dirigeants nazis Rosenberg figurait toujours dans le rôle du penseur attitré du nazisme (21).... Il était, au sommet du Parti, un accessoire, mais cet accessoire était essentiel' (23). Frau Kinder, in charge of the Nazi documents at the BA, would agree with this assessment of the evidence. For a brief discussion of the general character of the Rosenberg documents, see the Bibliographical Essay.

²VB, 24.2.1934 (BA: NS 15/169).

According to a 1936 newspaper article, Rosenberg had always been for Nazis the conscience of the Movement, the loyal guardian of the Nazi Weltanschauung to be applied without compromise to the whole of political and cultural life. All that Rosenberg the philosopher and author had prophetically formulated, Rosenberg the orator and enlightener of the people was now imparting to the formations of the Party, the cultural organizations of the nation, the associations of its productive people, and the units of the Wehrmacht. He was communicating the message to thousands, indeed millions, through the press and radio, at evening receptions as well as at mass meetings.¹ This was not merely wishful thinking, but to a large extent true.

Such instances of extreme praise in the German press are not isolated cases but could be multiplied almost ad infinitum. The Nazi ideologist was constantly portrayed to the people as the truest paladin of the Fuehrer, the intellectual idealist of the NSDAP, the representative of original and consistent Nazism, the great opponent of the Churches and traditional Christianity, and the prophetic herald of a new Weltanschauung. As such he could be compared, on one occasion at least, to great creative geniuses like Luther, Copernicus, Galileo, and Kant.²

In addition to extravagant praise in the press, Rosenberg was the recipient of numerous public honors. For instance, he was made an honorary citizen of several German cities: Lübeck, Weimar, Cologne, and Düsseldorf among others. Especially gratifying was the honor accorded in 1939 by Münster, once a citadel of Roman Catholicism. In the ceremony the mayor emphasized that heretofore only the Fuehrer had received the honor. The citizenry was not easily moved and difficult to convince; but once they had grasped an idea or a faith, they remained true to it. 'By this honor Nazi Münster confesses

¹Bayerischer Ostmark, 18/19.4.1936 (BA: NS 15/159).

²Frankfurter Volksblatt, 12.1.1939 (BA: NS 8/27, 61). Cf. sample clippings in BA: NS 8/3-8, 25-28, 72-98; NS 15/159, 159a, 169.

the pioneering ideas and fundamental works of Alfred Rosenberg, the awakener of the Nordic racial soul and the defender of the Weltanschauung of Adolf Hitler's Movement'.¹

At the Party Congress of 1937 the Nazi intellectual was the first to receive from Hitler the German National Prize for Art and Science. According to the official citation:

In his works Alfred Rosenberg, in the most distinguished way, has helped to found and fortify both scientifically and intuitively, the Weltanschauung of National Socialism. In an untiring struggle to maintain the purity of Nazi ideology he has earned for himself special merit. Only a later era will be able to measure just how deep is the influence of this man upon the intellectual and ideological formation of the Nazi Reich. The National Socialist Movement, and furthermore all the German people, will greet with deep satisfaction the fact that the Fuehrer, by granting the German National Prize, distinguishes in Alfred Rosenberg one of his oldest and truest comrades in arms.²

In response to this award one newspaper drew the practically inescapable conclusion: Rosenberg had conducted the ideological struggle allegedly as a private citizen, even though from the outset his views could not be understood merely as his private opinion. This honor now made it official that Rosenberg's point of view was also that of the Party.³

There seems to be no available evidence of any direct, open criticism of Rosenberg from within the Party during the Third Reich. In fact, the only public criticism came from clergymen. True, one might possibly unearth a rare specimen here and there: for example, an article in a newspaper against some aspect of his aesthetic taste, or in a scholarly journal opposing some

¹Westfälische Landeszeitung, 17.1.1939 (BA: NS 8/7, 33). For Rosenberg's honors, see NS 8/7 in its entirety.

²Der Parteitag der Arbeit 1937 (Munich, 1938), 50f.

³Westfälische Volkszeitung, 9.9.1937 (BA: NS 8/7, 120).

detail of his historical views.¹ But these would be scarce indeed.

Public criticism was apparently permitted, at least in principle, but only on strictly religious issues by Church officials, or on minor details of Rosenberg's thought—but not by Nazis on issues of Nazi ideology. For instance, in 1935 a certain Dr. Karrenbrock sent 1,000 printed but unpublished copies of a brochure attacking Rosenberg's allegedly materialistic Mythus, and especially his views on the Jewish question, to Party leaders including Hitler. The author was quickly expelled from the NSDAP and the brochure confiscated.² In 1939 Reichsminister for Church Affairs, Hanns Kerrl, intended to publish a book in which he distinguished sharply between Weltanschauung and religion and proposed a synthesis between Nazism and Christianity. But Rosenberg and Bormann were adamantly opposed, and Hitler forbade publication.³

Given Rosenberg's public image, it is not surprising that he was in constant demand as a speaker. That he was one of the most popular speakers in the Party, probably the most popular after Hitler, is abundantly clear from his correspondence and the Nazi press. During the 1930's the Nazi philosopher spoke to millions—to the applause of Nazi officials, enthusiastic crowds, and the Nazi press. A few examples may suffice to illustrate the point.

When Rosenberg spoke at Stuttgart in November 1934, the VB reported it as the fulfilment of the desire of many to hear the author of the Mythus.

¹Rosenberg alludes to the former in the VB, 14.7.1933 (BA: NS 8/25, 23). A possible example of the latter is mentioned by Hans Rothfels, 'Die Geisteswissenschaften in den dreissiger Jahren', in H. Diem (et al.), Deutsches Geistesleben und Nationalsozialismus (Tübingen, 1965), 103. It is conceivable that some critical clergymen may have been technically Party members whose criticisms, whether in public sermons or published writings, would have been limited to strictly religious issues and permitted only because of their official ecclesiastical connections.

²BA: NS 8/40, 208ff; cf. NS 8/42, 139. The brochure was entitled: Die Lösung der Judenfrage in Deutschland, Zugleich eine wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit der Gedankenwelt des "Mythos".

³Hess to Kerrl, 10.10.1939; Rosenberg to Bormann, 31.10.1939 (BA: NS 8/182, 103,80).

The giant Stadthalle had been sold out for days and was filled up long before the speech, which had to be transmitted to 21 additional halls so packed that they were cordoned off by the police. In all an estimated 30,000 people heard the speech. At Düsseldorf in February 1935 the mayor introduced him in the midst of thunderous applause with the words: 'Rosenberg is for us not only the herald of the Fuehrer's doctrine, his name is a program'.¹

In 1936 at Wuppertal, a center of Pietist Protestantism in Germany, a crowd estimated at well over 100,000 came out to hear the Nazi heretic. According to the local newspapers the city had never experienced anything like this before. But it was only natural that the very many who had read the Mythus and Rosenberg's other writings wanted the opportunity to see him face to face. The local schools let out early, and youth streamed in droves to meet his train, accompanied him to his hotel, and then demanded he come out to speak to them, chanting: 'We want to see Rosenberg....Alfred, we are calling you'. Later a gigantic torchlight parade of thousands followed his evening speech.²

In October 1937 Rosenberg was greeted in Roman Catholic Freiburg like a king by a reported 50,000 people, caused in part by the fact that businesses and factories let employees off for the festive occasion to hear the Nazi orator. In Krefeld in 1938 he was greeted by the mayor as the Fuehrer's closest comrade in the liberation of the German people from their spiritual need. 'Moreover, you are for many of us, who seek the truth beyond outmoded forms and solidified dogmas, the herald of a knowledge which is suited to disclose and convey a new epochal outlook and intellectual world'.³

¹Volksparole, 4.2.1935 (BA: NS 8/73, 22); VB, 30.11.1934 (BA: NS 8/72, 163).

²Bergisch-Märkische Zeitung/Wuppertaler Zeitung, 24.3.1936 (BA: NS 8/75, 61,63).

³VB, 4.6.1938 (BA: NS 8/82, 168); 17.10.1937 (BA: NS 8/80, 38).

Rosenberg's oratorical activity did not fade into the background during the war years. If anything, his significance as a speaker increased as he spoke to the issues raised by the War. He was in constant demand until early 1945, speaking to small Party gatherings or to the masses—for instance, to some 60,000 at Nuremberg to commemorate war dead in the wake of Stalingrad.¹ His Prague speech of January 1944 received wide attention and acclaim; copies were sent out to servicemen as a Feldpostbrief and circulated in Czech, Serbian, Dutch, and French.²

Glowing reports of Rosenberg's speeches could be multiplied many times over. No doubt numbers and circumstances were exaggerated and clichés parroted. Nonetheless, it is highly unlikely that all accounts were falsified, or that every cliché was meaningless. Even allowing for much exaggeration and meaningless repetition, as an actual political phenomenon all this was remarkable indeed. Even if some simply attended and applauded because of the euphoria, the psychological atmosphere generated seems to have had a significant impact on those involved. Inspired by this atmosphere, which he himself helped to create, Rosenberg convinced himself, at least in his more exalted moments, that his struggle for the soul of the Nazi Party and the German people, especially in traditionally religious regions, was destined to succeed.³

ROSENBERG IN THE NSDAP

In view of Rosenberg's position in the NSDAP and public reputation, it is difficult to believe that he exercised little or no influence in the Party, especially in its lower echelons. In the early years of struggle the average Party member's image of Nazism and the NSDAP came largely from

¹Fränkische Tageszeitung, 15.2.1943 (BA: NS 8/94, 68).

²Rosenberg to Lammers, 1.8.1944 (CDJC: CXLIII-358, 2). Cf. BA: NS 8/158, 35.

³Diary, 6.2.1939; May 1939 (PT, 79,85); Oct. 1937 (Monat, 32).

hearing Hitler speak and from the Völkischer Beobachter. Despite its meagre circulation in the 1920's the VB played a significant role in molding Party opinion, especially during the years when Hitler was forbidden to speak in public. And the VB was for all practical purposes Rosenberg. Admittedly he was not without adversaries in the Party. But his opponents' motivation was mostly non-ideological; when it was ideological, his views normally prevailed. For instance, during the interregnum of Hitler's Landsberg confinement, Rosenberg's leadership was bitterly contested by Esser, Hanfstaengl, Streicher, and others. But this opposition stemmed more from personal rather than ideological factors. Even where there was a tactical difference on participation in elections, Rosenberg's judgment prevailed with Hitler. In the late 1920's Rosenberg did have an ideological dispute with the Strasser brothers and Goebbels over the validity of National Bolshevism and the meaning of German Socialism, but Hitler supported his viewpoint and it ultimately prevailed.

In the early years Rosenberg continuously opposed what he called völkisch sectarianism, those who thought the NSDAP existed to realize their fantastic religious and political schemes. This brought ideological opposition from within the völkisch camp. For instance, in 1931 one fanatical critic violently accused Rosenberg of being too intellectual and philosophical in opposition to the simple spiritual interests of the Volks.¹ At about the same time an ideological controversy arose between the Nazi philosopher and the followers of General Ludendorff and the Tannenberg Bund over the validity of its political and religious propaganda.² But such sectarian influences made little headway in the NSDAP, and Rosenberg's views were generally accepted with Hitler's ostensible support as the Party line.

From 1930 on the most serious ideological opposition to Rosenberg within the NSDAP had to do with his anti-Christian views as expressed in the Mythus.

¹P. Lamberty, Critique of the Mythus (BA: NS 8/14, 219ff).

²Cf. former Nazi Gauleiter A. Haselmayer, Der Fall Ludendorff--und fällt Hitler mit? (Munich, 1931) in reply to Rosenberg, Der Fall Ludendorff, NSMH 2:16 (July 1931), 289-307.

He maintained in the introduction that it was a personal confession, not the program of the political movement to which he belonged. Yet the Mythus was supposed to lay a foundation for bringing about the future day of liberation. This ambivalence was reproduced in the Party itself and in the public life of the Third Reich. For example, in 1934 a Party official in the Catholic Saar wrote to the Party office responsible for approving books, requesting a declaration of official disavowal of the Mythus and a statement that it was never authentic material for indoctrination. The request was turned over to Rosenberg, who referred to his introduction (to which neither he nor the Party had anything to add) with the assertion that the Party had never disavowed the book.¹ The ambivalence is well-expressed in a 1936 newspaper article publicizing one of his radio addresses: Rosenberg was not only the private author of the Mythus, but also the herald of the Fuehrer on the march toward a Nazi future.² When expedient, Party leaders could stress the private character of the Mythus; but normally it was simply identified with Nazi ideology.

Rosenberg's actual political power within the Party was far less than his official position and public reputation would lead one to believe. Nevertheless he did exercise considerable influence in those areas ostensibly under his control, and in matters of ideological education his views carried weight.³ Having patched up an old quarrel with Max Amann, Rosenberg often determined what was published by the Eher Verlag. In 1938 he managed to force Schirach to stop publication of the Hitler Youth periodical Wille und Macht due to his opposition to articles on philosophers Immanuel Kant and Ludwig Klages.⁴

¹Dienststelle Rosenberg to Reichsstelle zur Förderung des deutschen Schrifttums, 25.9.1934 (BA: NS 8/148, 143-144). Cf. Rosenberg, Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts (Munich, 1935), 2f, 17.

²Mitteldeutsche National-Zeitung, 17.6.1936 (BA: NS 8/26, 39).

³Billig (Rosenberg, 34) would agree on the basis of his study of the Rosenberg documents at the CDJC.

⁴Schirach to Rosenberg, 30.12.1938 plus additional correspondence (BA: NS 8/212, 130ff). Cf. Rosenberg's correspondence with the Eher Verlag (BA: NS 8/213).

This was, however, a rare victory in Rosenberg's constant conflicts with other Reichsleiter. But these conflicts did not necessarily reflect fundamental ideological divergences or weaken his influence in the lower echelons of the Party or with the people at large. These internecine struggles did not trickle down to the Party at the grass roots level or to the masses.¹ The important thing is that the Party and the people thought that the official ideologist of the NSDAP corresponded to his public image, that he had Hitler's blessing and confidence with that access to the Fuehrer which was the key to power in the Third Reich.²

Many provincial and local political leaders, especially those involved in ideological indoctrination, considered themselves disciples of Rosenberg. In 1935 a Gauschulungsleiter happily reported that 20,000 copies of his just-published Dunkelmänner had already been sold in the Gau. Sixty local Party groups from the Mainz area wired from a conference the assurance of their loyal support in the struggle for the renewal of German culture. In 1937 600 Schulungsleiter in Westphalia wired greetings with the assurance of constant solidarity in the struggle.³ One Gauschulungsleiter from Düsseldorf wrote: 'You know that we in our Gau are putting forth the utmost effort to promote our Weltanschauung as understood by Rosenberg. Our whole educational program is energetically geared to this end!'.⁴

Although indoctrination efforts were greatly impeded during the War, Rosenberg's disciples apparently continued to be active. In early 1944 he received birthday greetings from all those engaged in indoctrination in the

¹Cf. M. Steinert, Hitlers Krieg und die Deutschen: Stimmung und Haltung der deutschen Bevölkerung im Zweiten Weltkrieg (Düsseldorf, 1970). 33.

²Cf. BA: NS 8/99, 159; 8/159, 21 for examples of correspondence to Rosenberg revealing this outlook.

³Telegrams, 9.7/3.11.1935; 26.6.1937 (BA: NS 8/152, 88, 168; 8/9, 125).

⁴Brenger to Urban, 26.11.1937 (BA: NS 8/150, 68).

Gau Danzig-Westpreussen with the hope that he would enjoy good health in order to be able to impart spiritual strength to all those who looked to him as the spiritual standardbearer of the Fuehrer's Weltanschauung. As late as December 1944 Rosenberg's representative in Gau Niederschlesien, after hearing that he was to speak to officers in Breslau, asked in the name of the Gauleiter and Gauschulungsamt if he could speak to the political leaders of the Gau. 'The desire to hear you is strong everywhere'.¹

It was only natural that the Nazi ideologist was appreciated more in some areas than others, depending on the attitude of the provincial Gauleiter. According to Rosenberg, one could expect personality conflicts even in an ideologically-based Party; moreover, that he would be an embarrassment to Nazi leaders in Roman Catholic areas. Gauleiter Joseph Wagner, a dogmatic Catholic, even worked vehemently against the Mythus before Hitler had him removed for his religious dogmatism.² Nevertheless, Rosenberg, was on good terms with most of the Gauleiter, and some were outspoken admirers and supporters. Karl Kaufmann was an exacting reader of Rosenberg and often invited him to Hamburg to speak on the Nazi Weltanschauung as an antidote to the routine of everyday life.³ Rosenberg had a similar relationship with Dr. Alfred Meyer of Westfalen-Nord and Hinrich Lohse of Schleswig-Holstein, both of whom later served under him in the Ostministerium. Carl Röver was an ardent disciple who often invited Rosenberg to speak in his Gau. He told Hitler: 'In Oldenburg we indoctrinate only with Rosenberg. That is for me a matter of course'.⁴

The Nazi philosopher was especially popular in Halle-Merseburg ~~under~~

¹ Venatier to Rosenberg, 22.12.1944 (BA: NS 8/155, 154); Löbsack to Rosenberg, 11.1.1944 (BA: NS 8/156, 36).

² LA, 168f; Wie der Mythus entstand, Nov. 1935 (BA: NS 8/22, 72).

³ VB, 16.12.1934 (BA: NS 8/72, 167). LA, 153.

⁴ LA, 143f. Cf. correspondence in BA: NS 8/152, 155, 93ff, 102.

under Gauleiter Eggeling. When Rosenberg came to Torgau in 1937 to dedicate an old Protestant church as a Nazi Feierstätte, the Gauleiter greeted him as the 'spiritual sword' of the Fuehrer and the Movement. Sending birthday greetings in 1941, he assured the Nazi ideologist of the veneration and 'inner solidarity' of Gauleiter and Gau.¹ Martin Mutschmann of Dresden was from 1923 on an enthusiastic devotee of Rosenberg and in 1943 wrote a laudatory article to commemorate his 50th birthday, praising the Mythus and its author as the most significant educator of contemporary Germany.² Fritz Sauckel of Weimar was one whom Rosenberg always considered ideologically consistent. In 1944 Sauckel published, with a foreword of his own, excerpts from Rosenberg's commentary on the so-called Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Sauckel wired after a programmatic Rosenberg speech on ideology in 1934: 'Your address yesterday was like a redemption and a revelation at once. This I would like to confess as an Alter Kämpfer and Gauleiter'.³ Julius Streicher of Nuremberg had quarreled with Rosenberg since 1924, and the latter often criticized his pornographic anti-Semitism. Nevertheless Streicher could introduce the Nazi ideologist at a 1936 speech with the words 'Your name is for us program and law'.⁴

Such expressions of veneration continued during the War. At Stuttgart in 1942 Gauleiter Murr expressed all the political leaders' gratitude to Rosenberg, with whom they had always felt close ties. Punctuated by thunderous

¹Eggeling to Rosenberg, 10.1.1941 (BA: NS 8/156, 216). Torgau, 17.10.1937 (BA: NS 8/80, 48). Eggeling's predecessor was also an enthusiastic devotee, writing in 1934 of the 'overwhelming approval' among the Party members of the Gau of Rosenberg's VB (9.1.1934) article 'Totaler Staat' (Arden to Rosenberg, 12.1.1934—BA: NS 8/148, 84f).

²Nationalsozialistische Korrespondenz, 8.1.1943 (BA: NS 8/7, 4). Cf. LA, 152.

³Telegram, 23.2.1934 (BA: NS 8/127, 13); Baur to Rosenberg, 8.6.1944 (BA: NS 8/213, 293). Cf. LA, 166.

⁴VB, 5.12.1936 (BA: NS 8/77, 179). Cf. Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (19.-22. 4.1946), 261 for Streicher's admiration for Rosenberg's intellect.

applause, he declared: 'As opponents feared him so National Socialists loved him'.¹ At Munich in 1943 Gauleiter Giesler introduced him as the intellectual warrior of the NSDAP who had drawn out of the German character those values necessary for mastering life's struggle.

He has forged our spiritual weapons for the entire ideological struggle of this century and—no National Socialist will ever forget this—liberated the sources of German thinking from the rubble of centuries. He has widened our field of vision, he has burst open our thinking; thus he has opened our eyes to all that which is really taking place in our time. We have all received a new outlook through him.²

In 1944 several Gauleiter sent birthday greetings with expressions of loyalty. Acting Gauleiter Gerland of Kassel expressed gratitude for Rosenberg's willingness to participate in the 1,200th anniversary of the founding of Fulda. It would be the occasion's high point and a significant step in overcoming confessional influences in the city. Kassel had suffered a frightful fate. 'Only the intimation of the possibility of your visit has, in an extraordinary way, spurred my closest co-workers on to their daily work. The lift which you will give us is indispensable'.³

Rosenberg was also appreciated by Nazis outside the borders of the post-Versailles Reich, for instance, in Austria, the Sudetenland, and the West. In 1932 the editor of a Nazi periodical in Vienna wrote: 'We are struggling in the direction of the author of the Mythus'.⁴ The Mythus was banned by the Dollfuss government in June 1934. Yet in 1936 its author could receive requests for several copies of it and his other books from the Austrian Hitler Youth.⁵ When Rosenberg toured Austria after the Anschluss he was mobbed

¹Württembergische Zeitung, 7.12.1942 (BA: NS 8/93, 144).

²Munich, 3.4.1943 (BA: NS 8/67, 88). At Cologne one week later Gauleiter Grohé declared that Western Germany's spiritual strength in the air war was a result of Rosenberg's untiring labors; the German people could thank God for a man with his mind and courage (Bergheimer Zeitung, 12.4.1943—BA: NS 8/95, 9).

³Gerland to Rosenberg, 1.2.1944 (BA: NS 8/157, 15f). Cf. BA: NS 8/157, 131; 8/155, 94, 109, etc.

⁴Wildner to Rosenberg, 29.12.1932 (BA: NS 8/99, 299).

⁵Weber to Rosenberg, 18.1.1936 (BA: NS 8/212, 240).

with great enthusiasm. Introducing him before a speech in Graz, the Kreisleiter exclaimed: 'It was your work which, when we were banned, gave us steadfastness and purpose'. Upon leaving the city Gauleiter Uiberreither presented him with a collection of letters from imprisoned Austrian Nazis to their families with the inscription: 'To the man to whom we owe the inner strength for our resistance'.¹

The Mythus had also been confiscated in Czechoslovakia. But Konrad Henlein, the Nazi leader of the Sudeten Germans, could make a similar declaration at Reichenberg in 1939:

At night and with the danger of being imprisoned for months or years, our political soldiers smuggled over the border the book of the Fuehrer and above all your writings also, comrade Rosenberg. They feverishly hid themselves and in secret became engrossed in your train of thought, mentally taking National Socialist Germany by storm long before they were permitted a free and open expression of their confession of the Fuehrer and the Nazi Weltanschauung.²

A similar tribute was expressed by Kreisleiter Dr. Schreder in introducing Rosenberg at Luxembourg in 1943. Here in this new addition to the Reich the Mythus had made him known many years ago. Through it he had gained many enemies but also many friends. The Nazi ideologist was especially welcome in Lützelburg since the people here had come into the Reich because of their ideological outlook on the world.³

From 1930 on Rosenberg was especially popular with many of the Party's old guard or Alte Kämpfer. As one who had been in the Movement from the beginning

¹LA, 170; VB, 8.4.1938 (BA: NS 8/82, 45). Cf. Uiberreither to Rosenberg, 3.7.1940 (BA: NS 8/160, 157): 'I have a special obligation, Dear Parteigenosse Rosenberg, plainly and simply to thank you for what you have given us. The last half year I was corporal in a Gebirgsjägerregiment and participated in the Norwegian campaign from the landing to the march on Narvik. Naturally we were often in situations where it is of tremendous value when one has received clarity concerning ultimate things. Just how much you have given us became especially clear to us during these days and nights. I know that I may express this gratitude on behalf of countless comrades'.

²Die Zeit, 1.4.1939 (BA: NS 8/85, 228). The next day Rosenberg was presented to the people of Kaaden with high praise for the Mythus (Kaadner Zeitung, 1.4.1938—BA: NS 8/85, 1).

³Nationalblatt (Coblenz), 12.4.1943 (BA: NS 8/96, 97).

and continued to be prominent, he was to many a symbol of what the NSDAP was supposed to have stood for originally, that is, an anti-clerical claim upon the whole man. In 1937 he was assured, to the accompaniment of thunderous applause, by Minister President Professor Mergenthaler of Württemberg that the Alte Kämpfer especially supported him in his and the Fuehrer's fight against the ecclesiastical obscurantists (Dunkelmänner).¹

This attitude is reflected in several letters to Rosenberg, for example, one from an architect deeply disturbed in 1933 at the Party's acceptance of late-comers with little understanding of the Nazi intellectual and cultural position. Other letters from Alte Kämpfer welcomed his appointment in 1934 to supervise ideological education in the Party. One old Nazi, a nominal Protestant advocating the German religion of the Mythus, claimed to have lost his position as a Party speaker in Magdeburg for quoting from it in religious meetings. He asked for support appealing to the great bitterness of many old Party comrades who saw their redemption in this true doctrine.²

With regard to the Nazi Party Organization, Rosenberg had some difficulties with Gregor Strasser and quarrelled off and on with his successor, Dr. Robert Ley. But it was Ley who originally suggested that Hitler appoint Rosenberg to supervise all ideological education. Ley repeated Rosenberg's ideas, though the latter despaired of his ideological understanding. At the end of 1942 Ley sent season's greetings assuring the Nazi ideologist that nothing could minimize 'my deep respect for you and your work'.³

As for the Party Chancellory, Rudolf Hess, much like Hitler, respected Rosenberg as a thinker but was sceptical of his ability in practical affairs. Hess spoke of him as the best ideological mind of the Movement and was

¹VB, 16.10.1937 (BA: NS 8/80, 34). Cf. Gauleiter Meyer at Detmold, 16.1.1937 (BA: NS 8/78, 17).

²Witthft to Rosenberg, 5.3.1934 (BA: NS 8/257, 176). Cf. correspondence in BA: NS 8/101, 233; 8/104, 67, 200ff; 8/107, 210; 8/109, 28f.

³Ley to Rosenberg, 21.12.1942 (BA: NS 8/193, 129). Cf. Bollmus, Amt Rosenberg, 54ff.

especially interested in his views on Christianity, the Jewish Question, and détente with England. In fact, Hess spoke with Rosenberg immediately before the fateful flight to Scotland.¹ On one occasion he publicly characterized the Nazi ideologist as 'the Alter Kämpfer who never strayed from the Party's main line'.²

Like his predecessor Hess, Martin Bormann was strongly anti-Christian and opposed to any attempt to synthesize Nazism and Christianity, even for the purpose of doing away with the Churches. As he once wrote to Rosenberg: 'Not through a compromise between National Socialism and Christianity will the Churches be overcome, but only through a new Weltanschauung whose coming you yourself have announced in your works'.³

To be sure, there were many disagreements between the two Reichsleiter over matters of policy and authority. Bormann could maintain that, even given agreement from a purely ideological point of view, basic matters of Party policy should for political reasons be approved by him before being put into effect. Nonetheless he often requested Rosenberg to speak; for instance, to Nazi army officers in 1944 on an ideological theme. It was important to have 'name personalities' express their views on important political questions. Bormann also applauded certain of Rosenberg's speeches, requesting that copies be distributed to all important officials of Party, State, and Wehrmacht.⁴

¹Cecil, Myth, 185. Cf. PT, 108 and Rosenberg's correspondence with Hess (BA: NS 8/182, 11f, 120, etc.).

²Pressebericht, 18.4.1935 (BA: NS 15/155).

³Bormann to Rosenberg, 22.2.1940 (PT, 204f. PS-098).

⁴Bormann to Rosenberg, 11.1.1944; 11.8.1940; 6.6.1944; 14.5.1943 (BA: NS 8/190, 253f; 8/186, 148; 8/190, 46f; 8/188, 44).

ROSENBERG AND THE THIRD REICH

Given the close connection between Party and State in the Third Reich, Nazi organizations on the Reich level practically functioned as agencies of the State. Rosenberg's influence here was by no means uniform, depending on his relationship to the particular organization and its leadership. In organizations under his wing, like the NS-Kulturgemeinde, he was naturally influential. He also carried weight in those whose leadership appreciated him, like the NS-Volkswohlfahrt and the NS-Frauenschaft, and often had opportunities to speak at their functions. Bernhard Köhler and Dr. Walther Gross, of the Party Kommission für Wirtschaftspolitik and the Rassenpolitisches Amt respectively, expressed enthusiastic appreciation of his work.¹ Rosenberg was always on excellent terms with Konstantin Hierl of the NS-Arbeitsdienst and evidently revered by at least some of its leaders. One wrote that he had honored Rosenberg, by naming a room in his department after him, and asked for a picture to decorate it. Another sent the assurance of his great respect and of 'the fighting solidarity with which we in the Arbeitsdienst want to serve your idea!'.²

The NS-Lehrerbund was ardently pro-Rosenberg, often inviting him to speak at its gatherings and using his writings and speeches in its many indoctrination camps for teachers. The NSLB and its leader Dr. Fritz Waechtler often expressed their loyalty to Rosenberg in glowing terms, as in a 1939 telegram: the 360,000 teachers of Greater Germany remembered his unparalleled, uncompromising struggle and assured him of their ever-steadfast fidelity.³

¹Köhler to Rosenberg, 9.2.1937 (BA: NS 8/11, 58); Gross to Rosenberg, 25.10.1938 (BA: NS 8/150, 225).

²Dr. Krüger to Rosenberg, 18.3.1935; Quarz to Rosenberg, 25.2.1935 (BA: NS 8/149, 30,32).

³BA: NS 8/198, 47f, etc. Cf. Cecil, Myth, 142f; R. Eilers, Die Nationalsozialistische Schulpolitik (Cologne, 1963), 8.

This outlook of the NSLB, along with the general influence of völkisch ideas in German educational circles, would indicate that Rosenberg's ideas exercised some influence in the schools. At Nuremberg Rosenberg denied that he personally had any direct influence on the schools or universities. This was technically true since he was responsible for Party, not State education. The latter was the province of Reich Minister of Education Bernhard Rust. But Rust was an old Nazi who once confessed: 'Comrade Rosenberg, really you ought to sit in my place; you have been the teacher of us all including me'.¹ Rust naturally resented interference in his domain and their relationship cooled over the years. Nonetheless he ordered the Mythus put in all school libraries, and it was used in the education of teachers and often in the classroom as well.²

Apparently Rosenberg's influence depended on the local situation. A 1942 police report quoted an Abiturient, now in the Navy, lamenting the deficiency of the schools. This he had to make up on his own, by studying philosophy, especially Nietzsche and Rosenberg, a big help in debates with others. 'In school one hardly mentions Rosenberg at all'.³

On the other hand, there are various indications in Rosenberg's files of his influence in the schools. In 1933 before Hitler's chancellorship an enthusiastic Gymnasium pupil having just read the Mythus, requested a copy for himself and his friends since it was 'absolutely necessary' to consult Rosenberg's viewpoint in the various subjects taught. In 1934 an educator, given a copy of the Mythus by a colleague, wrote of his interest in educational reform on the basis of the concept of racial soul despite the opposition

¹ LA, 149; PT, 115. Cf. PHKV (16.4.1946) 11, 507.

² I. McKee, Tomorrow the World (London, 1960), 277-278. That the Mythus was used in some schools is common knowledge in Germany. Cf. Cecil, Myth, 143; Eilers, Schulpolitik, 116.

³ H. Boberach (ed.), Berichte der SD und der Gestapo über Kirchen und Kirchenpolitik in Deutschland 1934-1944 (Mainz, 1971), 727.

of the Church. A teacher requested permission to publish excerpts from the Mythus for use in school due to the interest of pupils. An assistant headmaster wrote of his loyal support in the battle versus Rome and Judah, who had made the fatal mistake of not having paid attention to racial science and Biblical criticism.¹ In 1937 a Dutch monk reported that his niece in Aachen had to write the following ten times at home to improve her handwriting: 'Rosenberg says: The Germans are by heredity not sinful but noble, etc.'² In 1939 a mayor from a town in the Ruhr valley requested permission to rename a Catholic Volkschule the 'Alfred Rosenberg Schule' because of the Nazi ideologist's exalted reputation among teachers.³

The leadership of the NS-Deutsche Studentenbund, at least after its reorganization in 1934, consistently expressed enthusiastic devotion to Rosenberg and confessed loyalty to his cause. For example in one 1937 telegram: '800 student leaders greet you from the first symposium of German students as the proclaimer and preserver of the National Socialist Weltanschauung'.⁴ He also was on the best of terms with Reichstudentenführer Dr. Scheel. During the 1935 Nuremberg Party Congress the Nazi press hailed Rosenberg as the 'patron saint' of the new breed of Nazi student.⁵

¹ Dr. Drewes to Rosenberg, 22.12.1934 (BA: NS 8/102, 108f); Dr. Westermann to Rosenberg, 26.9.1934 (BA: NS 8/16, 189); Schrimpf to Rosenberg, 6.1.1934 (BA: NS 8/109, 151); Hilkenbach to Rosenberg, 14.1.1933 (BA: NS 8/14, 86).

² De Maasbode, 22.11.1937 (BA: NS 8/3, 90).

³ Antrag, 9.16.1939 (BA: NS 8/170, 41). The request was later withdrawn at the insistence of the local Nazi Kreisleiter who thought it premature and therefore inadvisable (BA: NS 8/170, 38-39).

⁴ BA: NS 8/200, 107. Cf. telegrams in 1935, 1939, 1941 (BA: NS 8/200, 117, 48, 35).

⁵ VB, 14.9.1935 (BA: NS 8/74, 172).

Anti-Semitic thinking had long had a hold on German student and academic life. As early as 1924 Rosenberg's commentary on the Protocols was required reading in one of the German student unions.¹ Thus it is not surprising that a Nazi student leader could write Rosenberg in 1932 that the Mythus was very popular in student circles; or that a correspondent could write in early 1934 that the Mythus was now in the hands of all the academic youth. Yet in these early years there was much at the universities to displease the Nazi student. A member of the NSDSB at Frankfurt wrote in 1933 that, with much opposition and internal dissension, the NSDSB was no significant factor there and asked if Rosenberg would come to speak. 'Local speakers are inadequate. Students make higher demands'.² The Nazi ideologist did have his followers in the student world. In 1934 a student from Göttingen, 'a completely convinced devotee' of Rosenberg's religious point of view, wrote that his friends also owed their ideological outlook entirely to the Mythus. In 1938 the NSDSB leadership in East Prussia wrote that they were setting up an exhibition of Rosenberg's works at Königsberg under the slogan: 'The Nazi student stands by Alfred Rosenberg in his fight'.³ Finally, Nazi students at some universities were influential and interested enough to request that Rosenberg speak at official university functions.⁴

The Nazi ideologist also exercised considerable influence in the NS-Dozentenbund. In 1938 its leaders assured him, through Reichsdozentenführer Dr. Schultze, of their heart-felt solidarity in pursuing common Nazi goals. This did not prevent lively disputes arising from Rosenberg's attempts to exercise control over the NSDB. This he managed to achieve, at least nominally,

¹H.P. Bleuel/E. Klinwert, Deutsche Studenten auf dem Weg ins Dritte Reich (Gütersloh, 1967), 146.

²BA: NS 8/100, 39f; 8/106, 163; 8/148, 123.

³BA: NS 8/151, 193; 8/109, 167.

⁴Cf. BA: NS 8/154, 123 (Tübingen, 1934); 8/158, 179 (Jena, 1944).

from late 1942 on. Henceforth he was to approve all NSDB plans and publicity for research and ideological education.¹

It does not appear, however, that Rosenberg had any significant influence on university education as such beyond the general lip-service paid to National Socialism. Most professors and lecturers probably had little time for the Mythus. Of course, they did not express this openly but by simply ignoring it. In 1943, after the Munich student revolt, Rosenberg lamented the sad state of the ideological outlook of professors and students.²

Nevertheless, there were a number of university teachers, and many intellectuals and academics in the sense of university-educated people, who expressed regard for Rosenberg and his work. It is startling how many of the letters of appreciation in his files were from those with university training. Many of these had doctorates, including a number of medical doctors.³ This is partially explicable by the long-standing influence of anti-Christian and völkisch thought in the German universities. Völkisch intellectuals could write favorable reviews of Rosenberg's books in the 1920's.⁴ After 1930 there were those who praised the Mythus—especially, so it seems, people with artistic, philosophical, and religious interests. Hitler's favorite architect, Professor Ludwig Troost, wanted to have a word from the Mythus, along with something from Mein Kampf, inscribed over the entrance of the proposed temple of art in Munich.⁵ The poet Hanns Johst was an enthusiastic admirer of the message of the Mythus and an ardent

¹ TWNC 25, 351f (PS-318). Telegram, 23.6.1938 (BA: NS 8/199, 17).

² Rosenberg to Gauleiter (Wagner, Lohse, Koch, et al.), 2.12.1943 (BA: NS 8/157, 1,57,85).

³ A group of Nazi doctors once even dedicated an ancient oak to Rosenberg as a symbol of their sympathy with his ideological struggle! VB, 4.6.1935 (BA: NS 15/169).

⁴ Akademische Blätter (Bonn), 15.4.1928 (BA: NS 8/3, 6f).

⁵ LA, 333. For other indications of Rosenberg's influence in the cultural life of the Third Reich, see the various references to him in J. Wulf (ed.), Kunst und Kultur im Dritten Reich, 5 vols. (Gütersloh, 1963/1964).

defender of 'this encyclopedia of a National Socialist Weltanschauung' in the face of its ecclesiastical critics.¹

Other admirers included professor Paul Krannhals, H.F.S. Günther the racial theorist, and philosophy professors Hermann Schwarz and Wolfgang Schultz. The latter, along with several other academics, sent Rosenberg materials to help in his fight against the Catholic Dunkelmänner.² In 1935 the Rector at Tübingen wrote that he was also opposed to obscurantists of every shade. At the request of the Rector and Senate of Halle to support the university by conveying the Nazi Weltanschauung to students, Rosenberg opened each semester with a lecture until the War interrupted this practice. Nobel Prize winning physicist Philipp Lenard of Heidelberg corresponded with him and expressed great appreciation for the Mythus.³ Professor Alfred Baeumler, author of various respected philosophical works, edited Rosenberg's works and wrote a booklet on the Mythus. It is of course possible that he and others were interested in furthering their careers, but that this was their sole motivation—that they were totally insincere—is difficult to believe, given the fact that they were already established scholars, and in some cases expressed their admiration, before 1933.

Rosenberg's thought was a serious subject for doctoral dissertations in the philosophical and theological faculties. This is not remarkable when one considers that Professor Erich Rothacker, in a standard text, mentioned in all seriousness the contributions of Hitler and Rosenberg to the philosophy of history.⁴

Hitler Youth leader Schirach testified at Nuremberg that Rosenberg had little

¹Das Schwarze Korps, 19.6.1935 (BA: NS 8/7, 144).

²Cf. correspondence in BA: NS 8/15, 225ff, 260ff; 8/16, 155ff.

³Lenard to Rosenberg, 18.1.1936/22.9.1938 (CDJC: CXLV-625, 594). Cf. Prof. Focke to Rosenberg, 11.5.1935 (BA: NS 8/13, 210).

⁴E. Rothacker, Geschichtsphilosophie (Munich, 1934), 145-148, Handbuch der Philosophie IV (ed. A. Baeumler/M. Schröter). Cf. the Rosenberg references in L. Poliakov/J. Wulf (ed.), Das Dritte Reich und seine Denker (Berlin, 1959).

influence within the Hitler-Jugend (HJ). But at the same time he testified that in his formative years he himself had studied Chamberlain's Grundlagen and listened to Rosenberg. He admitted that Rosenberg had influenced many people with philosophical interests. When confronted with evidence for his propaganda on behalf of the Mythus, as well as for the anti-Christian outlook of the Hitler Youth leaders, his answers were evasive and unconvincing.¹ The evidence is incontrovertible. Schirach consistently invited Rosenberg to speak at Hitler Youth functions, attacked the opponents of his religious views, and openly declared that Rosenberg's way was also the way of German youth.² As late as March 1944, he invited the Nazi ideologist to speak to an Adolf Hitler Schule since he himself hoped to be able to be there for the occasion.³

Rosenberg was very popular in Hitler Youth circles, received thunderous applause at HJ rallies, and was invited to speak at numerous HJ functions until 1944. In early 1934 the director of the Reich school for HJ leaders congratulated him: 'With great delight the Reichsjugendführerschule of the Hitler-Jugend has just found out that you have been commissioned to supervise all education in the Party'.⁴ When in 1934 local Hitler Youth leaders sent a sketch for the title page of the Mythus, Rosenberg was glad to see such interest in HJ circles. A district Hitler-Jugend leader reported that his Marienburg speech had been extraordinarily well received by the entire HJ leadership and among the youth of the Murmark, requesting 500 to 600 copies for HJ leaders. In 1935 Rosenberg sent, upon request, 50 copies of the Mythus and 200 of his Dunkelmänner to the HJ national camp. One youth

¹PHKV (23./24.5.1946) 14, 406,500,522ff.

²H. Müller (ed.), Katholische Kirche und Nationalsozialismus, Dokumente 1930-1935 (Munich, 1960), 312. Cf. VB, 3.6.1935.

³Schirach to Rosenberg, 23.3.1944 (BA: NS 8/158, 202). Cf. Cecil, Myth, 141.

⁴Minke to Rosenberg, 13.2.1934 (BA: NS 8/148, 203). For additional evidence, see BA: NS 8/212, 5,23,118,42; 8/45, 164ff; 8/72, 33.

bought a copy of the Mythus with his own money, but his father burnt it, and Rosenberg sent Schirach a new copy for him. In 1938 a group of national HJ leaders assured Rosenberg of their comradeship, loyalty, and support in his struggle for a truly German, Nazi culture.¹

One could cite additional evidence for Rosenberg's popularity with the youth of the Third Reich. One of his devotees, the youthful author of a 1933 introduction to his life and work, wrote that, in view of the confusing chaos facing youth, the Mythus would be the future confession of all German youth.² There is a very interesting eyewitness report of a group of young men from the Arbeitsdienst who went to great lengths to get to Heiligenstadt in 1935 to hear Rosenberg speak to 30,000 people in reply to his ecclesiastical critics: 'Everybody wanted to see the man standing at the center of the enemies' agitation and wanted to hear him speak'. Half of all those in attendance were between 16 and 25. These were the ones enthused by the speaker. 'This youth stands by Rosenberg'. There was scorn for one man in his mid-fifties who would not change his mind. 'The enthusiasm expressed during and after Rosenberg's speech was merely an expression of how we felt: the fight of our leaders is to be our battle as well.'³ In 1940 sixteen young people wrote that they had spent 18 evenings together studying the ideas of the Mythus.⁴

Until 1934 Rosenberg did not have close ties to the SA, due primarily to

¹BA: NS 8/212, 153f; 8/148, 175; 8/104, 149; 8/148, 78; 8/104, 146.

²Hart, Rosenberg, 14,5f.

³Wahrenholz, Der Arbeitsmann ist ein politischer Kämpfer, n.d. (BA: NS 8/152, 125-128). Cf. BA: NS 8/74, 8/75 and 8/83.

⁴BA: NS 8/15, 202. Axmann, Schirach's successor as HJ leader, was also a Rosenberg admirer (LA, 211) and asked him to speak to HJ leaders (BA: NS 8/212, 23).

mutual antipathy between him and Ernst Röhm. But after the Blood Purge he took a special interest in the SA and enjoyed the respect and confidence of its leadership, as well as its rank and file. In fact, immediately after the purge an SA man, purporting to be writing for his comrades, expressed his confidence by sending Rosenberg a message for Hitler so as to be sure the Fuehrer received it. In 1937 six SA men built a small hut at their own expense in a Siegerland forest and named it after Rosenberg. It was to be a place where they, living in the citadel of Protestant piety, could further educate themselves ideologically in the meaning of the Mythus. 'The name of the hut already attracts many Volksgenossen who desire to fathom the meaning of this work'.¹ In the late 1930's and early 1940's Rosenberg often appeared at SA rallies; and his articles in SA publications, where he enjoyed great veneration as the ideologist of Nazism. Throughout this period Rosenberg enjoyed the cordial friendship of Röhm's successor, Victor Lutze, who was a loyal supporter of ideological indoctrination and Rosenberg's anti-Christian emphasis on the Nazi Weltanschauung.²

Rosenberg also exercised considerable influence in SS and police circles. True, he did quarrel with Himmler in the late 1930's and early 1940's over the SS's mixing in ideological matters and its inordinate police powers. Himmler, likewise jealous for his own domain, sometimes disagreed with Rosenberg's judgement and had difficulty working with him. At the beginning of the Third Reich Himmler submitted to his official authority in ideological affairs since it supposedly represented that of Hitler. Only later did he feel strong enough to exert himself in this area. And even here, according to Himmler, the differences only extended to issues of policy—that is, the

¹Kreisleiter to Rosenberg, 29.12.1937 (BA: NS 8/153, 232ff); Schinstedt to Rosenberg, 3.7.1934 (BA: NS 8/109, 125ff).

²Cf. correspondence in BA: NS 8/210, 7,50f; 8/211, 178,174f. Cf. also Der SA-Mann, 15.1.1938 (BA: NS 8/7, 95); plus SA man E. Küster's 1940 dissertation on ideological indoctrination in the SA (see General Bibliography).

application of Nazi ideology—not to the basic character of the ideology itself.¹ In fact, the SS leader always maintained ideological solidarity with Rosenberg. In the early days the two men spoke together along anti-Christian lines at huge Party rallies for farmers. Although Rosenberg had nothing but criticism for Himmler in his memoirs, he recalled with satisfaction a conversation at Goslar: 'Our ideas likewise ran along similar lines. Also Himmler always stressed that his outlook was close to mine'.² In early 1943 the two men met at Posen and maintained the necessity of co-operation. Himmler stressed this in view of the ideological struggle against Christianity to come after the War. The two had not flinched in matters of Weltanschauung for 20 years and would have to work together.³ True to his profession, Himmler consistently invited Rosenberg to speak at SS functions; while the latter consistently wished Himmler success in his work in view of their common sentiments and struggle.⁴

Thus it is not surprising that the SS and police were very receptive to Rosenberg's ideas. SS periodicals regularly printed his articles and speeches. The Mythus was praised as the spiritual property of millions of Germans in the face of obscurantist opponents.⁵ A 1934 letter probably illustrates the attitude of the SS rank and file: 'Our enemies are the wealthy members of the so-called "black intelligentsia", but we are simple members of the SS without means, who...have the feeling that everything which our comrade

¹Himmler to Rosenberg, 31.10.1935 (BA: NS 8/182, 253).

²LA, 198. Cf. J. Ackermann, Heinrich Himmler als Ideologe (Göttingen, 1970), 75n, on the great significance of the Mythus in SS indoctrination.

³Diary, 25./26.1.1943 (Monat, 38). Cf. the Wisliceny report on Himmler's fanatical, anti-Semitic, religious Weltanschauung and Rosenberg's role in its formation (CDJC: XXXCIII-67) in L. Poliakov/J. Wulf (ed.), Das Dritte Reich und die Juden (Berlin, 1955), 91f.

⁴Billig, Rosenberg, 323-325, 62-64.

⁵Cf. Das Schwarze Korps. 1.5.1935 (BA: NS 15/145a); Cecil, Myth, 156f, 118f.

Rosenberg says and writes is correct and German'.¹ In 1938 an SS leader was grateful for 200 copies of the Dunkelmänner previously requested at the demand of his men. The brochures would help bring them up to the ideological standard demanded by the Reichsführer SS.² At Nuremberg Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Hoess admitted having read the Mythus as well as many of Rosenberg's speeches.³

As for the police, the Gestapo generally supported the official Nazi ideologist. The Sicherheitsdienst (SD) simply identified opposition to Rosenberg and the Mythus with opposition to Nazi ideology as such, and Heydrich sent him periodical police reports on the activities of his ecclesiastical opponents.⁴

There was always mutual respect between Rosenberg and Nazi Agriculture Minister Walther Darré. The Nazi ideologist had high regard for Darré's book, Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nordischen Rasse (1929); and the latter expressed appreciation for the Mythus. The two spoke together at Party rallies for farmers, and Darré consistently expressed his desire to work together on behalf of the furtherance of the Nazi Weltanschauung.⁵ His successor Riecke wrote in 1944: 'Your address at the ideological celebration in Prague has found enthusiastic support among all the country people'.⁶

¹Killian to Rosenberg, 9.5.1934 (BA: NS 8/14, 139).

²Dietz to Rosenberg, 14.5./27.7.1938 (BA: NS 8/211, 27f).

³Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (16.4.1946), 246.

⁴Cf. Heydrich to Rosenberg, 17.5.1935 (BA: NS 8/13, 233); Boberach, Berichte, 82ff. For additional evidence of police support, see Chap. 6.

⁵Darré to Rosenberg, 6.5.1940 (BA: NS 8/173, 45). Cf. Rosenberg, PT, 136, 35; LA, 180f; Mythus, 86n; Cecil, Myth, 166.

⁶Riecke to Rosenberg, 27.1.1944 (BA: NS 8/173, 12).

Propaganda Minister Goebbels seems to have had genuine respect for Rosenberg in the early years of the Nazi Movement.¹ But as time wore on, jealous disagreement prevailed, and Goebbels had only contempt for the dogmatic, impractical, incompetent bungler whom he called 'almost Rosenberg'.² His attitude toward the Mythus was ambivalent: on one occasion he expressed admiration for Rosenberg's achievement; on another he called it 'ideological belching'.³ In the 1930's the two men constantly squabbled over the application of Nazi ideology, especially in the cultural sphere. During the War Goebbels often mocked the Nazi ideologist in his diary. 'After the War we can talk about ideological education. At present we are living our ideology and don't have to be taught it'.⁴ But Goebbels' cynical sarcasm spared no one but Hitler, and it is probable that his antipathy to Rosenberg was due more to jealousy than to substantial ideological disagreement. At any rate, Goebbels' sarcasm was never reflected in his propaganda and did not reach the masses, who were only told of the Fuehrer's appreciation for Rosenberg as a statesman.⁵

With regard to other Nazis holding high office in the Third Reich, Interior Minister Frick supported Rosenberg's ideology and his campaign against the Church.⁶ Hans Frank, Hitler's lawyer and Governor General of Poland, requested Rosenberg in 1939 to put all German officials for Poland through a four-week course in Nazi ideology. Their relationship remained cordial through the

¹Das Tagebuch von Joseph Goebbels 1925/26 (ed. H. Heiber, Stuttgart, 1960), 87 (6.7.1926).

²A. Krebs, Tendenzen und Gestalten der NSDAP: Erinnerungen an die Frühzeit der NSDAP (Stuttgart, 1959), 166.

³Wiener Library Bulletin (WLB) 7 (1953), 33.

⁴The Goebbels Diaries (ed. L. Lochner, New York, 1961), 122 (27.2.1942), passim. Cf. Speer, Erinnerungen, 139.

⁵W. Boelcke (ed.), Die geheimen Goebbels-Konferenzen im Reichspropaganda-ministerium 1939-1943 (Munich, 1969), 253 (17.11.1941).

⁶Cf. L'Osservatore Romano, 9.7.1935 (BA: NS 8/74, 52ff); correspondence with Rosenberg (BA: NS 8/169, 34, 80).

end of 1944. At Nuremberg Frank experienced a conversion to Catholicism and confessed that the things he and Rosenberg had said made genocide possible.¹ Munitions Minister Speer, like others at Nuremberg, did not appear to have been ideologically-oriented but still paid lip-service to the Nazi Weltanschauung in his communications to Rosenberg. Reichsbank President Funk expressed his respect and that of his subordinates; he made a special point of thanking Rosenberg for his 1940 Paris speech, truly 'a document of world history'.²

At Nuremberg Goering played the role of the unideological cynic having joined the Party simply because it was revolutionary not because of the 'ideological stuff'.³ Throughout the Third Reich Goering had claimed to be a Christian, and he regularly attended the Protestant chapel in the Nuremberg prison. Yet US Army chaplain Henry Gerecke refused him communion in the end because of his lack of repentance and unaltered cynical attitude toward basic Christian doctrines.⁴

According to Rosenberg, Hitler once told him that the Mythus had won him at least one enthusiastic convert: Goering. Goering did congratulate the author and send out many gift copies. On the other hand, it was reported that Goering once characterized the book as 'junk' (Schmarren).⁵ But such statements, like similar remarks of Hitler, doubtless reflected tactical considerations.

During the early years Goering had been critical of Rosenberg in Party

¹Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (19.-22.4.1946), 257. Cf. PT, 98 (24.9.1939); BA: NS 8/157, 104-109.

²Funk to Rosenberg, 14.12.1940 (BA: NS 8/143, 50); PT, 85 (May 1939). Cf. Speer to Rosenberg, 12.1.1944 (BA: NS 8/158, 80).

³Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (11.12.1945), 66; cf. 368, 194.

⁴Ibid. (14.10.1946; 2.2.1946), 396f, 125, etc. For Pastor Gerecke's own account, see 'I Walked to the Gallows with the Nazi Chiefs', Saturday Evening Post, 1.9.1951.

⁵L. Schwerin von Krosigk, Es geschah in Deutschland (Stuttgart, 1951), 262. Hitler's comment is found in Wie der Mythus entstand, Nov. 1935 (BA: NS 8/22, 71f). Hitler may have been lying, but it is more likely that Goering's expressed viewpoint on the Mythus reflected at any given time his conception of Hitler's ambivalent viewpoint (see Chap. 8).

circles. But from the late 1930's on their relationship was very cordial indeed, and he expressed sympathy with the Party philosopher's anti-Christian views. For example, Goering praised Rosenberg's anti-clerical speech at the Nuremberg Party Congress in 1938 and requested a leather-bound copy as a keepsake. He read Rosenberg's essay Weltanschauung und Religion, and the two had lengthy discussions on religion and philosophy. In August 1939 Goering removed all chaplains from the Luftwaffe, and later that year fully supported Rosenberg's attempt to obtain appointment as Hitler's Reich Minister for the ideological conduct of the War: 'You are after all our theorist' (Programmatiker).¹ For the remainder of the War the Reichsmarschall enthusiastically supported all facets of Rosenberg's ideological warfare, especially the indoctrination of the Armed Services:

I am glad that you are preparing and carrying out the ideological and political indoctrination in the Wehrmacht to this extent, and would not want to neglect to express to you the fact that I am in complete agreement with your viewpoint and also with the manner in which it is being carried out.²

Given Goering's outlook, it is not surprising that Rosenberg had significant opportunities to speak to Luftwaffe officers. Three examples from 1944 may serve to illustrate. The commander of the Luftkriegsakademie requested a lecture on the ideological difference between the Nazis and their enemies. He asked Rosenberg since it was important that a name personality give a clear, comprehensive, and intellectual presentation devoid of propaganda. The commander of another Luftwaffe school was anxious for him to speak to squadron and group commanders so that they could spread the Nazi Weltanschauung upon returning to the front. Another commander was grateful for Rosenberg's ideological speeches to his aviators. These speeches were also a weapon in the struggle. 'I may assure you, Herr Reichsminister, that we veterans of the German fighter force have recognized our goal and will give

¹Diary, 5.10.1939 (PT, 102); 10.10.1938 (Monat, 32); 22.8.1939 (PT, 91; Monat, 32f); 3.12.1939 (PT, 109). Cf. Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 660.

²Goering to Rosenberg, 3.1.1944 (BA: NS 8/167, 4). Cf. BA: NS 8/167, 66, 97; 8/129, 72.

our all for it'.¹

There is little evidence in Rosenberg's files that he had much influence in the German Navy. Admiral Raeder was not himself an enthusiastic devotee of Nazi ideology. Nevertheless, he believed that the German people had chosen Nazism as its ideology and invited the Nazi ideologist to speak to naval officers at Kiel in 1935.² During the War his successor Doenitz was far keener on ideological indoctrination. Nevertheless Doenitz tried to maintain at Nuremberg that he was diametrically opposed to Rosenberg and that less than one percent of his naval officers had ever read the Mythus.³

As for the Army, Rosenberg was well aware that the Officer Corps on the whole was originally skeptical of Nazi ideology. The Churches provided anti-Mythus literature for officers and men, and there is evidence of opposition to the Mythus and its anti-Christianity in the Army.⁴

On the other hand, Rosenberg was continuously invited to address officers from 1933 to 1945. As early as October 1933 he was invited to address active and retired general staff officers on National Socialism. In 1934 the Reichswehrministerium requested permission to publish and send out copies of a Rosenberg speech to every Army technical school with a view to its serving as a guidance for instruction. In 1939 the Wehrmacht requested copies of a speech to officers at Bad Tölz. Meanwhile Rosenberg had accepted speaking engagements from Defence Minister Blomberg and Field Marshall Reichenau,

¹Letters to Rosenberg, 15.9./16.6/16.10.1944 (BA: NS 8/177, 47,72,33f). The two letters after 20 July 1944 may have been motivated by fear; but if so, it is still significant that the officers thought that by requesting Rosenberg to speak on Nazi ideology, they were protecting themselves.

²Rosenberg to Raeder, 16.8.1935 (BA: NS 8/154, 248,247). Cf. Nazi Conspiracy and Agression (NCA, Washington, 1946-1948) 7,154f.

³Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (16.4/2.5.1946), 248,288. Cf. TWC 35, 105 (D-443).

⁴Gerland to Rosenberg, 12.12.1936 (BA: NS 8/178, 130ff); LA, 217,236; Cecil, Myth, 132f.

and sent them copies of his Mythus and Dunkelmänner. He normally avoided religion in addressing officers, but Blomberg once complimented his statement that Christianity was enobled simply by the fact that Germans had believed in it. After a pre-war speech to Kluge's officers in Münster, the general remarked: 'Herr Reichsleiter, allow me a frank word. You were portrayed to us as a particularly fanatical man, and I confess that I had some misgivings. But what you said is so interesting and well-founded that I am very grateful to you'.¹

These speaking engagements increased with the coming of war. Before the offensive in the spring of 1940 there were several talks before officers in the West at the request of Army Commander Brauchitsch. In the autumn, Commander Keitel agreed to recognize Rosenberg's authority to carry out a program of systematic ideological indoctrination, whereby he was to provide and approve materials and speakers, with his judgment as final. For all practical purposes this authority and program existed only on paper, due to the long-standing tradition that each commander was responsible for troop morale and Army antipathy for anything smacking of political commissars.² Yet in the Russian campaign Rosenberg's ideas on subhuman, Asiatic, Jewish Bolshevism were clearly discernible in the orders of commanders Reichenau and Manstein.³

In October 1943 Rosenberg could report that in recent months he and his office had held 1,500 talks before officers.⁴ With the introduction of the

¹LA, 237,231. Cf. correspondence in BA: NS 8/99, 31; 8/108, 35; 8/148, 249; 8/181, 113; 8/154, 239ff; 8/65, 188f.

²Cf. V. Berghahn, 'NSDAP und gestige Führung der Wehrmacht 1939-1943', VJHZG 17 (1969), 28ff; LA, 250f; BA: NS 8/129, 23ff. Yet Keitel had nothing against the Protestant Church's sending literature to men in the field (BA: NS 8/176, 77).

³NCA A, 826-828 (PS-4060); TMWC 35, 84-86 (D-411).

⁴Bad Schachen, 13.10.1943 (BA: NS 8/68, 32).

NS-Führungsoffizier in early 1944, his influence increased somewhat when a zealous Rosenberg-admirer, General Reinecke, was put in charge of the NSFO's. Reinecke was concerned that the original agreement with Keitel actually be put in force, and constantly called upon Rosenberg and his assistants to speak and provide materials. The NSFO courses were not always appreciated. One in early 1944 turned out to be a disaster when a majority of the officers rejected the program. But when it was put in the hands of a fervent anti-Christian colonel, interest was apparently restored.¹ In June 1944 Rosenberg spoke to generals at Sonthofen along with Keitel, Himmler, Speer, and Reinecke. At the end of 1944, motivated perhaps by fear of Hitler, the commanders of Army Group A and Army Group Center on the Eastern Front requested his services.²

The vast majority of those in uniform probably had little active interest in Rosenberg's ideology. Yet considering that many servicemen formerly had been active in Party organizations such as the Hitler Youth, one would expect some interest in Rosenberg. Such interest is reflected in letters received from servicemen. A former Gauschulungsleiter, now a lieutenant, wrote: 'It goes without saying that I grasp every opportunity to work among the troops in the direction of our Weltanschauung. To my great joy I am fully and completely supported in this undertaking by my superiors up to the division commander'.³

One commander wrote that the Mythus, which he was not merely reading but studying, rested continuously on his desk. Eventually there was a special

¹Besprechungen, 14.1./4.2./13.3./11.9.1944 (BA: NS 8/132, 1ff, 11, 15, 95). Reinecke to Rosenberg, 11.3.1944 (WL: NO-5666/7).

²LA, 251, 224. Cf. correspondence in BA: NS 8/174, 7, 29, 3; 8/155, 90. Again even assuming the fear motive, it is significant that the generals thought that by calling on Rosenberg they would be protecting themselves from Hitler's wrath.

³Haselwander to Rosenberg, 27.11.1939 (BA: NS 8/159, 107). Rosenberg replied that he had received many such letters (BA: NS 8/159, 108).

edition sent to servicemen. Some indicated their own interest in the Mythus, others reported that Rosenberg's ideas were passionately discussed among their comrades.¹ One veteran in a hospital expressed gratitude in the name of many comrades. 'Evenings we often sat together and discussed you. Thus we thank you for your works and hope to be able to read many more!'.² Another lamented that there were so few interested comrades. A former theology student, convinced of the Mythus, was trying to convince his comrades, but many were still bound to the Church. Finally, a young severely wounded captain on the point of physical and psychological collapse for three years, confessed that it was the truth and faith of the Mythus which had finally brought him out of depression and despair. 'Your work even in perhaps this most difficult and certainly fateful time of suffering for the German people means light and strength for us who are younger'.³

MYTHUS NULLIUS MOMENTI?

In view of Rosenberg's public image, role in the Nazi Party, and reputation in the Third Reich it is very unlikely that hardly anyone paid attention to his speeches, articles, and books. Even if there were those who took him with a grain of salt, there had to be many with some degree of interest in his views. That no one read Rosenberg's books, that the Mythus was of no significance in the Nazi Movement, are rather shaky propositions.

Former Gauleiter Alfred Krebs reported that many Party leaders criticized the Mythus when it appeared in 1930. But this may have been due more to personal jealousy, or to the politically embarrassing anti-Christianity of the book, than to substantial ideological differences. At any rate Krebs,

¹Letters to Rosenberg, 26.12.1940; 17.4.1941; 11.1.1944; 31.7.1940; 23.8.1940 (BA: NS 8/159, 37ff, 217, 183, 160ff, 150).

²Michalak to Rosenberg, 18.6.1944 (BA: NS 8/160, 12f).

³Paul to Rosenberg, 25.9.1944 (BA: NS 8/15, 73f). Cf. BA: NS 8/160, 8, 57f; 8/159, 73, 100, passim.

who sympathized with the Strasser brothers and had no love for Rosenberg personally, indicated that Rosenberg was widely read in the NSDAP. Krebs himself had read his articles in the VB and the Weltkampf 'a dozen times'.¹

Rosenberg's writing gave him the reputation of the Party intellectual and thus helped contradict its anti-intellectual image in the minds of many during the Kampfzeit.² A 1931 letter to Rosenberg indicated that, while one local Party leader in Bavaria was glad that Hitler would soon have to drop Rosenberg, the author pledged his support on behalf of the 'irreplaceable intellectual forces of the Party'.³ An observer no less critical than Theodor Heuss wrote in 1932 that the Mythus was without a doubt the most assiduous, serious, and consistent Nazi work. The book contained parts which, when one disregarded the fantasy and pedantic approach, were both interesting and informative.⁴

The sale of Rosenberg's books, given the nature of their subject matter, reached phenomenal proportions. By 1944 the Mythus (1930) had sold some 1,100,000 copies, despite the fact that in 1929 Munich's Bruckmann Verlag, Chamberlain's publisher, had refused it on the ground that it would not sell.⁵ An die Dunkelmänner unserer Zeit (1935), Rosenberg's reply to his Catholic critics, sold some 300,000 copies in the first month, and by 1942 close to 900,000; its counterpart, Protestantische Rompilger (1937), some 600,000.

¹Krebs, Erinnerungen, 177-179. Cf. Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 84, 96f for the fact that Rosenberg's books were taken seriously in Party circles.

²Cf. Hessische Landeszeitung, 9.9.1937 (BA: NS 8/7, 125). This was a common observation in the Third Reich.

³Schilling (?) to Rosenberg, 19.2.1931 (BA: NS 8/15, 192).

⁴T. Heuss, Hitler's Weg (Tübingen, 1968), 34, 109f.

⁵Bruckmann to Rosenberg, 3.4.1929 (CDJC: CXLV-591). LA, 137.

By 1942 his commentary on the Party Program—Wesen, Grundsätze und Ziele der NSDAP—managed to sell well over 800,000 copies.¹

None of the rest of the Nazi author's works approached these sales. But there were other means by which his ideas were propagated. For example, Der Schulungsbrief, a monthly used for indoctrination and strongly influenced by Rosenberg, had in 1935 a circulation of some 1,100,000.² Rosenberg's articles and speeches were regularly carried by newspapers and periodicals with large circulations. His major speeches were carried over the radio, not to mention the constant parroting of his ideas by others in the mass media and within the Party. Even if hardly anyone ever read the Mythus, this would be no proof that Rosenberg's ideas were without influence in the Third Reich. Rosenberg's thought was everywhere in what was once the electric atmosphere of the Nazi regime. One could as well maintain that Marx's ideas are without effect in a Communist regime for those who have never read Das Kapital.³

In substantiating an optimistic assessment of his influence, Rosenberg appealed to 'many moving letters' of appreciation received from all over the Reich. Many had been awakened and attained inner peace and liberation; having lost the old, they had received a new meaning in life through the Mythus. It had articulated that which many only dimly felt, or did not dare to think. For millions, who would not otherwise have been awakened, the hypnosis of traditional religion was gone. 'A look through these letters will be of great historical interest someday'.⁴

¹Honorarberechnung, 11.4.1942 (BA: NS 8/144, 16). Cf. Mitteilungen zur Weltanschaulichen Lage, 5.6.1935 (BA: NS 15/169).

²Diary, 24.2.1935 (PT, 72).

³This insight is from one who knew the Nazi atmosphere firsthand, Prof. W. Kühneth (Conversation, 25.11.1975; Deposition, 24.2.1976).

⁴Diary, 10.5./19.1.1940 (PT, 140, 118f).

No doubt Rosenberg had these letters in mind when he told prison psychologist G.M. Gilbert at Nuremberg that he had not written books in vain. No one had ever been forced to read the Mythus, but he had been surprised to see how many people, in all walks of life, actually had read it.¹

Several hundred of these letters have been preserved in Rosenberg's files.² It is obvious, from gaps, that not all are there. These letters make interesting reading. Insofar as the letters are sincere and representative, they partially substantiate their recipient's claim. At the very least, they indicate that there were some who, in fact, took the author of the Mythus very seriously. It is not possible here to present a detailed analysis of these letters, simply a few comments on their general character and a few representative examples of their content.

The letters are, on the whole, full of expressions of respect, appreciation, and praise for Rosenberg's ideological work in general, for his speeches and writings, especially the Mythus. Some may be suspected of ulterior motives: for example, when flattery is coupled with requests for free books, or for help in getting a job or publishing a manuscript. But most seem genuine. Only a very few letters are critical in nature, but there are some. These either criticize Rosenberg's religious views in general, or raise questions as to the validity or meaning of various details in his writings. Sometimes approval and criticism are expressed side by side with suggestions for improvements. The letters reflect a great variety in the background of their authors. They stem from rich and poor, old and young, educated and uneducated. As might be anticipated, the educational level of most of those who write appears to be well above average. Many letters

¹Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (25./26.5.1946), 321,325.

²See BA: NS 8/13-16, four volumes of letters devoted exclusively to the Mythus. There are many other letters of appreciation scattered throughout Rosenberg's correspondence in BA: NS 8/99ff. A few are to be found at the CDJC in Paris. Still others may be located in the archives of the Yad Vashem Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem.

reveal significant religious backgrounds and interests; they express disillusionment and antagonism with regard to established religion, whether Catholic or Protestant. In summary, the general impression given is that Rosenberg had a definite popular following: he was deeply appreciated by certain people in all walks of life, chiefly as a symbol of intellectual National Socialism, of rabid anti-clericalism, and of an alternative to traditional religion, with emphasis more on the negative than on the positive significance of the symbol.

Many typical examples of enthusiastic expressions of appreciation for the Mythus, of loyalty to its author and to the Nazi Weltanschauung, could be adduced. Perhaps it would be most interesting to cite examples of admiration couched in religious language.

A certain Dr. Günther, school superintendent and member of the Nazi teachers' federation (NSLB), confessed that the Mythus had become his gospel. For some correspondents it was a new Bible.¹ Others acclaimed its author a prophet and stressed the need for a popularized version, for instance a catechism, to get the message to the people.² One man maintained that, of all those who read the book, only one third understood it, another third merely followed the fashion, and the rest were serious but could not understand it without help. Another rejoiced that it was becoming the myth of the people. A Christian critic lamented that it was being devoured as a new religion by many, especially the uncritical youth. A professor was wrongly listed in the index as a Jew; since the book was in the hands of all culturally and artistically interested circles, his career was being ruined.³ Others indicated that they were spreading the word. Many were inspired to creative activity and sent their own thoughts in the form of books, poems, dramas, novels, or essays.

¹BA: NS 8/13, 153, 168, 289.

²BA: NS 8/14, 88-90, 208; 8/15, 211; 8/111, 112.

³BA: NS 8/15, 236, 179; 8/13, 141; 8/16, 86f.

Some correspondents attributed their allegiance to Hitler and the NSDAP to Rosenberg's influence, usually stressing his intellectualism and anti-clericalism. One man confessed becoming a Nazi through reading the Mythus: 'I have to thank you above all for the fact that I have become a National Socialist "to the core" and probably do not need to assure you that I prefer your writings in my study'.¹ A theology student wrote that he had been moved to listen to the Nazi Movement for the first time by one of Rosenberg's speeches in 1931. A medical doctor wrote in 1933: 'I "swallowed" the great deal of red in the Hitler banner on the evening that I heard Alfred Rosenberg speak in the Heidelberg castle'.² One man wrote that his anti-Christianity had kept him from becoming an official member of the Party in that he had been plus royaliste que le roi; only after reading the Mythus could he come to a synthesis between National Socialism and anti-Christianity. An engineer confessed that he had come to complete trust in Hitler only after the latter had entrusted Rosenberg with supervising the Party's work of ideological liberation in the direction of a new anti-Catholic community (Gemeinschaft). Now he felt free to join the NSDAP, enroll his boy in the Hitler Youth, and support the cause with all he had (mit Gut und Blut).³

Despite all the contemporary evidence for Rosenberg's significance, the defendants at the Nuremberg Trial gave the impression that he was not taken seriously in the Third Reich. Schirach swore to prison psychologist D.M. Kelley that no one in the Party had ever really read the Mythus. He had himself made a survey of Hitler Youth leaders and found that, while all possessed a copy, none had been able to wade through the book. He added sarcastically that since every Nazi had to buy a copy, 'Rosenberg should go down in history as the man who sold more copies of a book no one ever read than any other

¹CDJC: CXLV-599, published in Poliakov/Wulf, Das Dritte Reich und seine Denker, 257.

²BA: NS 8/13, 1f; 8/15, 22.

³BA: NS 8/15, 95-97; 8/103, 193.

author'.¹ Later Schirach stated on oath that he had begun to read the Mythus, but never quite finished it, adding that the HJ leaders had certainly not read it. As the other defendants filed out of the courtroom, prison psychologist Gilbert asked each one if he had read the Mythus. None of them had, and most of them laughed at it, with only Streicher maintaining that it was a very profound book, only a little too deep for him.²

In assessing this testimony we must remember that Nazi ideology was discredited at Nuremberg to the point that no one but Rosenberg and Streicher wanted to be associated with it. Moreover, while ostensibly the defendants were not on trial for their beliefs, the prosecution put great stress upon their ideology as evidence of motive and intent in a criminal case involving conspiracy. Thus denying any serious belief in Nazi ideology was part of one's self-defense. Furthermore, they were, on the whole, committed to the principle of not testifying to the detriment of each other. This may explain, in part at least, their reluctance to attribute influence to Rosenberg in the face of the prosecution's insistence that he was an essential part of the conspiracy. Schirach was obviously trying to save himself, Rosenberg, and German youth from the charge of anti-Semitism and anti-Christianity when he testified that the Nazi ideologist had little influence.

As a matter of fact, the defendants argued among themselves over Rosenberg's influence. For instance, Hans Fritzsche stressed the importance of the Party's anti-Semitic ideology and insisted, over Schirach's protest, that the fanatical Rosenberg was the father, indeed the high priest, of Nazi ideology. And Franz von Papen, who had always opposed the Nazi's anti-Christianity, vehemently maintained, against Doenitz, that Rosenberg's ideology had considerable influence in Nazi circles. Yet when Fritzsche later came to testify

¹D.M. Kelley, 22 Cells at Nuremberg (London, 1947), 37.

²Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (24.5.1946), 321; PHKV (24.5.1946) 14,494.

in his own defense, he emphasized the un^{der}ideological character of the Party which he had served, maintaining that 'the theorist Rosenberg was and remained controversial in the Party to the end'.¹

There are two sides to every controversy. There were those who payed no attention to Rosenberg. Nevertheless he did have a significant following in the NSDAP; and the Mythus, not simply the book as such but what it symbolized, played a significant role in the historical reality which was once the Third Reich. Moreover, Rosenberg's thought represented far more than the positive religious thrust of the Mythus. Even Nazis with doubts about a new religion embraced Rosenberg's general völkisch ideology including the anti-Semitism and anti-clericalism of the Mythus. The Nazi phenomenon as a whole cannot be understood aright without taking Rosenberg's Nazi ideology into account, even discounting the mystical religion of the Mythus.

But if Rosenberg's ideology really was significant in the Nazi Movement, what happened to it after the fall of the regime? With the fall of the Third Reich the vaunted Nazi Weltanschauung seemed to have evaporated into thin air to the point that Nazi ideology seemed ridiculous. No one put the objection better than Hjalmar Schacht: 'Had there ever been a Nazi ideology, there would have had to have been at least some of it left in the minds of men after the collapse'. Rosenberg was supposed to have been its official herald and defender but never gave it any systematic presentation, certainly not in the Mythus. 'It is a totally amateurish, immature, incoherent book which scarcely a few dozen men read through and which no one understood'. Fourteen years of struggle and twelve of rule ought to have brought out an intellectual side to National Socialism, but there was none. 'Hitlerism was a reaction to the economic need and the mental depression after losing the First World War,...a revolt against the incapacity of the Democratic governments, nothing more.' The Nazi Weltanschauung so-called was a mere

¹PHKV (26.6.1946) 17, 154; Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (16.4.1946), 248.

window-dressing to give the impression of some sort of idealism.¹

There is ample evidence to refute the view that Nazism was nothing more than political and economic despair, that Nazi ideology was a mere front for the will to power. The answer to the problem of its disappearance lies, in part, in the character and content of Rosenberg's Nazi Weltanschauung, its anti-intellectual and anti-dogmatic religious character, together with its appalling historical results.

The answer also lies in the consideration that we cannot read history backwards; that is, assume that because Nazi ideology is meaningless now, indeed was so right after the collapse of the regime, it never had any significance during the Third Reich. It is necessary to appreciate the peculiar atmosphere of the Nazi euphoria. We must remember that it is very difficult for us to recapture the atmosphere of the time; and that, according to the astute observation of the first chief of the Gestapo, 'in the Third Reich atmosphere was everything'. Rudolf Diels went on to comment that, now after the demise of the giant, it is virtually impossible to reconstruct this atmosphere even from contemporary documents and accounts.² Nevertheless such contemporary evidence is the only basis for understanding the historical reality involved and Rosenberg's place in it. Apart from the distinctive atmosphere and mentality of the Third Reich, the problem of Nazism remains an enigma.

Had the Nazis prolonged the atmosphere of the Third Reich by winning the War, we can well imagine what Alfred Rosenberg's place in history might have been. But such was not to be, and the Mythus is dead. Not that it ever lived in all Germans, or even Nazis, during the Third Reich. Many, including some Nazis, were indifferent, and some even actively opposed it.

¹H. Schacht, Abrechnung mit Hitler (Hamburg, 1948), 41f.

²R. Diels, Lucifer ante portas (Stuttgart, 1950), 74.

Nor does the evidence adduced here mean that every Nazi understood or accepted the whole of Rosenberg's ideology. He himself was not under this illusion. Certainly much was hollow rhetoric and empty propaganda, and much is to be explained by the political and psychological 'atmosphere'. Even so, there is enough evidence to indicate that the Mythus once lived in the hearts of many, and to interest the historian in the thought of its creator.

3. THE MYTH OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Nazi Movement laid great stress on Weltanschauung, ideology, philosophical outlook. As the ideologist of Nazism, Alfred Rosenberg was also its chief philosopher. It fell to him to explain Nazi ideology intellectually, to justify the ideology and the political movement philosophically. In this capacity Rosenberg made an essential contribution to the mentality, or mental atmosphere, of the Third Reich.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the philosophy underlying Rosenberg's Nazi ideology. To this end, after sketching the general background of Rosenberg's thought, there follows a discussion of its chief source, namely, the thought of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, then of the philosophy of the Mythus, and finally of the Nazi Weltanschauung as myth. The main point is that Rosenberg's philosophy provides insight into Nazi mentality and activity. Nazism was, for many, a self-conscious myth to be authenticated by action. Embraced to face the modern intellectual and religious crisis, the myth stemmed, negatively, from the Copernican Revolution of Kant; positively, from Chamberlain's myth of race. The myth appealed to those no longer believing in truth, but still needing faith.

THE PROBLEM OF THE 19TH CENTURY

According to Rosenberg's own account, two complementary experiences of his youth, both occurring in 1909 when he was sixteen, were the decisive impulses in the development of his thought. The first experience, his confirmation in the Lutheran Church, had a negative impact; the second, his stumbling upon Chamberlain's Grundlagen des XIX. Jahrhunderts, was the positive impulse which set the course for all his later thought and activity. In reaction to the Church's instruction he said a quiet and unostentatious, but decisive and final, No to the world of the Bible. Chamberlain introduced him to another, alternative view of the world. 'The strongest positive impetus in my youth was Houston Stewart Chamberlain....Another world loomed

before me....And to everything I inwardly said an ever-recurring Yes!.¹

Apart from these experiences it is impossible to understand Rosenberg the man much less his thought. For the basic motive behind all his intellectual and political activity was the earnest desire to come to grips with what Alfred Baeumler, the editor of his works and specialist on Kant and Nietzsche, called the problem of the 19th century. A basic loss of faith was slowly but surely undermining the very foundations of Western civilization, thus weakening modern man's will to pursue creative goals. The youthful Rosenberg reduced the problem to the question of the meaning of the world and of the life of the individual human being. Some, for instance the French, might be content with a skeptical and cynical answer, but not the Germans. For Rosenberg life had to have some meaning. He could not escape Tolstoy's essentially religious question: 'Why am I alive, and how am I to relate myself to my human environment'?²

Whenever the Nazi philosopher spoke of the spiritual forerunners of the Nazi Movement, he usually mentioned three prophets—Nietzsche, Lagarde, and of course Chamberlain—and always in the context of the momentous cultural crisis and collapse to which all three prophetically pointed. Sometimes he also mentioned Wagner and, less frequently, Schopenhauer as progenitors of the Nazi Weltanschauung.³ But neither had a direct or decisive influence upon his own intellectual development. Doubtless much of Wagner's Bayreuth mentality was imbibed indirectly through his son-in-law Chamberlain. Rosenberg read Schopenhauer, closely enough to expend many pages of the Mythus refuting his theory of the will, and probably imbibed his general

¹ Wie der Mythus entstand, Nov. 1935 (BA: NS 8/22, 34-38). Cf. LA, 273f.

² Rosenberg, Erste Aufzeichnungen (hereafter EA), 4.9./21.2.1917 in Schriften und Reden (2 vols., Munich, 1943) Vol. 1, 8,22-23. Cf. S&R 1, lxivf (Baeumler).

³ Cf. Rosenberg, Gestaltung der Idee: Reden und Aufsätze von 1933-1935 (Munich, 1940), 18,29,142,288,384 (hereafter B&B 2 as Vol. 2 of the four-volume series Blut und Ehre). Cf. LA, 93f.

mood of pessimism and voluntarism. Schopenhauer was mentioned perhaps because of his role as the heir of Kant and influence on Wagner and Nietzsche.

Rosenberg claimed to have read Zarathustra, as well as books on Nietzsche, while still in his teens. But he had difficulty personally identifying with Nietzsche. 'Nietzsche's human tragedy was totally foreign to me'.¹ Only much later, about 1930, when the Nazi philosopher was more sure of himself intellectually, did he take up Nietzsche again and begin to comprehend his loneliness. Nietzsche, admittedly, had no positive, formative influence on Rosenberg's intellectual development.²

Nevertheless Nietzsche represented for Rosenberg the most perceptive prophet of that 'great European spiritual and cultural crisis' which was a basic premise of the Mythus. Nietzsche was both the ruthless analyst of Nihilism and the courageous example of an heroic attempt to overcome it by a new order of values. His tragic madness and wild sermonizing about the Übermensch was symbolic of the mad epoch which the Mythus with its new German Menschentyp aimed to replace.³ Moreover, Rosenberg's life purpose was basically Nietzsche's: namely, to lead men beyond atheism and Nihilism by means of a creative and realizable myth, resulting in a new type of humanity, for the sake of the preservation of the species. For without myth in the form of a philosophy of life transcending mere biological life, man would not be able, in the long run, to maintain even his biological existence.⁴

For Rosenberg it was Nietzsche's general outlook, rather than the details

¹LA, 27. Cf. S&R 1, lxvii, where Nietzsche expert Baemler stresses that Nietzsche had no formative influence on Rosenberg.

²Wie der Mythus entstand (BA: NS 8/22, 41f).

³Mythus, 530f; BA: NS 8/37, 177f; B&E 2, 254; LA, 167.

⁴For these themes in Nietzsche, with extensive documentation, see G.A. Morgan, What Nietzsche Means (New York, 1965), 36-38, 47ff, 51ff, 56, 365.

of his philosophy, which anticipated the Nazi worldview. Nietzsche saw that traditional religion was a thing of the past, that science was undoing all faith, that politics was becoming more brutal, while the educated classes worshipped material prosperity and wanted to conceal the general sickness of fragmented Liberal society. His goal was, allegedly, to restore the unity of the German people, a specifically German unity between soul and nature, mind and life, content and form, inner spirit and outer convention.¹

The Nazi philosopher, well aware of Nietzsche's many-sidedness, was silent on his anti-German and anti-völkisch sentiments. Taken as a whole Nietzsche was unsuitable as a foundation for ideological education in the NSDAP and was not to be presented as a direct precursor of Nazism.² In short, Rosenberg instinctively accepted Nietzsche's diagnosis of modern man's sickness, and in principle even his remedy, while recognizing that the specific völkisch content of the Mythus was foreign to Nietzsche.

More important than Nietzsche was well-known orientalist and völkisch theologian Paul de Lagarde, whom Thomas Mann once hailed as the 'praeceptor Germaniae'.³ Lagarde would have been pleased with this title, once reserved for Melancthon; for he conceived of himself as the prophet of a new Germanic faith to replace the Protestant piety of his fathers.

According to Lagarde 19th century Germany, despite all its outward glory, was inwardly experiencing a profound loss of faith with the consequent moral decline, cultural decay, and psychological disunity. Confessional Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, was doomed to extinction because its Jewish

¹Rosenberg, Friedrich Nietzsche (Munich, 1944), 13, etc. Speech at Weimar, 15.10.1944.

²Denkschrift, 10.2.1940 (BA: NS 8/60, 165). Cf. Rosenberg to Bormann, 19.2.1944 (BA: NS 8/190, 160); Trotha to Hürtle, 14.6.1937 (BA: NS 8/151, 60).

³T. Mann, Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen (Berlin, 1919), 262. (Quoted in F. Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair, Berkeley, 1961, 85).

elements were rendered incredible by the advance of modern scientific and historical research. The apologetic attempt to synthesize traditional Christian dogma—the whole mythology of the Church—with modern thought was intellectually dishonest. But, given the nature of man and human society, religion was indispensable. Thus, as an antidote to this spiritual illness, Lagarde prescribed an allegedly anti-universalistic, non-historical national religion, suitable to the modern German. Its specific content was rather vague, boiling down to a kind of political theology centering in the rebirth of the national soul to result in a new political community of believers; its basis, contrary to some, would not be a racial but spiritual. The realization of this political piety would be difficult and not accomplished overnight. But Providence had given a mission to the German nation. In the face of the international Jewish conspiracy and the future challenge of Russia and America, this mission necessitated consolidation in central Europe, a campaign against the Jews, and the colonization of the East.¹

These ideas are reproduced in Rosenberg, who publicly proclaimed Lagarde as a prophet of the Nazi Movement. This 'conservative revolutionary' unveiled both the bankruptcy of the old worldview and the longing for a new ideology. He pointed out the inadequacy of the old religion for this modern age and the necessity of a new national religion. He helped Nazis recognize their mission, in the service of which they found a higher life. 'For some of us Lagarde opened the window and the door to the future'.² He epitomized the Nazi faith in one sentence: 'The religion of the German is his Fatherland'.³

On the 50th anniversary of Lagarde's death, Rosenberg summed up his contribution in terms of his reducing the whole issue of life to that of ethnic

¹ P. de Lagarde, Deutsche Schriften (Munich, 1924), 267ff, 59, 81, 30, 143, 279ff, 286, 116, 30ff, passim.

² Rosenberg, Blut und Ehre: Reden und Aufsätze von 1919-1933 (Munich, 1938), 230, 228f (VB, 25.12.1927). Hereafter B&E 1 as Vol. 4 of the four-volume Blut und Ehre series.

³ VB, 25.12.1929 (Christmas ed., B&E 1, 53).

(völkisch) character. This, the original message of National Socialism, involved radical anti-clericalism; antipathy for orthodox Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism; along with opposition to Conservatives, Liberals, and all others opposed to the true interests of the Volk.¹

Lagarde was more or less the patron saint of the völkisch movement and exerted great influence upon völkisch thought. Thus he may have influenced Rosenberg more indirectly than directly. At any rate, Lagarde is not mentioned in Rosenberg's account of his own intellectual development, despite the fact that he quoted from Lagarde's Deutsche Schriften in the early 1920's and later in the Mythus.²

The philosopher of Nazism was heir to a vast body of völkisch literature, and his thought reflected the religious atmosphere of much of this literature. For example, the idea of a new religious myth was put forth by Protestant pastor and völkisch author, Arthur Bonus, who wrote a series of volumes on the 'Religious Crisis', one of which was entitled Vom neuen Mythos (1911). Bonus reflected the transition from Protestant Liberalism to a new Germanic faith; for which 'myth' was simply religious, as opposed to scientific or philosophical truth. Since the old religious myths were inadequate for contemporary needs, a new one had to arise as a result of the creative, artistic activity of the will.³ Despite the similarity of ideas Rosenberg did not acknowledge Bonus as a forerunner, and it is uncertain whether he was influenced by him. At any rate, Rosenberg was not the only one in the völkisch camp with the idea of a new religious myth.

Rosenberg explained the völkisch movement in terms of an undercurrent of genuine spiritual seeking resulting from that cultural crisis without which

¹ Lagarde Gedächtnisrede, Berlin, 22.12.1941 (BA: NS 8/91, 53ff).

² S&R 1, 226; 2, 459ff, 470. Mythus, 457f.

³ A. Bonus, Vom neuen Mythos (Jena, 1911), 1ff, passim. Cf. G. Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology (New York, 1964), 63f, etc.

such movements as the Alldeutscher Verband and the Wandervogel were incomprehensible. Though self-consciously a product of the völkisch movement, Rosenberg always distinguished himself intellectually from what he called völkisch fanaticism (Schwärmerei), as exemplified by theologian-novelist Artur Dinter's spiritualistic views and missionary journeys. To him it represented 'a pure intellectual torture and horror chamber'.¹

The Nazi philosopher considered himself on a higher intellectual plane than much of völkisch thought with its lack of appreciation for the best of the German intellectual tradition as epitomized by Kant's critical philosophy. It was Rosenberg's original encounter with Chamberlain which introduced him to German intellectual history as he was to conceive of it ever afterward.

HOUSTON STEWART CHAMBERLAIN

In view of Chamberlain's decisive influence, it is imperative to depict what the Nazi ideologist assimilated from him, in order to understand Rosenberg's Nazi ideology. This is especially necessary in that Rosenberg's general philosophical outlook as well as his positive religion of race was taken over from the seer of Bayreuth.²

When Chamberlain died in 1927, Rosenberg wrote in the Völkischer Beobachter

¹BA: NS 8/20, 12f; LA, 94-97. Given Rosenberg's education in Russia, it has been suggested that his thinking was especially influenced by distinctively Russian sources. It is true that he was familiar with the classics of the Russian intellectual tradition. For example, he had great admiration for Dostoevsky, especially for his psychological insights and portrayal of the spiritual crisis of modern culture. But it is very unlikely that Russian sources exerted any formative influence on Rosenberg's thought, with one possible exception, the apocalyptic conception of the Jewish conspiracy derived from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Taken as a whole his roots were, intellectually as well as ethnically, in Germany—not Russia. Laqueur (Germany and Russia, 114-117) maintains that Rosenberg was 'apparently influenced' by the writings of a certain Fyodor Viktorovich Vinberg. Since Vinberg wrote in Russian, it has been impossible to examine this assertion. Rosenberg never mentions Vinberg. Even if striking parallels could be found, it is more likely that Rosenberg drew these ideas from German völkisch sources. For his denial of any influence from Russian sources, see Interview, 7.4.1936 (BA: NS 8/43, 186).

²For a very helpful account of Chamberlain's thought, with just stress on its religious aspect, see J. Réal, 'The Religious Conception of Race—Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Germanic Christianity', UNESCO, The Third Reich (London, 1955), 243-286.

that his work was 'a ray of light in the darkness'. Chamberlain had bridged the gap between abstract science and a purposeful life. This most universal man combined philosophical acumen with religious fervor. Assembling the wisdom of Europe, he gave an epoch without direction a new picture of the world. 'He who grew up under Chamberlain's worldview once again found the courage to face the problems of existence freely without the detailed dogmas of all the armchair religious and academic authorities'.¹

Rosenberg's book, Houston Stewart Chamberlain als Verkünder und Begründer einer deutschen Zukunft (1927) was written to pay a small portion of the debt owed to 'the man whose writings once opened for me the first clear vision of a free German humanity'. He looked forward to the day when Chamberlain would be the basis of German education.² Excerpts from his works, and from Rosenberg's book, appeared during the Third Reich in such indoctrination periodicals as Der Schulungsbrief.³

The Nazi ideologist did not always agree with Chamberlain but both were captivated by faith in Germany. 'Even if everything else which Chamberlain taught...were false, still the greatest thing would ever remain untouched: the never wavering faith in the German people'.⁴ As Chamberlain told Hitler in 1923: 'My faith in the German character (Deutschtum) has not for one moment faltered'.⁵ According to Rosenberg Chamberlain's intellectual achievement was his ability to mediate between the consciously rational and

¹VB, 11.1./12.1.1927.

²Rosenberg, Houston Stewart Chamberlain (Munich, 1927), 7, 14, 98f.

³Cf. Der Schulungsbrief, Sept. 1935, Jan. 1936.

⁴Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 12, 22.

⁵Chamberlain to Hitler, 7.10.1923 (G. Schott, ed., Chamberlain als Seher des Dritten Reiches, Munich, 1941, 13). Cf. Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 22. For instances of disagreement with Chamberlain, see: EA, 25.12.1938 (BA: NS 8/19, 50); Chamberlain, 28f, 72, 93; Mythus, 334; LA, 274.

the subconsciously irrational in the German character. With a proper feeling for life's organic unity, he was able to reconcile science with faith, conscious rational knowledge with the racially-conditioned subconscious.¹

Chamberlain confessed allegiance to Kant's critical philosophy, which was supposedly Germanic philosophy in its classic form. The school of Kant meant science without presumption, religion without superstition. It was the haute école of inner freedom, where one learned to command oneself and, beyond the blind alley of rationalism and the swamp of empiricism, unlearned fear.²

Following Kant, Chamberlain held to an ultimate agnosticism. Man could only ever really know himself, his wisdom would always be only human wisdom. His worldview, whatever its 'delusion of comprehensiveness', would ever be only a small picture in the brain of the individual human being. Contrary to the Greek philosophers there could be no talk of any absolute wisdom or knowledge, no matter how trivial; but only of human knowledge, that which various men at various times thought they knew. Consequently Chamberlain preferred the German Weltanschauung to the Greek philosophia. The world (Welt) in view was not the so-called cosmos but the inner world of the human mind, and the act of viewing was one of inner intuition (Anschauung). Therefore, given the agnostic presupposition, the relative worth of a Weltanschauung was less a matter of content or abstract rationality as of intuitive perceptivity, vivid perspective, and artistic qualities.³

Furthermore, according to Chamberlain the external world of nature was in and of itself dumb, ultimately inscrutable and unknowable. True, it was necessary for scientific purposes to define nature in terms of the mechanical

¹Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 22f, 29, 51, 56.

²H.S. Chamberlain, Immanuel Kant (Munich, 1916), 553ff, 562f, 662. Cf. Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 60ff, 119f.

³Chamberlain, Die Grundlagen des XIX. Jahrhunderts (Munich, 1915), 736ff. Cf. Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 123.

rule of law. But, ultimately, nature was chaotic, and natural science only the ever more detailed exposition of something ultimately unknowable. Philosophy, or better the pursuit of a Weltanschauung, was creatively giving shape (schöpferische Gestaltung) to chaotic reality in nature. Hovering between both worlds, the realms of nature and freedom, philosophy was the fresh artistic fashioning (Bearbeitung) of the segregated, purified reality of both. As such, it was of necessity a tragic endeavor since nature was cruelly indifferent to the lofty interests of human reason and freedom.¹

According to the Kantian Weltanschauung as interpreted by Chamberlain, it was impossible to span the metaphysical chasm between reason (νοῦς) and nature (φύσις), between rational thinking (Denken) and intuitive perceiving (Anschauung), between man and the world conceived as two distinct entities. The original myth of all myths (Urmythos aller Mythen) was the naive presupposition that there is some sort of correspondence between reason and nature. Many different conceptions of the world—myths—have been born from this original myth. It was Kant who demolished this original myth of the identity of thinking (Denken) and being (Sein): 'Only with Kant does man become conscious of his own mythologizing (Mythenbilden). Kant's critical work is the Copernican turning point in the history of our intellectual life'.²

Kant was supposed to have laid bare the delusion of an alleged development through error to truth, the foolishness of squabbling over all dogmas and 'isms'. All such were in the nature of the case myths in that we are surrounded by mere phenomena. All philosophy is simply developed mythology. No world-view can escape myths; we are all thrown back on myths, today as millennia ago. Duplicity is a basic phenomenon of human existence in that the gap

¹Chamberlain, Grundlagen, 910ff, 930ff, 208, 54f, 44.

²Chamberlain, Kant, 387, 282ff, 286f, 353ff.

between the intuition and understanding (Verstand), between nature and the self, can only be bridged by means of 'more or less consciously trumped-up and dreamed-up myths' (bewusst erdichtete und erträumte Mythen). Myth is 'a conscious day-dream' resulting from the attempt to bridge the gap with a view to creating a unified, comprehensive worldview.¹

Given this metaphysical and epistemological abyss, and the consequent necessity of myth, there was according to Chamberlain no essential difference between the intellectual activity of an old Aryan shepherd and that of an equally naive, though sophisticated Aristotle or Hegel. The difference between ancient and modern mythology was only one of degree. The only really new 'solution' to the eternal riddle of existence, was Kant's critical philosophy whose nature-freedom scheme simply admitted the problem. It denied the original myth that one can really know what ultimate reality is, and was able to live with the abyss only by dreaming up a realm of freedom on the other side. This is apparently what Chamberlain meant when he spoke of the birth of 'the true myth' which articulated 'pure, inconceivable truth' such as Kant's concept of freedom!²

Although Rosenberg confessed that he was in no position to pass judgment on Chamberlain's biological theories, he found his organic approach to reality philosophically significant. By attempting to explain phenomena genetically rather than essentially, modern science unfortunately avoided basic philosophical issues, since true knowledge can only be of being (Sein) not of becoming (Werden). Indeed, science sidestepped the most basic of all questions, that respecting the essence of life (Wesen des Lebens). In response, Chamberlain developed a biological philosophy of life (Lebensphilosophie) the central

¹Chamberlain, Kant, 283f, 390. Cf. Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 64, 127.

²Chamberlain, Kant, 335, 286ff.

thesis of which was: the essence of life, empirically understood, is form (Gestalt); understood conceptually, it is practicality or expediency (Zweckmässigkeit). Life stubbornly preserves its forms amid all the flux of nature. Form characterizes life in the world of nature; practicality, life in the world of the human mind. The essence of man's natural life is form; the essence of his intellectual life, expediency.¹

Expediency, so it seems, was the practical means by which man maintains himself as racial form in that biological struggle for existence which results in the survival of the fittest. Chamberlain thus accepted Darwin in part. But he rejected the theory of progressive evolution as well as the doctrine of special creation, both of which were allegedly based on the false assumption that something can come from nothing. According to Chamberlain and Rosenberg the doctrine of the evolutionists was just as much mythology as that of the theologians.

Alongside the mechanistic method of natural science Chamberlain provided Rosenberg with an intuitive organic method of observing the world. There was no real rational connection between life in nature and the life of the mind. There was only a practical connection grounded in the organic bond between nature and mind, that is, in the fact that both are aspects of biological life. Thus while there was no theoretical rational unity, there was a practical organic unity of a biological nature. In this fashion Chamberlain, captivated by the metaphysical urge toward unified being (Sein), attempted to span the chasm between nature and mind by means of the unifying concept of life.² Unable to live in the abyss, Chamberlain had to have a practical solution to the insoluble riddle of existence. Falling prey to the

¹Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 66-70. Cf. Réal, op. cit., 249ff, whose exposition of Chamberlain at this point is remarkably parallel to Rosenberg's.

²Cf. Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 60ff, 70f. Chamberlain, Kant, 542f.

Urmythos, Chamberlain the artist concocted a myth which viewed the essence of unchangeable reality in terms of organic life.

Chamberlain's myth was the basis of his philosophy of history taken over by Rosenberg. The artistic outlook—which, unlike the scientific approach, unified rather than fragmented reality—was able to give form and unity to history's chaotic vastness by intuiting 'the secret parallels between the phenomenal world and human thought'. History was viewed in biological terms by means of the concept of race. There was supposedly, due to the organic unity of life, a basic correlation between the outward physical form and the inward mental outlook of the human being. Thus there was no real conflict between the biological and the ideological interpretation of history since there was an organic relationship between racial form and the myths by which men live. Indeed, these myths, their origin and dogged persistence, were the real stuff of history in the higher sense; and the profoundest historical method was that which grasped the essence of what persists beyond raw temporal flux (das Wesen des beharrenden Aussergeschichtlichen erfassen). With Chamberlain Rosenberg was convinced that mythological and metaphysical thinking ultimately determined the life and deeds of races, peoples, and nations.¹

Chamberlain gave Rosenberg three fundamental ideas for the interpretation of history. First, there was the myth of a creative Germanic racial stock and character (Germanentum), which supposedly had contributed everything worthwhile in Western culture. Its ancient roots were in an original Aryan race (Urrasse); its most characteristic and dynamic modern expression was found in the German character (Deutschum). Second, Chamberlain stressed the concept of the chaos of peoples (Völkerverchaos), an era of racial and cultural degeneration following an alleged golden age epitomized in ancient Greece. Modern Europe still suffered from this racial and cultural chaos against which the Germanic peoples had put up an heroic struggle. Third, there was the idea

¹Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 62, 72ff, 104f. Cf. Chamberlain, Kant, 501;

of Jewry (Judentum) as the exponent of racial and spiritual chaos. The Jews worked to subvert the unified cultures of all other peoples while zealously maintaining their own racial and cultural solidarity. The historic mission of the Germanic peoples was to combat the Völkerchaos and its racial progenitors, the Jews. The clue to history's meaning was the life and death struggle for existence between them.¹

With Chamberlain the struggle for form (Gestalt) against chaos in history was analogous to that against chaos in nature. Both nature and history as such are chaotic and have no meaning in and of themselves. Germanic man only found meaning in life in terms of a biological and spiritual struggle to give creative form to recalcitrant natural and historical reality. He was essentially a knight in battle against the dark and sinister powers of ultimate chaos.²

The reality of race was for Chamberlain a scientific fact, but as one steeped in 19th century science he was well aware of the problem of defining it. For his major purpose, however, this was quite unnecessary since his aim was not primarily the theoretical one of enlightening the understanding but the practical one of arousing the will to enthusiastic action. With all his stress on the objective physical characteristics of race, Chamberlain ultimately conceived of race subjectively in primarily spiritual terms. Decisive in the matter of race was not the physical form but the mental attitude. 'Without bothering myself about a definition I have race in my own bosom'. Well informed on the historical anthropology of his day, Chamberlain knew the problems surrounding the working hypothesis of an original Aryan race. But the existence of such was no more crucial to his racial philosophy than to Rosenberg's. 'Were it proved that there never

Grundlagen, 3f, passim. A strict scientific conscience was supposed to guard against turning the philosophy of history into 'the historical phantasy of a madhouse' (Grundlagen, 4)!

¹Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 75ff; Grundlagen, passim.

²Chamberlain, Grundlagen, 318, 910ff.

was an Aryan in the past, we want one to exist in the future—for men of action this is the decisive viewpoint'.¹

In the realm of politics Rosenberg accepted Chamberlain's negative critique of Liberalism and Socialism. Liberal political thought was opposed to nature and life in that it did not correspond to the organic psychological structure of the Volk. True freedom in the Germanic sense had to do with the inner autonomous development of the human personality rather than with the outer forms of political and social organization. Democracy was dead as a viable form of government in that it led to anarchy. This in turn lead to the absolutism of international Socialism, where there was no room for freedom or originality. According to Chamberlain, Socialism was imperialism in disguise. In the face of the monotony and squalor of modern industrial life millions of German workers thoughtlessly obeyed a handful of immigrant Jews conspiring to destroy the German people. Chamberlain was not sure whether there really was a Jewish secret society behind it all. But one did not need to prove a conscious conspiracy to implicate the Jews. It was clear that they were instinctively bent on the racial, spiritual, and moral destruction of Indo-European humanity.²

What positive political action was necessary in the face of this danger? The answer that Rosenberg received from Chamberlain, was rooted in philosophical anthropology. Man participated in the two worlds of conscious freedom and unconscious nature. Man as freedom was, in politics, prone to express his freedom destructively with hate and envy. Man as nature was the unconscious servant of a constructive, creative life principle which, if not arbitrarily hindered, was pressing on toward the new world of great deeds and cultural achievements. Either one should follow the politics of nature toward a noble future or face catastrophic collapse with a reversion

¹Chamberlain, Grundlagen, 269f, 290, 31. Cf. Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 72ff, 106, 125. Rosenberg seemed convinced that scientific developments since the Grundlagen confirmed Chamberlain's racial intuitions (72f).

²Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 36-59, 76. Cf. Chamberlain, Grundlagen, 681f; Kant, 697; Demokratie und Freiheit (Munich, 1917).

to bestiality. The only way to escape this fate was to bring human freedom and human nature into harmony with each other. This demanded the creation of new political ideals. The realization of these ideals would mean, as a result of an organic natural process, a German revolution, or rebirth (Neugeburt), which would make the French Revolution seem like child's play. This revolution would involve not only a political but also a social and cultural rebirth.¹

In the Grundlagen Chamberlain discussed the ethics of this revolution ushering in the new golden age. Such could not be achieved under the delusion of progress or retrogression in history in terms of any absolute standard such as natural rights, universal brotherhood, or eternal peace. All such absolutes are, in the nature of the case, impossible to achieve. The only sure and useful standard by which to pass judgment on past, present, and future was 'historical morality'. This meant, in Shakespeare's words, remaining true to oneself. For the Germanic man of Northern Europe it meant faithfulness to Germanic or North-European culture and satisfaction within its limitations. It meant extending Germanic dominance not only over the surface of the globe and the powers of nature, but also over the inner world of the mind by mercilessly overthrowing and excluding all opposition.

It is often said that politics may know no scruples (Rücksichten); nothing can know scruples. Scruples are a crime against self....The most sacred duty of Germanic man is to serve the Germanic cause (Germanentum). This is his historical value standard: in all spheres that man and that deed will be judged the greatest and most significant which most successfully advances the Germanic character and most vigorously supports its supremacy.

The philosophical justification for this 'historical morality' was, according to Chamberlain, Kant's doctrine of human autonomy as the supreme moral principle, whereby morality only exists where one is subject to no other laws than those which he legislates for himself.²

¹Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 46ff, 56, etc. Cf. Chamberlain, Politische Ideale (Munich, 1915).

²Chamberlain, Grundlagen, 720f, 509f, 939.

Religion was an area of special interest for both Chamberlain and Rosenberg. As in ethics, the starting-point was Kant's intellectual revolution. This demanded a tidy divorce between science and religion. Philosophically it was a matter of the distinction between the theoretical and the practical. Theoretically we cannot know, let alone prove, God; practically, however, he is a certainty, or at least a possibility. According to Kant's critical philosophy of religion, true science was restricted to the outer world of nature, true religion to the inner world of freedom. Mechanistic science had paved the way for genuine religion which, unlike that of Judaism and traditional Christianity, was idealistic not materialistic. Still, Chamberlain wanted to retain a purified Germanic Christianity, and with the help of modernist Protestant theologians reinterpreted it as a mystical Religion Jesu. Contrary to his outlook during the Third Reich, Rosenberg was somewhat sympathetic to this notion in his earlier years.¹

Chamberlain laid great stress on Germanic man's religious nature due to his inborn metaphysical and religious need. Yet, strangely, his achievements in this area had been meagre in comparison with his other cultural achievements. Germanic culture was sick due to the lack of a true religion. This lack of a genuine religion corresponding to Germanic character was the greatest danger facing the future of Germanic man, his Achilles heel. To meet this crying need, the seer of Bayreuth preached his gospel of a Germanic religion in the following manner:

Germanic religion...opens up a wide realm which slumbers in us as a sublime ideal and teaches us: here you are free, here you yourselves are creative and law-giving nature. The realm of the ideal is not, but by your action (Tun) it actually can come to be. As a mere phenomenon you are, to be sure, bound to the general law of relentless mechanical necessity; yet experience teaches you that you possess autonomy and freedom in this inner realm—use it!

The otherwise undiscoverable connection between the two worlds—the visible and the invisible, the temporal and the timeless—lies indeed in your own

¹Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 82ff. Cf. Chamberlain, Grundlagen, 937ff, etc.; Mensch und Gott (Munich, 1939; orig. ed. 1921).

bosom, and by the conviction of the inner world the meaning of the outer world is determined—this, conscience teaches you daily. It is taught by art, love, pity, and the whole history of mankind. Here you are free the moment you but know it and want it. You can transform the visible world, be born anew yourselves, convert time into eternity, plough up the field for the kingdom of God—then do it! Religion for you shall no longer mean faith in the past or hope for the future, nor...mere metaphysical knowledge, but action in the present! If you but believe in yourselves, you possess the power to make the new "possible kingdom" a reality. Awake, the day is at hand!

Such was the message that Rosenberg imbibed from Chamberlain, the artistic fashioner of a viable religious worldview which could serve as the basis of a meaningful life and meaningful activity. In the middle of the raging flood of technological development the prophet of Bayreuth raised up a standard against a one-sided, mechanical, materialistic, catastrophic view of life. In the midst of historical flux he held fast that which remains (im Flusse der Dinge das Bleibende festhält), and taught many the essence (Wesen) of the spiritual and intellectual ground (Boden) on which one could stand. In his Grundlagen he not only laid bare the foundations of the 19th century but also laid those of the 20th.² Rosenberg's Mythus of the 20th century was built self-consciously upon Chamberlain's Grundlagen of the 19th.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE MYTHUS

The Nazi philosopher consciously drew from other sources and freely acknowledged them in his account of how the Mythus came to be written. Chamberlain reinforced his boyhood experience of reading classical and Germanic mythology. These sagas, filled with a spirit of sentimental loyalty and inexplicable tragedy, admittedly had as profound an effect upon Rosenberg as his living environment. Chamberlain introduced him to the study of Judaism and the old Aryan world. He studied Julius Wellhausen on Jewish history, Paul Deussen on Indian philosophy, and from 1910 to 1920 many other similar works which reinforced his convictions on the reality of race. During this formative period there were also—besides formal technical training in architectural engineering—several attempts at artistic creativity in the form of painting as well as the study of the history and philosophy of art.

¹Chamberlain, Grundlagen, 941f, 751f, 18.

²Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 77ff, 81.

In this connection Rosenberg studied, besides Schopenhauer's aesthetic, Kant, Schiller, and Goethe. This led to an attempt, beginning in 1917, to develop his own aesthetic philosophy, which formed the center from which the Mythus developed. 'The later Myth of the 20th Century grew out of the experience of art'.¹

To art was added, according to Rosenberg, the study of philosophy, history, politics, and biology from 1919 to 1925: Kuno Fischer's history of philosophy, the works of Erwin Rohde, Jakob Burckhardt, Leopold von Ranke, and many others. During this period the Nazi journalist had much contact with Dietrich Eckart. But Rosenberg, while indicating that Eckart helped improve his style, acknowledged no material influence from this quarter. It is, however, very likely that Eckart's philosophical interests and religious anti-Semitism, which had an impact on Hitler, reinforced similar tendencies in Rosenberg. The encounter with Hitler did not influence the material development of the Mythus, except in so far as the myth's concrete political form was presented in terms of the realization of National Socialism. Rosenberg never acknowledged Hitler as his mentor in matters of Weltanschauung. However, he did acknowledge, that H.F.S. Günther's biological works influenced the details of the racial views presented in the Mythus; but maintained that his basic ideas on race arose long before from the experience of art, not the study of

¹Wie der Mythus entstand, Nov. 1935 (BA: NS 8/22, 38ff,48); LA, 32ff,69ff, 129ff,285. There is no reason to disbelieve Rosenberg's claims since his early notebooks and later writings indicate a serious interest in these areas and authors as well as the fact that he must have read a great deal. Also, it were only natural for him to read those authors recommended by Chamberlain. Moreover, his architectural studies demanded some serious study of art. W.J. Martin, former Chairman of the Department of Semitic Languages at Liverpool University, was greatly impressed by Rosenberg's library and knowledge of Old Testament criticism when he had a lengthy interview with the Nazi leader in 1932. 'Intellectually I found him impressive' (Martin to Hutchinson, 9.2.1976).

biology.¹

By 1925 the Mythus was essentially complete, and Rosenberg did nothing more with it until 1928-1929 when he expanded it to reflect the polemic of the years 1925-1929 against such causes as Ottmar Spann's philosophical universalism, Otto Strasser's socialism, and women's emancipation. The manuscript was completed at the end of 1929 and published in the autumn of 1930. The work was written between editions of the Völkischer Beobachter and on Sunday mornings in the midst of a busy political struggle without benefit of a library or extensive notes. By the author's own admission it followed no well-thought-out plan, was more the confession of a soldier than the study of a scholar, and thus demonstrated the defects of any such work. The original title was to have been Philosophie der germanischen Kunst, changed in 1925 to Rasse und Ehre and finally in 1928, doubtless due to the work on Chamberlain (1927), to Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts.²

According to its subtitle the Mythus is an evaluation of the spiritual struggles of our time. Book I is a grotesque portrayal of the historical background in the light of a racial philosophy of history centering in the conflict of values between Aryan or Nordic man and his opponents. Book II, on the character of Germanic art, is an involved presentation of Rosenberg's aesthetic philosophy, emphasizing the racial ideal of beauty and the primacy of the aesthetic will in opposition to all forms of philosophical dogmatism and universalism. On the basis of this foundation Book III is a lengthy characterization of the coming Reich in the form of programmatic conclusions and suggestions for the shaping of its social, political, cultural, and religious life. The general mood and ultimate purpose of the book is

¹LA, 78f, 100, 129; BA: NS 8/22, 46f, 52f. There is also no acknowledgement of any formative influence from Eckart in Dietrich Eckart: Ein Vermächtnis (1928) or in 'Dietrich Eckart zum Gedächtnis'—Berlin, 26.12.1941 (BA: NS 8/91, 99-103).

²S&R 1, xxx, 589n; LA, 136, 277f; BA: NS 8/22, 33, 46f, 63ff, 71; Mythus, 3.

revolutionary: to experience a new Mythus, from this new myth of life (Lebens-Mythus) to create a new human type (Menschentypus), and from this new man to build a new state and a new life.¹

A new myth was necessary because the old myths were dead. Christianity and Liberalism had had their day. To be sure, they still had a following but only as corpses, hollow forms devoid of animated content. In the course of the 19th century the old myths died a slow death, precipitating a flight to materialistic Positivism and mechanistic Darwinism. Since the established Churches could no longer satisfy man's religious need, many were turning to Marxism as a dogma to live by. But materialistic Marxism was no religious substitute for Christianity and in the form of dogmatic Bolshevism could only end in spiritual chaos, social anarchy, and political tyranny. Between the deluded hosts of Marxism and the faithful few in the Churches, millions wandered aimlessly about seeking a new way. Prey to prophets of all kinds, they had to be rescued from a despairing Nihilism by means of a new myth leading to a rebirth of old values and the experiencing of a new sense of togetherness.²

Sometimes Rosenberg used the term 'myth' to refer to ancient legends, but usually in a more comprehensive sense for the spiritual or ideological justification of man's communal life. Myth was the result of the unending creative attempt of a race or people to form a unified culture, life-style, and purpose according to an overall worldview. Rosenberg's terminology was never very precise, and he characteristically did not bother to define myth. He did, however, describe what he meant. Myth comprised that intangible concentration (Zusammenfassung) of all the tendencies of the self, of the Volk, of any community, which lies beyond the empirically verifiable—for example, the Greek myth of beauty, or the Jewish myth of election.³

¹Mythus, viiff, 2, 481, passim. Cf. LA, 135f.

²Mythus, 480, 520, 600f. ³Mythus, 451ff, 462. Cf. S&R 1, lxvf.

Thus, after the manner of Chamberlain, myth had to do with things beyond this phenomenal world. Rosenberg sometimes used the term in the sense of creative idea or dream, supreme value or ideal. Often myth was synonymous with religion or faith; it was the religion which binds men together, the faith by which men in community live. There was thus the Roman Catholic myth of the Papacy or the Protestant myth of Holy Scripture. Such myths were realized in concrete historical forms or types. Myth (Mythus) indicated the inward spiritual content of human life; type (Typus), the outward form, or forms, which myth, religion, culture take on in human society. From one point of view myth engenders and determines type; but from another, the experience of the type produces knowledge of, faith in, and zeal for the myth. Myth is the sort of dream which creates reality in the form of concrete phenomena or types; type in turn points back to myth and leads to faith in it.¹

The traditional Jewish and Christian myths were alien to that myth which was true for the Nordic race and the German people. This myth Rosenberg characterized in general terms as the racial myth, the Nordic myth, the Germanic myth, the German myth, the myth of the nation, the myth of the people (Volksmythus), the ethnic (völkisch) myth, the myth of the blood, the eternal myth of the Nordic racial soul. The modifying expressions seem to refer to both the subject and the object of the myth. For instance, the racial soul was both its source and content. The eternal myth was both old and new: old in that it had always been unconsciously implicit in the racial soul, new in that it was becoming explicit by being consciously awakened in the 20th century.² Beyond such descriptions Rosenberg was

¹Mythus, 258, 344, 450, 462ff, 471f, 623; 453ff, 521, 531.

²Mythus, 670, 476, 510, 449, 608, 615, 566, 698, 678, 701, 258. Cf. S&R 1, 731; B&E 1, 207, 137, 161, 142, 300. Rosenberg commonly used the term 'myth' in his writings (and in the VB) until 1932.

characteristically vague in depicting the specific content of the new myth.

The Nazi ideologist attempted a philosophical justification of the Mythus with reference to Kant's critique of pure reason. Even when one acknowledged the formal validity of Kant's epistemology, nothing was settled with respect to the content of what is produced in the mind by the use of one's rational capabilities. Kant's critical philosophy, though formally valid, provided no help for evaluating various cultures and worldviews. Ultimately no race or culture is in a position to pass judgment upon the creative myth of another. 'In the final analysis...every philosophy which goes beyond a formal critique of reason is less cognition (Erkenntnis) than confession (Bekenntnis)—a racial confession of the soul, a confession of values'.¹

Accordingly Rosenberg denied the possibility of any universally valid knowledge or science. There is no science without presuppositions. There can be no scientific knowledge without a priori ideas, theories, hypotheses necessary to organize the vast unrelated data of the empirical world. These ideas are racially and culturally conditioned according to a given people's values. Each culture approaches the universe with a different set of questions. The basis of modern science is the undemonstrable Nordic presupposition that nature is governed by natural laws, but other races have different presuppositions. Everything, science as well as morality and art, is relative to the blood. Nothing can be intellectually justified or condemned on the ground of its being true or false, right or wrong, ugly or beautiful in itself (an sich), but only because it is alien to racial myth and cultural type.²

Ancient Greek philosophers assumed that eventually human reason would provide a complete knowledge of ultimate reality. Only recently did Kant make clear that, in the nature of the case, man is unable to grasp absolute truth so-called, or the supposed meaning of what happens on earth. Further-

¹Mythus, 118, 115ff.

²Mythus, 119f, 273.

more, even if this were proclaimed to him, he could not comprehend or understand it in that it would transcend space, time, and causality. Thus, following Chamberlain, Rosenberg's justification of myth rested on the Kantian notion of man's inability to know ultimate reality. His concept of myth was aptly depicted, in a VB review of a Munich performance of Ibsen's Ugly Duckling, in terms of 'man, his idea, his illusion, his world of imagination; his lie, if you will, in struggle against any absolute'. It was the true lie which could only be appreciated in terms of man's eternal and tragic conflict with ultimate reality and truth.¹

One might be tempted to think that Rosenberg's appeal to Kant was simply a cavalier attempt to use Germany's most renowned thinker in order to make his Nazi ideology intellectually respectable. But, from his student days, as evidenced by the notes from which the Mythus grew, he was absolutely convinced that intellectual respectability began with Kant's epistemology. For Rosenberg Kant was the greatest of all thinkers, and all distinctively modern thought had to follow the wise man of Königsberg. As he wrote in an early issue of the VB, 'Since the life of Kant everything will and must tie in with his work'.²

Nevertheless man, including post-Kantian man, still longed for that absolute, eternal truth which neither blind reason nor dumb nature could provide. Popular philosophers still sought universal truth. Even some völkisch thinkers were still under this delusion, thinking that Germanic man's rational capacity was the only way to get at truth. But there were many other ways, for example, the intuitive and the volitional. The positive message of the Mythus (as opposed to its denial of absolute truth) was truth of a very different sort—inner 'organic truth' based on organic life.³

¹VB, 23.6.1925. Mythus, 681.

²VB, 12.7.1922 (S&R 2, 638). Cf. S&R 1, 10 (EA, 24.6.1917), 28f (EA 18.5.1918), 120 (EA, 7.2.1919).

³Mythus, 681-683.

Following Chamberlain, Rosenberg defined organic life in terms of outer form (Gestalt) and inner adaptability (Zweckmässigkeit) or purposefulness (Zielstrebigkeit). Form indicated the organism from the intuitive or empirical side, adaptability from the rational or intellectual side; but they were organically one and the same. According to Rosenberg, the heart of the new worldview and political outlook of the 20th century was that organic truth was self-sufficient or autonomous (in sich selbst ruht); it was relative to the mental adaptability of each biological type (an der Zweckmässigkeit der Lebensgestalt abzulesen). Organic truth was biological life as existential form (Dasein) in organic union with its mental adaptability (Sein). As such it was a general standard in every area of life. Intellectual adaptability or functionality meant the expedient building up of the organism, the lack of expediency (Unzweckmässigkeit) its downfall. Self-sufficient organic truth comprehended the rational, intuitive, and volitional dimensions of life and truth. 'Form and adaptability are thus the tangible value-standards not of "a part of eternal truth" but are truth itself, so far as this can be manifested at all within our intuitive ideas (Anschauungsformen)'.¹

As total truth (Gesamtwahrheit) organic truth was served by its rational intuitive, and volitional aspects. Serving organic truth meant serving racially-conditioned ethnic character (rassegebundenes Volkstum). The 'decisive criterion' of organic truth was what enhances the outer racial form and inner ethnic values of the Volk; what shapes it more vigorously (lebenskräftiger), educates it more expediently (zweckmässiger). According to Goethe's dictum, only that which is fruitful is true! The search for 'absolute eternal truth' was not a matter of knowledge but of faith. 'The ultimate "knowledge" of a race already lies locked in its first religious myth'.²

¹Mythus, 683f.

²Mythus, 684f.

In this manner Rosenberg stood Kant's formal critique of knowledge on its head. By means of a biological, racial, and relativistic conception of human nature, he filled Kant's formal presuppositions with new content, turning subjectivism into relativism, relativism into pragmatism, and pragmatism into dogmatism. The practical reason's need for eternal truth and religious faith led to the most dogmatic relativism and pragmatism in the name of both philosophical acumen and religious faith. For Rosenberg Kant's destroying knowledge to make room for faith made room for the myth of the blood.

According to the Nazi philosopher metaphysical reality is unknowable, and no one can make dogmatic pronouncements on it. But Kant's freedom-nature scheme, allegedly only of conceptual and methodological significance, practically took on for Rosenberg metaphysical status as a mental fact of life. 'The fundamental fact of the mind of Nordic Europe is the consciously or unconsciously adopted separation of two worlds, the world of freedom and the world of nature. In Immanuel Kant this native phenomenon of the way we think became fully conscious and may nevermore disappear from our view'. These two realms comprised what is 'real' for Nordic man.¹

Rosenberg's myth of the blood had to do with bridging the gulf between freedom and nature. Conceptually this was impossible since the two spheres were by definition mutually exclusive. Biologically, however, there was an organic unity between them as seen in man, where personal freedom and natural necessity mysteriously co-exist side by side in one organism. Man is mysteriously a participant in both worlds, and it is the very essence of human existence to try to reconcile freedom and nature. This is philosophically impossible in that idea and experience never quite co-incide due to the intermittent character of mental perception on the one hand and the incessant flux of nature on the other. The only way to overcome this insuperable duality (Überwindung des Unüberwindlichen) is by means of 'an artistic

¹Mythus, 131f.

synopsis (Zusammenschau) of freedom and nature'.¹

Rosenberg's idea of nature combined ancient Greek, early modern Renaissance, and modern Darwinian conceptions.² Nature was conceived primarily in organic terms as biological life. Nature and life functioned according to inexorable mechanical laws. Nature was in constant flux, an everlasting process. Biological life was instinctive teleological activity operating according to the eternal natural law governing temporal becoming. Nevertheless there was no ultimate plan behind nature replete with chance occurrences. Nature was an eternal struggle for existence resulting in the survival of the fittest according to the principle of natural selection. It was identified with that inscrutable external necessity or frightful destiny (Schicksal) in the face of which Germanic man endeavored to create his own spiritual 'destiny' by means of art and myth.³

The world of nature was life as it really is, the raw reality which is simply there as vegetative animal existence (Dasein). Upon such the human mind had to superimpose itself as a realm of freedom for practical purposes. The world of freedom was life as man would have it—myth, faith, art, civilization (Sein). Still myth ought to be based upon life. True myth ought to correspond to nature, instead of being alien to biological reality, the racial facts of human existence, the great laws of the universe. The myth of Nordic man was thus the myth of life (Mythus unseres Lebens/Lebens-mythus). Myth followed from life, and life was the content of the myth.⁴

According to Rosenberg the freedom-nature scheme was rooted in Nordic man's 'mystical vitalism' which conceived cosmic reality in biological terms. All of reality, at least as far as man is concerned, was one gigantic, rhythmically-breathing organism embodying a dynamic harmony and organic unity

¹Mythus, 141, 398, 400, 532, 316.

²Cf. R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of Nature (Oxford, 1960), 3ff and passim.

³Mythus, 398ff, 402, 407, 394, 328ff, 139ff.

⁴Mythus, 250ff.

between the polar duality of freedom and nature. Cosmic reality was life! Life was freedom as well as nature. Life was at once being (Sein) and becoming (Werden), consciousness and subconsciousness. In the midst of eternal becoming man sought to create being through creative ideas and deeds, to fashion the 'world' for himself as an organic order (Gefüge).¹

The moral philosophy accompanying the Mythus was allegedly Kant's categorical imperative. In itself this was no ethical command but simply a statement of the fact of moral obligation. Man knew that a categorical moral law was operative within, and that he had the freedom and ability to obey this law since without this freedom there could be no genuine moral obligation. This obligation also presupposed the autonomy of absolute personality, that is, that man is free to legislate his own morality and live accordingly. But this freedom is organically circumscribed by race and Volk. Therefore the content of man's formal ethical obligation was determined by racial and ethnic factors. The chief moral values for Nordic man were epitomized in the concepts of personal honor and duty arising from the consciousness of inner moral freedom. This consciousness summarized the Germanic feeling for morality as expressed in Kant's sublime doctrine of duty. True wisdom was living according to inner organic truth, and the wisest man was he who aligned his own personal self-realization with that of his race. Whatever was fruitful for the Volk was true and right, including 'error' and 'sin'.²

For the Nazi philosopher agnosticism and relativism went hand in hand with aestheticism. The practical primacy of aesthetic outlook was a key feature of Rosenberg's Mythus, which grew out of what he, on the eve of his literary and political career, called 'the aesthetic mood'.³

Art had its origin in the inner, creative activity (Formung) of the artist.

¹ Mythus, 141f, 509f, etc.

² Mythus, 684ff, 336, 396, 141. Cf. Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 31f; B&E 1, 60.

³ EA, 28.12.1918 (BA: NS 8/19, 59f).

whereby he fused the outer world of nature and the inner world of freedom into an organic synthesis—the world of art (Kunstwelt). The inner creative drive which impelled the artist to art was the driving force behind the production of man's worldviews, whereby the world around us in all its multiplicity is condensed into a unity and reworked into a symbol. A worldview was thus a symbolic work of art involving 'the primacy of the poet'. Philosophical activity was always essentially aesthetic or poetic activity as the result of a religious longing for a unified worldview.¹

According to the Mythus all philosophy and every worldview is relative. There is no universally valid aesthetic viewpoint. Kant's philosophy, properly understood in organic terms, allegedly taught that a universal aesthetic was no more possible than universally valid truth or morality. That which fit Kant's definition of beauty—the form of an object's purposefulness (Zweckmäßigkeit) insofar as this is perceived without any notion of purpose—for one race might not fit it for another. Consequently all conceptions of beauty were racially conditioned, and there could be only various racial ideals of beauty. Universality of aesthetic ideal was only possible within a racial or ethnic community.²

The chief emphasis of Rosenberg's aesthetic philosophy rested on the heroic and creative aesthetic will. This will comprised the essence of man and was the will to form (Formwille) in every area of life. As such it was equally important for artist, scientist, statesman, thinker, or saint and was behind every creative act in art, science, politics, philosophy, and religion. This will was not to be understood as an egoistic drive (Schopenhauer) but as a contrary principle from the noumenal realm of freedom (Kant and Fichte). By it man overcomes the phenomenal realm of nature with all its chaotic diversity and grasps it as a mythical unity. Nordic man

¹S&R 1, 37, 43f (EA, 18.5.1918), 70 (EA, 17.1.1919).

²Mythus, 303ff.

supposedly did not overcome the world of nature by idealizing or romanticizing it but by recognizing it for what it is together with 'the ideal of a new aesthetic will ruthlessly embodying itself'.¹

To realize this aesthetic will, for the purpose of creating a unified German people and culture, there had to be a mythical reminiscence of the past, experience of the present, and reshaping of the future. According to Rosenberg, the determination to do this, not simply long for it, was what was essentially new about the Mythus. This organic worldview demanded its right to rule (Herrenrecht) in the face of the modern sickness of universal relativity. The rule for this will to power was organic or racial (völkisch) truth within.²

NAZI WELTANSCHAUUNG AS MYTH

What does all this have to do with Nazism? What is the relationship between Rosenberg's Mythus and the Nazi phenomenon? It might seem that there is little or no connection between Rosenberg's philosophy and the Nazi Movement. There is, however, a real link between the Mythus and the peculiar atmosphere of the Third Reich.

For Rosenberg personally, as the classical example of a Nazi intellectual, the Mythus was essential to Nazism as the indispensable ideological presupposition of the practical political movement. There was in his mind an organic connection between the intellectual and the practical; the Nazi Movement was simply the application of the Mythus to the realm of politics, the political aspect of the myth. Thus in the 1920's the Nazi ideologist referred to Nazism as 'the political myth' uniting the myth of the blood with that of the Reich.³

As a political ideal Nazism was, in Rosenberg's mind, ultimately one with

¹Mythus, 348, 315ff, 334, 343f, 347f, 405ff, 436.

²Mythus, 685f, 692, 694f, 697.

³VB, 8.1.1927; 6./7.2.1927.

his religious myth of the blood. The Nazi Movement was the incarnation of the racial myth. The Mythus was the product of the deep religious quest of Germanic Europe, which as yet had not produced its own distinctive form of religion. There was, however, a beginning in the Bayreuth ideal of art as a genuine means of overcoming the world, as autonomous religion (eine Religion an sich). Rosenberg said with Wagner: I do not understand this world anymore—I will create another! The Nazi Movement was to give the German people not only a political idea but also an aesthetic ideal. The 'German myth', reawakened in the World War, was becoming in the Third Reich a mythical yet real experience (mythisches wirkliches Erleben) increasing in intensity to a self-evident feeling of reality in the form of a new religion or myth.¹

Book III of the Mythus, despite the disclaimer in the introduction, identified the myth of the blood with the coming Nazi Reich and the Nazi Weltanschauung. Like all worldviews this only became 'true' when it found outward expression in the form of a unified culture where myth, religion, art, philosophy, and politics expressed the same thing in different ways. For instance, religious cult and public political life, as the myth which man himself acts out (darstellen), had to go hand in hand. Realizing this cultural unity someday, was the goal of the racial ideal. The symbol of the myth of organic Germanic truth—of national freedom, social justice, living space, and racial purity—was the swastika, which would replace the crucifix and the red flag.²

The Mythus ended with a recapitulation of Rosenberg's philosophy as the basis of the Nazi Movement. The myth of the 20th century meant the end of the search for 'one absolute truth' without in favor of movement toward organic or racial (völkisch) truth within. According to modern knowledge, what was once unchangeable being had become being mysteriously forming itself

¹Mythus, 441ff, 448-450.

²Mythus, 2f, 451ff, 688f.

in the process of becoming. The value of this new knowledge of becoming lay in the consciousness of possible perfection through self-realization. This new knowledge was the foundation of 'a new morality', in which there were no goals or abstract rules from without only principles of organic development within. Ethical autonomy meant organic truth, whereby 'truth' was not a matter of what was logically right or wrong but of what was fruitful or unfruitful, autonomous (eigengesetzlich) or constrained from without. In justification of the organic and ethnic outlook, Rosenberg appealed to Herder, Schleiermacher, and the Romantics, among others. The only 'eternal truth' was genuineness (Wahrhaftigkeit)—being true to oneself, one's people, one's race. The ultimate standard of all Nazi thought and action, indeed measure of all things, was not any God without but organic truth within the racially-restrained ethnic soul (rassegebundene Volksseele). This was the myth of the blood and of the soul, of race and personality, which determined all of human life and demanded a world revolution in human values. This was that Faustian will to form (Gestaltungswille), allegedly the destiny of the German people. There was no refuting the new myth and its power to create new types—it would make its own way and 'create facts'.¹

Given Rosenberg's public reputation and following in the Nazi Movement, there was bound to be a practical connection in the mind of many Nazis between the Mythus and National Socialism. It is true that Rosenberg occasionally toned down the religious dimension of the Mythus for political reasons, and that from 1933 on he avoided the term 'myth' because of Hitler's aversion to it.² Nevertheless, the Nazi ideologist, not to mention lesser figures, repeatedly preached the gospel of the Mythus throughout his political career, and especially after 1933.

A classic example was Rosenberg's speech at the 1929 Nuremberg Party Congress. The explicit aim was a clear and understandable presentation of

¹Mythus, 700,686,689-694,697,699f.

²Cf. LA, 102f and Chap. 8.

the philosophical presuppositions and creed (Bekenntnisse) of the Nazi Movement. Given the deep difference between man's ability to comprehend and the eternal flux of the organic life-process, one could only apprehend and subdue the world by way of intuition, will, and reason. By means of art and intuitive symbols genuine intuition depicted a life-myth (Lebens-Mythus). Regarding the volitional approach, the Nazis represented 'the practical standpoint of a confession' (Bekennens). As for the rational approach, Kant's critical philosophy, with its freedom-nature scheme, was the order of the day. 'We believe that the three possibilities of making the world one's own (Weltaneignung) through intuition, will, and reason flow together from a unified faith, a single myth, that of blood and Volk'.¹

Parts of this speech were incorporated into the Mythus, and the address formed the core of a booklet (published by the Party publishing house) entitled Das Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus (1932). Here the racial philosophy of the Mythus, with particular stress on its religious dimension, was repeated as the essential framework of National Socialism. For instance: 'Germanic morality—this was that great genuineness (Wahrhaftigkeit) with oneself, which wanted to give an account of its own ego, nature, and the cosmos. Out of this longing the mystics, the great natural scientists, were born up to Immanuel Kant's sublime doctrine of duty'.²

Such evidence for Rosenberg's diffusion of the basic ideas of the Mythus in the Nazi Party and the Third Reich could be multiplied many times over, not to mention the parroting of the Mythus by others. Rosenberg presented his philosophy directly in the VB, the Weltkampf, the Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte, not to mention other Nazi periodicals such as the Schulungsbrief. He frequently preached the philosophy of the Mythus in political speeches: to mass meetings, to august assemblies of academics, to political and youth leaders at Party rallies, to closed groups of SS and Army officers. The

¹Nuremberg, 21.8.1929 (B&E 1, 142, 134ff). Cf. NSMH 2:13 (Apr. 1931), 149ff.

²Rosenberg, Das Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus (Munich, 1933), 42, 7, 12, 41f, 66, 70f. Cf. Mythus, 561f, 586-589.

message was always the same: There is no absolute, universal, eternal truth or morality. That which is racially fruitful is metaphysically and ethically 'true'. Therefore, the Nazi faith and morality is the way of truth and life. 'If faith in the worth of the blood leads to Germany's rebirth, then this is the seal of truth upon its metaphysical genuineness'.¹

Before academics the general message was defended by appealing to what was allegedly best in the German philosophical tradition: Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Fichte, and especially Kant's Copernican Revolution in epistemology and ethics.² But it was also preached to the Party and to the masses, for instance, in a speech to Reich legal authorities at the Berlin Sportpalast. For Europe Nazism meant the end of the universalistic age in the form of Medieval, Liberal, and Marxist universalism. These had no intellectual basis and were only influential because of their political power. There simply is no absolute truth, morality, or justice fallen from heaven.

One thing appears to me to be a fact above all else, namely that the claim of universal validity (Allgemeingültigkeit) on the part of these various dogmas is now destroyed in the hearts of many millions of Germans. This is a crucial psychological fact which one day will have its political consequences (Auswirkung) just as formerly the recognition of a universalistic principle in the hearts of millions of individuals also had its political consequences....³

In the Mythus and before Rosenberg used Weltanschauung more or less synonymously with myth. After dropping 'myth', he normally used 'worldview' in its place, doubtless because of Hitler's preference. In his unpublished sequel to the Mythus, an amplification of his speeches during the Third Reich,

¹Rome, Nov. 1932 (B&E 1, 301, 296ff). Cf. Cologne, 13.10.1934 (BA: NS 8/39, 134; 8/72, 116). Hamburg, 14.12.1934 (BA: NS 8/39, 236). Cf. Rosenberg, Krisis und Neubau Europas (Berlin, 1934), 11. Rosenberg in Sammelheft ausgewählter Vorträge und Reden (Berlin, 1939), 187ff. Rosenberg sometimes toned down the religious side of his message when speaking to Army officers. But such was not the case when speaking to the SS (cf. BA: NS 8/48, 27ff).

²Königsberg, 19.2.1939 (Rosenberg, Tradition und Gegenwart: Reden und Aufsätze 1936-1940, Munich, 1941, 232ff, 236, 241; hereafter B&E 4 as Vol. 4 of the four-volume series Blut und Ehre). Cf. B&E 4, 45ff, 58ff, 81ff, 94ff, 180ff, for philosophical discussions in Rosenberg's speeches.

³Berlin, 3.3.1938 (BA: NS 8/82, 20, 12ff, 17).

he simply substituted value (Gehalt) and form (Form) for inner myth and outer type.¹ Terminology was different but content the same. Rosenberg continued to speak of the worldview, ideal, or idea of the 20th century. The Nazi philosopher could use Ideologie and Weltanschauung synonymously but almost always spoke of ideology in a pejorative sense to refer to the 'dogmatic' Christian, Liberal, or Marxist worldviews as opposed to the allegedly undogmatic Nazi Weltanschauung.²

The Nazi ideologist constantly presented Nazism as a worldview. Worldview meant an inner spiritual attitude of the soul, the character, and the will toward the world, life, destiny, existence in general. It was a man's intuitive vision of reality by means of his aesthetic faculty. Worldview was a practical matter of character values and volitional action, not of learned doctrines or theoretical thought. Nazi Weltanschauung meant spiritual conversion not rational knowledge. Ultimately it was not a rational viewpoint but an instinctive, heroic attitude to destiny resulting in daily devotion to the NSDAP. Thus it could be the experience not only of the nation's Fuehrer but of the simplest SA man as well. The Nazi worldview was not a dogma but an attitude embracing religion, science, and art. The Germanic unity of religion and science by means of art was the essence of the alleged ideological (weltanschaulich) revolution of the 20th century.³

For Rosenberg, and many devotees of Nazi ideology, the Nazi Weltanschauung was formally a myth—a 'true myth' to use Chamberlain's term, a 'lie' to use Rosenberg's. That is, it was an irrational faith, functioning as a framework for practical life, which had no basis in ultimate truth but was 'truth' for those who believed and lived it. The Nazi myth was an ideal world created to give meaning to life in an ultimately meaningless real world of natural and historical flux. This ideology not really true, but, by

¹Die Form der Deutschen—Die Form im nationalsozialistischen Zeitalter (BA: NS 8/23, 5f, 251, 276). Rosenberg did not drop Mythus entirely (6, 251, 276) but used Gehalt, Wert (118), or Idee (115) in its stead.

²Cf. B&E 2, 291; BA: NS 8/39, 241; 8/85, 8; PT, 239ff, 252.

³Weltanschauliche Thesen, July 1939 (PT, 239-241. PS-1749). Cf. Der SA

believing the myth and realizing it in action, one would make it true.

Ideology would be authenticated by activity.

The intellectual justification for Nazi ideology was Kant's philosophy. Once one admitted that knowledge of anything beyond sense experience was impossible, then all talk of another world was myth—all philosophy, mythology. Pure reason's doing away with knowledge to make room for the faith of the practical reason, also made room for myth. The formal character of the critique of pure reason and the categorical imperative made room for the Nazi racial myth and Nazi ethics. This is not to saddle Kant with Nazi ideology. The specific content of the Nazi myth did not come from him, but from Chamberlain and others. But the basic structure of the Nazi mentality is incomprehensible apart from Kant's freedom-nature scheme and the formal and subjective character of his philosophy. This is not surprising given Kant's awesome influence on the German mind.¹

Finally, the mentality of the Mythus corresponded to much of the mentality and activity of the Third Reich. For example, in view of Rosenberg's official position as Party philosopher, it is not surprising that his mentality is apparent among the Nazi philosophers of the Third Reich, notably E. Krieck, F. Böhm, H. Schwartz, H. Heyse, and A. Baeumler. Their Nazi philosophy reflected the themes of the Mythus: for instance, the importance of philosophy in Germany, intellectual anarchy due to rationalism, strong religious interest and need for German faith, the pan-vitalism of dynamic organic life, fruitfulness as a criterion of truth, historical relativism and racial pragmatism as eternal and universal truth, God as becoming and man as the measure of all

Führer, Jan. 1939, 3f (BA: NS 8/27, 57f). These themes were repeated ad nauseam in Rosenberg speeches. Cf. B&E 2, 145, 235, 249f, 293, 328. BA: NS 8/46, 122ff; 8/48, 93; 8/50, 17; 8/54, 99; 8/58, 73ff; 8/67, 81; 8/68, 9, 22; 8/71, 116; 8/77, 100f; 8/81, 22; 8/84, 221; etc.

¹This theme of the Kantian mentality's role in preparing for Nazism will be developed further in Chap. 10.

things.¹

Apart from the philosophical, religious, and racial aspects of the Nazi myth, there was the mentality of myth itself, that is, the self-conscious creation of a subjective and total worldview with a view to producing a meaningful mental atmosphere conducive to the will and purpose of the Party leadership. It is significant in this connection that a recent historian of the Nazi Movement begins his presentation of the Nazi phenomenon with the notion of myth, and of life within the framework of mythical as opposed to empirical reality.²

From Rosenberg's standpoint, however, the Nazi myth was vitally related to empirical reality. Insofar as the Nazi worldview presupposed the raw realities of the natural world, the myth included empirical reality as an integral part of its overall content. Insofar as Nazi ideology concerned ideals in the realm of human freedom as over against the inscrutable necessities of nature, the myth was to create empirical reality by means of faith and action. The myth was becoming empirical reality in the Nazi regime. Rosenberg's ideology included not only the racial myth per se but its concrete embodiment in the charged atmosphere of a very empirical reality and realm—the Third Reich.

By means of that peculiar atmosphere which according to Rudolf Diels was 'everything' in the Third Reich, the Nazi myth—to which Rosenberg contributed more than anyone, excluding Hitler—made history, created historical reality. To contend that Rosenberg's Mythus had nothing to do with Nazism as empirical history, is to misunderstand and underestimate the mythical yet very real atmosphere of the Nazi era. This atmosphere of myth become history was

¹Cf. F. Grégoire's article on Nazi philosophers, The Third Reich, 678-709.

²D. Orlow, The History of the Nazi Party 1 (Newton Abbot, 1971), 2ff, 10,300.

created and maintained by verbal and visual symbols.

A recent analysis of the Nazi mentality, as indicated by its visual art, understands the Nazi phenomenon in terms of the aesthetizing of reality and the historicizing of myth in an essentially meaningless world. Rosenberg is never mentioned but he would have agreed with the analysis. The Nazi myth, with its roots in the Bayreuth mentality, shaped perceptions; perceptions produced policies, and policies in turn caused historical events and situations. Aesthetic reality was translated into historical reality by means of the theatrical melodrama of the Third Reich. The German people were able to escape life's meaninglessness by being taken up in an institutionalized theatrical atmosphere with its own meaning and truth. Symbolic melodrama, as exemplified by the Nuremberg Party Congresses and Leni Riefenstahl's film Triumph of the Will, determined social and political behavior. Non-verbal aesthetic forms were used to project a world of make-believe and thereby to make reality through the vivid atmosphere of myth.¹

A second means of creating and maintaining the peculiar atmosphere of the Nazi Regime was verbal symbols, that is, human language. Victor Klemperer, a philologist who lived through the Third Reich and made an analysis of its language, concluded that language was more powerful than blood. Language was the Nazis' strongest and subtlest means of attracting and influencing the minds of men. Klemperer had read the Mythus and suffered for it: the Dresden Gestapo hammered his Jewish head with the book for reading such holy writ. Nevertheless he recognized Rosenberg's essential contribution to the verbose rubbish (Phrasenwust) of the Nazi Movement with its murderous results. He noted in particular the philosophical language, the irrationalistic denial of 'eternal truth' and mystical enthroning of 'organic truth', and the regard for the racial 'knowledge' of 'religious myth'. The Nazi Party needed the

¹B. Kinser and N. Kleinman, The Dream That Was No More A Dream: A Search for Aesthetic Reality in Germany, 1890-1945 (New York, 1969), 5ff, 13ff, 20ff.

intellectuals, and to this end not only the propagandist Goebbels but the philosopher Rosenberg.¹

¹V. Klemperer, Lingua Tertii Imperii (Berlin, 1947), 4, 15ff, 18, 22, 106f, 268.

4. THE RACIAL IDEOLOGY OF HISTORY

Nazism, both as an ideology and a political movement, constantly emphasized the importance of race and the racial view of history. The racial idea was not incidental to Nazism; racial considerations played a crucial role in the actual historical development and destiny of the Nazi Movement. But why race was so important to the Nazis, remains somewhat of an enigma. In the NSDAP Alfred Rosenberg was always the symbol of racial ideology. Perhaps his ideology can provide some insight into the significance of race in Nazism.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand Rosenberg's racial ideology of history with a view to discovering the role of race in the Nazi mentality. The main point is that racialism, negatively anti-Semitism and positively Aryanism, was essential to Nazism in that it provided the political movement with a faith, or myth, under the guise of scientific respectability. Nazi racialism had a religious significance. It provided the Nazi mind with a religious philosophy of history and a metaphysical object of faith in the midst of the demise of the Christian view of history and the flux of 20th century historical relativism.

First, we consider Rosenberg's general philosophy of history; second, the negative aspect of the racial myth in the form of the Jewish racial conspiracy; third, the positive myth of the blood or racial interpretation of history in general; and, lastly, the emphasis on history and race in Nazism.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

The myths of mankind normally concern things alleged to have happened, Rosenberg's Mythus was no exception. If his thought consciously took the form of myth, its content had to do with history. His Nazi ideology was formally a philosophy of history in that its major interest was, ostensibly, the nature of historical reality as the basis and impetus for the Nazi political program. The Mythus in fact began with a lengthy account of Rosenberg's racial ideology of history. The 20th century was one of those

epochs in which world history had to be written anew. The principle upon which it would be rewritten was that world history (Weltgeschichte) was fundamentally racial history (Rassengeschichte).¹

Rosenberg cherished a lifelong interest in history. From when Chamberlain first opened his eyes to the vast panorama of human history to the lonely days in Nuremberg, he was fascinated with historical reality. He had the lifelong custom of reading history for pleasure and claimed to have read many well-known historians: Meyer, Mommsen, Gibbon, Burckhardt, Ranke, Treitschke, Trevelyan, Meinecke. His writings are full of historical allusions and discussions. Rosenberg was not himself an historian in that he had no time for extensive original research. He was rather a philosopher of history, primarily interested in broad questions of interpretation and explanation rather than minute details.²

The Nazi philosopher was interested in the most basic problems of historical explanation, such as the reasons for the tragic decline of the Graeco-Roman world. But the historical problem which kindled a special interest, and indeed started him on his literary and political career, was the parallel one of how

¹Mythus, 21ff, 628.

²Cf. LA, 69, 132, 187, 240ff, 340ff. Rosenberg's writings reveal historical knowledge far beyond that of the normal politician, and one should not think that he had no knowledge of historical details. In this connection he was accused of pseudo-scholarship (e.g. by Laqueur, Russia and Germany, 76) in the form of numerous pseudo-learned references in order to give the educated middle classes the impression of original research. Laqueur is right that Rosenberg was a young man in a hurry who relied on standard works without digesting every work he referred to or quoted. But Laqueur gives a very false impression in that, taken as a whole, Rosenberg's works contain very few footnotes. In fact, most all of them, including the Mythus, contain almost none, the only exceptions being some of the early works on Jewry and Freemasonry. Moreover, though Rosenberg claimed to be critical, he did not claim to be an original historian. Admitting that he had little time for research, he consciously put forth an intuitive synthesis of historical facts as he understood them. The Nazi ideologist was not the only historian in a hurry; there have been others! As for Rosenberg's general knowledge, note the testimony of W.J. Martin mentioned in Chap. 3.

to explain the intellectual, cultural, religious, political, social, and economic chaos of early 20th century Europe in the wake of World War 1. The attempt to come to grips with this problem was the underlying motive behind his reflections on history.

Rosenberg, along with others who had imbibed some form of the Germanic ideology, were confronted with the question as to how the Fatherland could have become the playground of alien powers. In response, the individual should not yield to the temptation of evaluating events from the standpoint of personal experience rather than in terms of long-range historical forces. There had to be some sort of unity in the confused multiplicity of events. Current events could only be explained by past history. 'The present is the child of the past, and the forces which today are coming to the surface, it goes without saying, have been secretly at work for a long time'.¹

The historian had to understand history in terms of its 'deeper necessities'. This involved discovering not only the 'occasions' (Anlässe) but also the 'reasons' (Gründe) for events. Why ultimately do men act the way they do? What is the final principle of historical explanation, or ground of historical necessity? The answer lay in ethnic character. The historian's task was to portray 'the course of historical necessity grounded in the characters of nations' (Volkscharaktere).² History was ultimately interpreting national character (Charakterdeutung) and its specific temporal expressions or types (Typendeutung). As the Nazi ideologist once said in a talk to British academics, history must be understood not in terms of fortuitous daily events but in terms of the lasting character which has produced them.³

Rosenberg's assumption was that the character of a people—for example,

¹Rosenberg, Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten (Munich, 1920), 4f (Preface, Dec. 1919).

²S&R 1, 226, 188f.

³Berlin, 3.9.1935 (BA: NS 8/74, 119). Mythus, 40; B&E 1, 347.

the Jews—remains a constant factor in the midst of temporal change. Thus the key to understanding history lay in knowing ethnic character, the invariable factor which ultimately explains human actions. Ethnic character was always identified with the reality of race conceived primarily in psychological terms as racial character. As a spiritual substance (seelische Substanz) race was not subject to changing temporal conditions but to 'unchanging laws of character'.¹

Race was thus the key to history in that it was allegedly the only constant amid a myriad of variables. This did not mean that there were no other significant factors in historical explanation. Rosenberg recognized early on the temptation to oversimplify history by reducing everything to one explanatory 'factor' (Moment); and, in his own mind at least, tried to avoid falling into this snare. For instance, such a momentous event as the World War could not be explained by 'one single cause' (Ursache). Obviously a great number of 'ideological, political, economic, and personal forces' (Kräfte) were involved in determining the circumstances leading to the conflict. But race was the scarlet thread which the inquirer gifted with instinct found amid the mass confusion of historical evidence.²

Moreover, in his many attempts at explaining history Rosenberg often appealed to factors other than race. But all these factors were themselves temporally and historically conditioned and thus could not function as primary principles of historical explanation. Presumably they were variable 'occasions' for what happens rather than 'reasons', in the strict sense, having to do with the unchanging laws of racial character. These factors were only secondary:

¹Mythus, 107, 85, 113. B&E 1, 128; 2, 269, 352, 365; 3, 368 (Rosenberg, Kampf um die Macht: Aufsätze von 1921-1932, Munich, 1942; 368; B&E 3 as Vol. 3 in the four-volume series Blut und Ehre).

²WK 1:6 (Nov. 1924), 2ff; S&R 1, 189, 503.

either included in, or ultimately outweighed by, racial character. 'For our part we do not deny at all various influences—landscape, climate, political tradition—but all these are surmounted (Überhört) by blood and the character bound to blood'.¹

Rosenberg's racial philosophy of history was based squarely upon the philosophy of the Mythus. From the standpoint of pure reason there was no absolute eternal truth accessible to man and thus no absolute universal plan for history. Any attempt to find such in the confused data of human history only led to despair.² Thus the necessity of human presupposition, confession, myth to grasp history. As Rosenberg testified before European academics and politicians in Rome, the necessity of presuppositions meant that ultimately all historical research and judgment could only take the form of a 'personal confession'.³

Genuine personal confession was rooted in a particular ethnic and racial outlook. Rosenberg's outlook was confessedly that of the so-called völkisch worldview. This outlook could not be understood without seeing its anti-Semitism as a negative protest against reactionary Conservatism, subjectivistic Liberalism, and materialistic Marxism. The theological, liberal, and materialistic philosophies of history were inadequate. Modern subjectivism had to be replaced with a new sense of moral obligation and individual commitment (Bindung), not to the Church but to Volk and race. The means to this end was the 'racial myth' and the parallel 'mythical experience' as the only hope for the future.

The fact that there was no overall plan did not mean that history was totally irrational and unknowable. The key to what happens in history was

¹Mythus, 17.

²Mythus, 68ff; WK 2:16 (Nov. 1925), 721f.

³Rosenberg in Convegno Volta Vol. 1 (Rome, 1933), 272 (Processi Verbal, Quinta Seduta—BA: NS 8/3, 131). Cf. Schulungsbrief 2:1 (Jan. 1935), 6-10: Absolute relativism should not reign in historical research. But history, like every other empirical science, was dependent upon creative intuitions, ideas, hypotheses, theories in the face of infinite factual detail. Without such presuppositions all empirical evidence was ultimately dumb.

the driving force of race (rassische Triebkraft) as the ultimate and primary phenomenon (das letzte Urphänomen) in the undulating ebb and flow of history. Race was a primary phenomenon in that it could not be explained as the result of climate or environment or idea, an ultimate one in that human knowledge could not press beyond it. Race was an expression of that biological life which, with its material and psychological aspects, is the ultimate reality knowable to man. Beyond basic biological reality man cannot go.¹

For Rosenberg biological history ultimately made no sense. But there had to be some sense to history to make life and practical activity meaningful, and he would make meaning by interpreting and creating history in terms of the racial myth. Objective historical science was impossible, all 'knowledge' being relative to the mind of the knowing subject. Historical knowledge was practically a matter of the noumenal realm of freedom. Of course the historian should immerse himself in the sources and treat historical facts impartially. But history is more than chronicle, and at some point so-called 'objectivity' must cease and 'evaluation' (Wertung) begin. History must be presented according to some principle of evaluation and interpretation. No matter how painstaking one is with historical evidence, history means evaluating the past and thus shaping in the present the history of the future.²

For Rosenberg the historian had to use historical imagination, put himself in the psychological situation of past generations.³ The ideal of Nazi historiography was to dramatize history by means of a 'sense of kinship' with the past. This meant exacting research for even the most intuitive historian. Otherwise, one fell into the snare of reading the ideas and feelings of the present back into the past instead of understanding it in its own terms. This fallacy betrayed 'a lack of piety with respect to

¹WK 2:16 (Nov. 1925), 721f, 725ff, 733. Cf. Mythus, 23, 392f, 682.

²Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus, 14. Cf. B&E 2, 36, 38, 214, 266.

³LA, 89: 'ganz in die Seelen der Menschen von damals hineinversetzen'.

history'. The ancient problem of historical truth and poetic license would always be with us.¹

Rosenberg's reflections on historical method constituted a negative reaction to the positivistic historiography of the 19th century; which, he said, produced chroniclers but not historians. Nineteenth century historical science unearthed and amassed facts but produced no unified worldview or historical consciousness. The task of the 20th century was to evaluate this mass of historical evidence and produce real history.² Apart from the racial viewpoint, there is similarity between Rosenberg's outlook and the neo-Kantian idealistic philosophy of history represented in the early 20th century by Dilthey, Croce, and Collingwood. The idea of history as the autonomous, imaginative reliving, rethinking, and re-enacting of the mind of the past, which can only be known by being perpetuated in the present, in theory is not far removed from Rosenberg. Though apparently unaware of his affinity with these men, he was not unsympathetic with their attempt to effect a 'Copernican revolution in the theory of history'.³

Rosenberg's presupposition, or key principle of evaluation allegedly facilitating historical science, was the idea of race as an unchanging eternal substance. Genuine historical 'knowledge' was a matter of grasping this eternal ideal reality as it expressed itself in time. Underlying this

¹Denkschrift, 8.3.1939 (BA: NS 8/55, 17ff). Cf. B&E 4, 198.

²Leipzig, 21.4.1941 (BA: NS 8/87, 182); Flensburg, 6.3.1937 (BA: NS 8/78, 92); Berlin, 18.1.1941 (BA: NS 8/90, 9).

³Cf. R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of History (Oxford, 1967), 236, 213ff. P. Gardiner (ed.), Theories of History (London, 1967), 211ff. As far as the present author knows, Rosenberg never refers to Dilthey or Collingwood, and only to Croce as an exponent of Liberalism (Letter, 13.12.1934—BA: NS 8/101, 222). Collingwood, reflecting the intellectual climate of his day, admits with Herder that human physical and psychological differences correspond in differentiating various types of humanity, but curiously rejects the racial explanation of this differentiation as both unhistorical and unethical (91f). The point here is not that Collingwood, himself a scrupulous Oxford historian, is to be put into the Rosenberg school; but simply that his attempt to apply Kantian epistemology to historical method was, at least in principle, similar to Rosenberg's outlook.

outlook was the old Platonic notion, taken over from Chamberlain, that only the eternal and unchanging is a proper object of knowledge. History of course had to do with the phenomenal realm of nature, with the discontinuity of temporal flux. But one must presuppose some substantial continuity, something which remains to experience change, in order to make any sense of history at all. 'For only something which is constant (beständig) can have history, i.e., suffer changes. Only by means of the invariable character of an essential reference point (Beständigsein eines Kernpunktes) can one ascertain its changes'.¹

On the one hand, history was rational in the sense that it was supposed to conform to inexorable natural laws such as the struggle for existence and natural selection. Significant historical events such as World War 1 were not the product of mere chance but of a long process of necessary historical causation. On the other hand, historical reality was irrational in the sense that nature itself followed no pre-ordained plan. History ultimately floated on an indeterminate ocean of chance. Furthermore, men, supposedly acting in accordance with both nature and freedom, often behaved in an irrational manner. Just like nature as a whole, the life of nations and races (i.e., history) did not follow the dictates of logic but rather those of passion. For instance, such 'incalculable elements' in history supposedly produced the catastrophic events beginning in 1914!²

The Nazi ideologist's view of history as a combination of the rational and irrational, as the product of deterministic nature and human freedom, was reflected by his conception of destiny (Schicksal). He accepted with Homer and the ancient Greeks the role of the impersonal fates (Moirai) and

¹Danzig, 14.4.1940 (BA: NS 8/61, 73). Cf. Entwurf, 1.12.1942 (BA: NS 8/66, 210).

²Berlin, 17.1.1935 (B&E 2, 247f). Cf. Interview, 18.8.1934 (BA: NS 8/38, 59): 'The events of world history seldom proceed according to logic and reason but are rather the results of passions'.

spoke of destiny in naturalistic terms as a frightful impersonal power outside man's control. As he once put it (in the context of justifying the Nazi outlook on the Jewish problem): 'Observed attentively the history of nations is...a gigantic experiment of Nature, Destiny, or Providence, however one wants to term the determination (Bestimmtheit) of events'.¹

At the same time, man was supposed to be free and could not be relegated to the mechanistic realm of nature alone. Destiny was not irresistible fate (Fatum) but a working together of external nature and man's internal response to it.² The heroic German outlook was to fight destiny. There was no room for fatalism in the Nazi ideology. The very essence of the Nazi Revolution was the inner will to oppose destiny. In fact the Nazi faith had reversed the course of destiny and produced a 'great destiny' in the 20th century.³ Supposedly destiny was not ultimately an 'inescapable mechanistic force' but somehow took its course according to inner laws (innere Gesetzmässigkeit)—that is, natural laws in the spiritual realm—operative in the 'contest between outer circumstances and inner attitude'.⁴

Although Rosenberg often referred to opposing philosophies of history, he had little time for any systematic analysis of them. These competing views were, chiefly, the Christian, Liberal, and Marxist philosophies characteristically lumped together as outgrowths of the Jewish mind. Unscientific in that they did not take into account the key factor of race, they were moreover

¹Frankfurt, 26.3.1941 (WK, Sept. 1941, 5). Cf. Mythus, 42,399ff.

²Wille und Macht, 15.6.1935, 2. Cf. Mythus, 400ff.

³Rosenberg, Neugeburt Europas als werdende Geschichte (Halle, 1939), 15-17. Cf. VB, 2.7.1935; 29.3.1938 (BA: NS 8/74, 3; 8/81, 17).

⁴Speech (to troops in France), Nov. 1943 (BA: NS 8/68, 179f). One of Rosenberg's mottos was: 'Destiny goes halfway, man himself must go the other half' (NSMH 7:77, Aug. 1936, 712).

unnatural in that their anthropology of human equality was opposed to the aristocratic laws of nature. Furthermore, their dogmatic understanding of history as the outworking of a universal plan for Christianizing, humanizing, or socializing mankind on this earth was both fatalistic and materialistic, and as such alien to true human freedom. In addition, these three philosophies of history, though fatalistic in form, were progressive and, in this sense, optimistic in content. But superficial optimism and qualitative progress were inimical to a truly profound view of historical reality. The common denominator of all three outlooks was the superficial, optimistic, deterministic materialism of the Jews.

Particular criticism was devoted to the Conservative philosophy of history represented by Oswald Spengler's morphological conception. Probably this was because of its similarity to Nazism in the form of the naturalistic, biological, and cyclical approach presented in Der Untergang des Abendlandes. In brief, Spengler was a captive in the spineless conservative camp of an irresolute past. The decline of the West was not to come but had already taken place! Unlike Gobineau, Spengler did not really appreciate the full significance of race in history.¹ His view of history represented a naive milieu theory of environmental influence, and his theory of the rise of cultures (Kulturkreislehre) neglected the essential role of racial factors in cultural development. Thus Spengler, despite his sympathy for Fascism and the Action Française, opposed Nazi anti-Semitism and did not understand the significance of Hitler, namely the creation of a popular movement (Volksbewegung) with a new faith.² Although Spengler ostensibly rejected Semitic fatalism, his doctrine of the irreversible zoological character (Nichtumkehrbarkeit) of human history was really a fatalistic pessimism which relegated and limited historical reality to the realm of material causality. He really

¹VB, 11.8.1921 (S&R 2, 510-512). Cf. VB, 9.11.1923!

²WK 2:9 (1.5.1925), 396ff (B&E 3, 341ff). Cf. NSMH 1:4 (July 1930), 18ff.

did not understand the Faustian mentality which willfully creates its own destiny. The spiritual force of blood was also irreversible 'destiny'!¹

In his first book Rosenberg seemed fascinated with the Marxist idea of the importance of economic and social factors in history. The historical significance of the Jews was due more to their economic and social position than to political, cultural, or religious conditions. But the Jews' position in the social structure could be traced to their attitude toward money and thus was ultimately a matter of racial character. The Marxist reduced all religious and political struggles in history to class struggles. 'It may be quite interesting to try to illuminate history from this point of view, and naturally no one should underestimate the effects of social structure'. But the Marxists could not resist the temptation to dogmatize this abstract principle of class struggle as the only factor in world history.²

The myth of the blood, allegedly no abstract principle but simply a concrete reality of life, was to take the place of the lifeless dogmas of Marxism and Christianity. History and thus the political mission of the future no longer meant the struggle of class against class, dogma against dogma; but conflict between races and peoples, that is, spiritual value (Seelenwert) against spiritual value. According to Rosenberg the racial view of history would soon become self-evident knowledge.³

THE JEWISH RACIAL CONSPIRACY

Negatively the racial myth meant, above all, anti-Semitism; positively, Aryanism or Germanism. The heart of the myth, indeed the meaning of history, lay in the conflict between Jew and Aryan. Crucial to the racial myth in its Nazi form was the myth of the Jewish racial conspiracy as a faith giving the German people a sense of mission and stimulating them to political action.⁴

¹Mythus, 673, 550f, 403f.

²S&R 1, 315-317, 188.

³Mythus, 1f (Introduction, Feb. 1930).

⁴N. Cohn, Warrant for Genocide, The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (Harmondsworth, 1970), 12fn, 187ff.

Anti-Semitism, the Aryan myth, and the idea of the Jewish world conspiracy were not original with Rosenberg. However, more than anyone else, he championed this mentality in the Nazi Party. The conspiracy mentality, as epitomized by the forged Protocols of the Elders of Zion, was the only new element in post-World War 1 anti-Semitism, and Rosenberg was the one primarily responsible for its propagation in the NSDAP.¹

Rosenberg's initial interest in the Jewish Question was occasioned by reading Chamberlain, not by personal experience. 'The fundamental realization of the Jewish problem had gripped me and refused to let me go. Therefore later political events appeared to me to be necessary—I needed to add no subjective experience whatever'.² Stimulated by Chamberlain's Grundlagen he read Wellhausen, Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte, and various other authors on Jewish religion and history. Rosenberg claimed to have read not only anti-Semitic but also liberal, philosemitic, and Jewish works such as Graetz's standard Geschichte der Juden, and Baeck's well-known Das Wesen des Judentums.³ Presumably he knew what to look for from reading Chamberlain and drawing upon a vast corpus of anti-Semitic literature: for example, Gourgenot des Mousseaux, Le Juif, le judaïsme et la judaïsation des peuples chrétiens (1869), which he translated into German (1920). Rosenberg objected to the author's strict Roman Catholicism and pointed out the work's scientific deficiencies in the light of modern Biblical criticism, but applauded his prophetic analysis of the Jewish problem. It was, however, naive to hope for the conversion of the Jews. 'The Jewish character as such has not changed;

¹Cf. P.G.J. Pulzer, The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria (New York, 1964), 300, 316f. Cf. Laqueur, Russia and Germany, 68ff, 93ff; Cohn, Myth, 214ff.

²Wie der Mythos entstand, Nov. 1935 (BA: NS 8/22, 36ff).

³Cf. S&R 1, 149n, 155n; Spur (1920), 4f; WK 1:6 (Nov. 1924), 17; LA, 69f. There is no good reason to doubt that Rosenberg read such works since he refers to them and quotes them. Also, there is the confirmatory testimony of W.J. Martin mentioned in Chap. 3. That Rosenberg read with an anti-Semitic bias, goes without saying.

whether Talmud Jew or atheistic stock-exchange speculator, the mainspring (Triebfeder) is always the same'.¹

Anti-Semitism was for the Nazi ideologist a life-long obsession. Intellectual and racial anti-Semitism is reflected in his early unpublished notes, elaborated in several books, preached in countless articles and speeches over a 25-year political career, and defended in his memoirs. Rosenberg always stressed the intellectual character and rational basis of his brand of anti-Semitism. As a Jena professor put it: 'Every educated man has to be an anti-Semite'.² According to Rosenberg, anti-Semitism was an 'economic, political, national, religious, and moral necessity'.³

Rosenberg appealed to a long anti-Semitic tradition deeply rooted in Western intellectual history with particular emphasis on the modern period, Religious anti-Semitism, from the very nature of the case, had been an integral part of the Christian tradition. But Rosenberg could also appeal to the intellectual anti-Semitism of the liberal Enlightenment and 19th century, not to mention modern racial anti-Semitism. One could find anti-Semitic statements in Voltaire and Rousseau, Kant and Fichte, Frederick the Great and Disraeli, Schopenhauer and Wagner, Hugo and Balzac, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, and many others.⁴

In fact each major 19th century ideology had its own brand of anti-Semitism to which the Nazi ideologist could have appealed. Conservatism saw the Jews as the incarnation of revolutionary unrest. To Liberalism they were the embodiment

¹ H.R. Gourgenot des Mousseaux, Der Jude, das Judentum und die Verjudung der christlichen Völker (Munich, 1920), 7-8 (Translator's Foreword). Cf. WK 1:4 (Sept. 1924), 15ff.

² WK 3:31 (July 1926), 327. Rosenberg, in appealing to German students, quoted a certain Prof. Plates.

³ Deutschlands Erneuerung 6:6 (June 1922), 361ff. Cf. S&R 2, 481ff.

⁴ Cf. L. Poliakov, Histoire de l'antisémitisme [Vol. 3] de Voltaire à Wagner (Paris, 1968), 103ff. Le mythe aryen (Paris, 1971), 219ff. In fact, Rosenberg only mentioned some of these figures; but the point is, he had no difficulty in finding anti-Semitic ammunition.

of ethnic intolerance; to Socialism, the personification of bourgeois Capitalism. Indeed, most leading 19th century Socialists—for example, Fourier, Proudhon, Marx, Engels, Lasalle, Bakunin—expressed strong anti-Semitic sentiments.¹ But, as Rosenberg acknowledged, the racial anti-Semitism of the Nazi 20th century, with its recognition of the eternally invariable character of Jewry and pugnacious political program, was quite different from the inconsistent anti-Semitism of the Age of Liberalism or the Middle Ages.²

The thesis of Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten (1920), as the title suggested, was the unchanging and unchangeable character of the Jew throughout all the changing circumstances of history. Rooted in race this character was unalterable by baptism or any other external circumstance. As a result Jewish history was ultimately a matter of natural necessity. Proof was the universal negative reaction to the Jews at all times and in all lands. There was also the uniform testimony of the classic literary deposits of the Jewish spirit, as Rosenberg tried to show in his Unmoral im Talmud (1920).

'The Jewish race and its spirit has maintained itself unchanged for 2,000 years'.³

The Jewish character was marked by deceitful profiteering, a double moral standard for non-Jews, religious intolerance, anti-metaphysical materialism, and so forth. Above all there was the insatiable lust for power (Machttrieb). Helpless before this 'demonic drive', the Jews conspired at nothing less than world dominion by means of materialistic ideology, social revolution, and economic wealth.

¹E. Silberner, Sozialisten zur Judenfrage (Berlin, 1962), 16ff, passim. Cf. E. Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism (New York, 1969), 421.

²Rosenberg to Hess, 17.5.1940 (CDJC: CXLIII-369, 4f).

³S&R 1, 327, 323ff; 1, 214, 195, 172, 145, 111. For a brief exposé of Rosenberg's unhistorical and unscrupulous handling of the Talmud, see Oxford Hebraist H. Danby's Foreword to an English summary of Unmoral im Talmud in Friends of Europe Publications No. 54 (London, 1937).

The black, red, and gold Internationals are the dreams of Jewish "philosophers" from Ezra, Ezekiel, and Nehemiah to Marx, Rothschild, and Trotsky....I am not competent to pass judgment on the no doubt manifold roots and moving factors of the World War. But it seems to me that one root is undeniable: the world conspiracy (Weltkomplott) for the establishment of world empire methodically managed by the immeasurable wealth of the Jews, secured by secret societies (Geheimbünde), and using the national aspirations of peoples with Satanic slyness.¹

The fantasy of a world-wide conspiracy of Jewish Liberalism, Capitalism, Communism, and Catholicism was elaborated further in Das Verbrechen der Freimaurerei (1921). Behind the contemporary spiritual and material chaos stood a conspiracy, centered in London or perhaps New York, against everything German. 'Wherever we look today we are confronted beyond all doubt with an organized political society made up of schemers from all nations, linked together and led largely by international Jewish high finance'.²

The Jews were in league with the Masons, in that both had the same 'Old Testament ideological and ritualistic background. Moreover, both espoused the same Liberal ideology in the form of the dogma of humanity. Both Freemasonry and Jewry were classical examples of Liberal intolerance: though demanding tolerance from others, they did not practice it themselves. Freemasonry was included in the plot probably as a means of implicating Liberalism and as a result of 19th century literature blaming the Masons along with the Jews for modern revolutionary movements. To substantiate his outlook Rosenberg made use of fantastic material from numerous anti-Semitic and anti-Masonic authors regarding ritual murders and the like. The Jew was the key to history—all was clear to 'the man in the know' (der Wissende).³

Moreover, the Jesuits were dragged into the scheme on the ground of alleged parallels between the Jewish and Jesuit ideal. Both represented the same

¹S&R 1, 166, 255, 128, 138n, 146ff, 153ff, 230ff, 282ff, 305ff.

²S&R 1, 453, 488, 397ff. The book's material was originally published in 1920 in Eckart's Auf gut deutsch (398n).

³S&R 1, 493, 411ff, 434f, 460, 474, 490, 498.

spirit of 'absolute intolerance'. Both used the same methods. Both advocated the extermination (Ausrottung) of opponents whether heathen or heretic. In short, both opposed Germanic character; therefore, they had to be collaborating with each other. The basic assumption was the practical consistency of the devil and the fundamentally Jewish ideology of Jesuits, Freemasons, Capitalists, and Marxists.

In reflecting on one factor influencing the history of nations, one easily falls into the temptation of wanting to reduce everything which happens to one common denominator. This is, to be sure, not possible. But even when we pass judgment ever so carefully, we constantly encounter the same point of departure, a joint working-together of forces which seem contrary to each other, so that it is really obvious to regard these destructive tendencies as the outworkings of one and the same ideal power (ideelle Macht).

The goal of Freemasonry is, admittedly, the world republic. That contemporary Socialism, indeed Anarchism as well, are seen as the means for attaining this goal, cannot be doubted. The only question is, when this instrument was first acknowledged as such. This is, to be sure, hard to determine. The decisive factor, however, is the direction of ideas (Gedankenrichtung), common to all these movements, which of necessity leads them all together.

In support of the conspiracy notion the Nazi ideologist appealed to the Zionist phenomenon in Der staatsfeindliche Zionismus (1922). The Zionist Movement was at the heart of the plot in that Jewish high finance and world revolution were working together toward Jewish hegemony from Mount Zion. Evidence was: the Balfour Declaration as England's attempt, under the influence of Jewish money, to win world Jewry for the Entente, as well as the sympathy for the Communist and Zionist causes among treasonous German Jews. Like all Jews they wanted to be citizens of Zion while simultaneously demanding full civil rights in every other national state. Why were they pacifistic in Germany and chauvinistic elsewhere, demanded their own rights but had no respect for those of the Arabs? 'Pan-Jewish unity' solidified the sons of Israel. Anti-Zionist Jews were a façade since the Jews were by nature and race one in purpose. The Jew—whether atheist or orthodox, liberal or conservative, socialist or capitalist—was always first and foremost a Jew. The

¹S&R 1, 503f, 517ff, 536, 554ff, 561. Rosenberg further presented the complicity of Freemasonry in Freimaurerische Weltpolitik im Lichte der kritischen Forschung (1929), to which he wrote a new foreward in 1941 maintaining that political Freemasonry was still a force to reckon with in world politics (BA: NS 8/63, 98).

Zionist Movement comprehended them all.¹

According to Rosenberg the Zionist conspiracy was simply a fact of contemporary history. The same people who criticized German militarism praised Zionism--whose chauvinist, nationalist, and racist character was obvious to all. The Zionist ideology was simply the modern form of the ancient Jewish myth of being God's elect. It was really a form of pan-Asianism with inner affinities to Bolshevism. There were in fact striking parallels between Zion and Moscow. Indeed, as one Jewish publicist admitted, like the Catholic and Communist Internationals the Zionist International unfolded secular power from religious roots.²

If Zionism was the heart of the Jewish conspiracy, Bolshevism was its most potent and dangerous expression. Rosenberg's case for the Jewish character of Bolshevism was put forth in Pest in Russland (1922). The Russian Revolution was explained in terms of long-range factors in Russian history, curiously enough without mentioning the Jews. The anarchistic drive slumbering in the Russian national character (as manifested, for example, by the peasant rebellions of the 17th and 18th centuries and the theoretical considerations of Bakunin in the 19th) played a significant role. But the Bolshevik Revolution could not be explained solely from Russian history and Russian character apart from biological and racial factors. It was essentially a rebellion of nomadic, oriental, Tatar blood whipped up by unscrupulous Asiatic Jews. That the leading Bolsheviks were for the most part 'Jewish conspirators' was obvious to all. The Red Terror was not primarily a Russian but a Jewish, Lithuanian, Polish, Armenian, Hungarian phenomenon, in that the Jews fired up alien races and peoples against the Russian nation.³

In the Mythus (169, 200ff) Freemasonry was identified with political Liberalism as a secularized Christianity, an anti-church (Gegenkirche).

¹S&R 2, 7ff, 67, 20, 25, 45, 56, 88, 103f, 106f. Much of Rosenberg's Zionismus was originally published in AGD in 1921.

²Völkischer Kurier, 10.7./28.7.1924 (B&E 3, 303, 314). Cf. Mythus, 463ff; VB, 26./27.7.1925; 5.10.1921 (S&R 2, 547).

³S&R 2, 198ff, 207ff, 209, 215ff, 221. The Bolshevik dictatorship rested on Russia's traditional 'anarchistic despotism', but the 'Bolshevist sphinx' itself

From a long-range historical perspective the Bolshevik Revolution was simply a new onslaught of the Asiatic spirit against Europe (after the manner of the Huns, Arabs, Mongolians, and Turks). Russian history was primarily the conflict between the European and Asiatic character at war within the divided soul of the Russian people. Like all other Bolshevik leaders, Lenin, with his Tatar skull and corresponding worldview, was not really Slavic or European. Moreover, the real leadership was not in the hands of Lenin but the Jews, the apostles of the advancing Völkerchaos. Bolshevism reflected the old struggle between the Asiatic spirit led by international Jews and Europe led by ethnic (völkisch) Germans, between chaos and form (Gestalt).¹

Furthermore, Rosenberg did not shrink from utilizing the forged Protocols of the Elders of Zion in warning the German people. Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion und die jüdische Weltpolitik (1923) was to portray the 'irrefutable facts of contemporary world politics' by elucidating the Protocols which had opened the eyes of millions to the real explanation of otherwise inexplicable current events. The Protocols were presented as the genuine record of the 1897 Zionist Congress in Basel, which allegedly aimed at universal revolutionary subversion and political dictatorship by combining the Red and Gold Internationals within a pan-Jewish conspiracy. That this was the product of both political **instinct** and ingenious planning, was self-evident to anyone knowing the Jewish character (Wesen). Though seemingly insane this plan, this conspiracy against Russia and Germany, was actually being fulfilled by current events! This was all leading up to the final, apocalyptic struggle (Endkampf) of all true Europeans for existence, freedom, and a new world order against the Jewish demon from another spiritual planet.

was a distinctively Jewish political struggle (B&E 3, 299f). Distinctively Russian factors were sufficient to explain the violent Revolution as such but not its specifically Bolshevik character (WK 4:41, May 1927, 215). Cf. Mythus, 112f, 208ff, 213f.

¹S&R 2, 246-248. Cf. Introduction to D. Eckart/O. v. Kursell, Die Totengrüber Russlands (Munich, 1921), 3ff; plus many Rosenberg articles on 'Jewish Bolshevism'.

'The Jew is present in our history as our metaphysical counterpart (Gegenbild)'.¹

The Nazi propagandist discussed the problem of the origin and authenticity of the Protocols at some length, coming to the conclusion that there was at present no juridically conclusive proof for either absolute authenticity or forgery. But this was no argument against 'the inner authenticity' of the Protocols, whose 'pan-Jewish völkisch outlook' was reflected in countless typically Jewish sources whose authenticity nobody doubted. Rosenberg's method was to try to show from ethnic psychology that the Protocols genuinely reflected the instinctive Jewish spirit regardless of their historical origin.² This position was further developed in Der Weltverschwörerkongress zu Basel (1927) with an allegedly critical discussion of the allegations against the Protocols and a special appeal to Theodor Herzl's diary as a crown witness for their authenticity. The unbiased scholar would come to the conclusion that they had their origin among Jewish conspirators as a 'probability bordering on certainty'.³

The Jewish racial conspiracy played a crucial role in Rosenberg's ideology and in Nazi propaganda from the beginning to the end of the Movement. Did

¹S&R 2, 428, 382, 339, 328, 301f, 374, 288, 249ff. Rosenberg told psychologist Gilbert at Nuremberg that (contrary to K. Heiden, Der Fuehrer, London, 1967, 9ff) he had not brought the Protocols from Russia but had accidentally stumbled upon them in Munich at the end of 1919. They proved to be an 'eye-opener' and he called them to Hitler's attention. He had known that they were supposed to be a forgery but maintained that they 'sounded genuine'. G.M. Gilbert, Psychology of Dictatorship (New York, 1950), 50n. Cf. Kelley, 22 Cells at Nuremberg, 35: 'When I cited this book [i.e., Heiden] to him Rosenberg flew into a fury and called Heiden several sorts of names, insisting that, though he had heard of them in Russia, he had first seen the Protocols in Munich in 1919. He felt at once that they were of "great value in revealing the international Jewish plot, and I determined to keep them before the public"'.

²S&R 2, 258, 405, 355, 369, 378, 390.

³Rosenberg, Der Weltverschwörerkongress zu Basel (Munich, 1927), 3ff, 20ff, 30. Rosenberg especially tried to refute B. Segel, Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion kritisch beleuchtet (Berlin, 1924).

Rosenberg really believe in the Jewish conspiracy and the Protocols, or was it only necessary political propaganda? It is fairly certain that, given his stress on subjective genuineness, he did not believe in the objective authenticity of the Protocols. Moreover, he purportedly confessed to Kurt Ludecke in the early 1920's that their genuineness was doubtful. During the Bern Trial in the mid 1930's he basically repeated his previous position. The issue was less a matter of the so-called authenticity of the Protocols than of their 'inner truth'.¹ Furthermore, the Bern Trial itself amply demonstrated the solidarity of world Jewry, which is what the Protocols were really about anyway. In 1939 Rosenberg sent Hess a copy of his 1923 book but advised him not to exploit the Protocols themselves on the ground that such could only lead to endless debates on their authenticity.²

Nevertheless Rosenberg was convinced of the reality of the conspiracy itself. As he once put it, the pan-Jewish conspiracy of world revolution and ruin was not the imagination of a few fanatics but 'historical fact'.³ He often claimed that future historical research would provide conclusive evidence to vindicate his allegations. This was not mere propaganda. During the War the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg scoured the Continent for evidence. Rosenberg could rejoice to Bormann that a flag combining the Union Jack, the Star of David, and a Masonic symbol had been found in a lodge on the Isle of Jersey.⁴ Moreover, two days after D-Day he authored a memorandum to Hitler on all the accomplishments of the ERR; for example, the confiscated archives of the House of Rothschild would yield evidence to

¹VB, 29.1.1934 (BA: NS 8/25, 39). Cf. articles on the Bern Trial in BA: NS 15/141; Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 482.

²Rosenberg to Hess, 18.12.1939 (BA: NS 8/182, 11f). To this evidence one might add the fact that in his introduction to Rosenberg's works Baeumler gives the impression that neither he nor Rosenberg accepted the Protocols' objective authenticity (S&R 1, xxif).

³VB, 13.1.1936 (BA: NS 15/159).

⁴Rosenberg to Bormann, 4.2./10.2.1941 (BA: NS 8/185, 198, 161). Cf. LA, 314; Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus, 22; S&R 1, 491.

alter our view of modern history.¹

Finally, Rosenberg tried to demonstrate from contemporary history that Jewish Capitalism was in league with Jewish Marxism, for example, in Die internationale Hochfinanz als Herrin der Arbeiterbewegung in allen Ländern (1925). It was necessary to understand: first, that the political aims of Jewish high finance corresponded to those of Marxism even where at first glance there seemed to be only bitter opposition between them; second, that the politics of all Marxist movements only served the stock exchanges of the world, that is, that Marxism was a direct tool of stock-exchange Capitalism (Börsenkapitalismus); and third, that this could only be explained by the fact that both, rootless financial Capitalism (Finanzkapital) as well as rootless Marxism, were led by Jews. That international Capitalism determined national and international politics, and that such was almost totally Jewish, had been demonstrated by thorough literature on the subject, for example, Professor Werner Sombart's well-known work, Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben.²

One must not think that Rosenberg viewed history as simply one vast racial conspiracy. He always tried to do justice to other factors and often discussed historical questions without mentioning race or conspiracy. At Nuremberg he ridiculed fellow Nazis such as Streicher for their 'pseudo-scientific approach to racial antisemitism'. Gauleiter Mutschmann, for example, came from the school of fellow Thuringian Theodor Fritsch (author of the popular Handbuch der Judenfrage) and thus 'saw too many Jews'. General Ludendorff's wife 'made out of world history merely a matter of secret conspiracies'.³

Ludendorff and the Tannenberg Bund were a case in point. In Freimaurerische Weltpolitik im Licht der kritischen Forschung (1929) Rosenberg ridiculed

¹Rosenberg to Hitler, 8.6.1944 (BA: NS 8/132, 54f).

²Rosenberg, Die internationale Hochfinanz (Munich, n.d.), 3-4, passim.

³LA, 102,151; Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (1.10.1946), 112. Cf. LA, 84ff, where Rosenberg explains the rise of National Socialism in terms of economic and social factors like industrialization and urbanization.

those who tried to make Freemasonry out to be nothing more than 'a systematic, sinister Jewish conspiracy from the start'. Such uncritical exaggerations, indicating the loss of intellectual balance, only did harm. In this nervous and excited age Nazis had to maintain self-control and discernment, holding only to that which could be researched scientifically. 'We do not now want to degenerate into the one-sided outlook of conceiving the whole of contemporary world history as merely the outgrowth of the plans of secret Masonic Father Superiors'.¹

In 1931 Rosenberg publicly attacked Ludendorff for seeing all of history as simply one single complex of conspiracies and explaining all political events in terms of the machinations of 'supranational powers'. To be sure, these played their part. But Ludendorff went far beyond actual facts as a result of a lack of historical judgment. The General's dilettantism in the field of history produced a psychotic mystagogy and mythology of history (Geschichtsmystagogie/Geschichtsmythologie) which uncritically popularized and violently oversimplified correct insights. Due to ignorance of historical research he fell prey, in the midst of a period of spiritual chaos, to the fantasies of his sensation-hungry Frau with her dilettante methods and conclusions. A psychiatric case, he made everyone a mere puppet of supranational powers and turned the Tannenberg Bund into a typical religious sect. No one educated historically immediately maintained causal connections where it was only a matter of investigating what happened (Gehaltsprüfung). Allegedly a more critically-minded man, Rosenberg could not sacrifice his

¹Rosenberg, Freimaurerische Weltpolitik (Munich, 1929), 41,5ff,8,10f. That Rosenberg had the House of Ludendorff in mind, is clear from the 1931 (3rd) ed. (p. 7). As early as 1920 Rosenberg cautioned against the delusion of making all the facts of contemporary life dependent on international conspirators (S&R 1, 515n).

scientific convictions to a superficial smattering (Halbbildung) of philosophy and history.¹

The Jewish problem was supposedly the heart of the racial issue. Yet Rosenberg was inconsistent as to whether the Jews really constituted a race or not. He often spoke loosely of the Jews in racial terms. For example: 'If Jewry (Judenheit) is not a unified race, then there is no such thing at all'.² In the Mythus, however, the Jews were not even accorded the dignity of constituting a Volk. They were a mere gang of humans (Menschengruppe), biological and social parasites (Schmarotzer) living off other peoples. This was allegedly not a moral judgment but a simple biological fact in accord with natural laws. As a parasitical organism the Jews had no organic spiritual character (Seelengestalt) and thus no racial form (Rassengestalt) as well. According to Rosenberg the parasitic Jews were an 'antirace' (Gegenrasse), the racial opposite and opponent of the creative Nordic race. The distinctive Jewish myth was the 'antiracial idea' (gegenrassische Idee).³

The Nazi ideologist conceived of the Aryan and the Jewish races primarily in ideal and symbolic, rather than in concrete terms. These 'pure races' were pure abstractions, metaphysical ideas or symbols, created for the practical purpose of giving a sense of meaning and mission to historical and political life. Rosenberg candidly admitted the role of the Jewish race as a symbol in the ideological and political struggle:

To every intellectual assertion of our opponents the Movement had to experience, put to the test, and depict ever more consciously a new position. In Jewry the symbolic negative counterpart (Gegensymbol) of all European races, so to speak, was created; and every German saw it daily with all its menacing features before his eyes. One can win whole nations for an idea only if a

¹NSMH 2:16 (July 1931), 334 (there is on this same page an advertisement for Fritsch's Handbuch der Judenfrage!), 289ff, 291f, 298f, 301, 305, 307, 334 (cf. 2:18, 429). Cf. Diary, 6.8.1934 (PT, 54f).

²VB, 22.3.1922 (S&R 2, 607). Cf. Book Review, Winter 1935 (BA: NS 8/40, 208).

³Mythus, 461-463, 364. Here Rosenberg consciously drew upon Sozialparasitismus im Völkerleben (1927) by fellow Balt Arno Schickedanz, Nazi Party comrade and friend from his student days.

correspondingly negative idea (Gegengedanke) stands vivid and tangible before the broad masses. The racial theory, no matter how good, would never have become so popular (volkstümlich), in view of the long duration of the foreign hypnosis; would never have been able really to lay hold of the inner man, as is the case today, if the Jewish race had not stood before the German nation...visible, to all as a foreboding symbol of horror (abschreckendes Gleichnis).¹

THE MYTH OF BLOOD AND RACE

The positive thrust of Rosenberg's ideological interpretation of history had to do with the reality of the Aryan or Germanic race. But race was not simply or chiefly a physical or material reality but a metaphysical, spiritual, psychological 'substance'. Race meant the racial soul (Rassenseele) from which flowed the myth, or religion, of the blood. The phenomenon of race did not only concern biological events in time and space but life (Lebensgeschehen) on a higher plane. The blood was a great mystery only divined by mystical intuition. Thus racial history (Rassengeschichte) was natural history (Naturgeschichte) and spiritual mysticism (Seelenmystik), or the history of the religion of the blood, at one and the same time. Such was Rosenberg's 'history-making gaze into the past'.²

Race was as obvious a fact for the 19th century as reason for the 18th, or God for the 17th, or social class for many academics of the 20th century. Throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th the reality, inequality, and inferiority of human races were taken for granted by educated men in all academic disciplines. The existence of race, the force of heredity, and the congenital difference between Indo-European Aryan and oriental Semite enjoyed the blessing of natural science. Philologists, anthropologists, biologists, philosophers, theologians, historians, sociologists, psychologists, politicians—all took seriously the reality of race. Pictet and Müller, Quatrefages and Virchow, Darwin and Huxley, Spencer and Nietzsche, Renan and

¹Unpublished Article, 28.7.1938 (BA: NS 8/51, 88,93f).

²Mythus, 1f (Introduction, Feb. 1930).

Wellhausen, Carlyle and Treitschke, Marx and Engels, Freud and Jung, Bebel and Kautsky, Roosevelt (Theodore) and Rathenau—all paid homage to the Aryan myth in some form at one time or another.¹

Thus it was only natural that the racial view of history should appear; as, for example, in the early romantic novels of Disraeli. Gobineau's pessimistic Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines (1853/55) was the classic presentation of 'the conviction that the racial question overshadows all other problems of history, that it holds the key to them all'.² The classic presentation in German was Chamberlain's optimistic Grundlagen des XIX. Jahrhunderts (1899), which is full of references to 19th century scholars and which stimulated Rosenberg's racial ideology of history. But the Nazi ideologist could have found support for this in a hundred other places. For instance, the key concept of the 'racial soul' is found in Le Bon's Les lois psychologiques de l'évolution des peuples (1894).³

Rosenberg confessed that his views on the significance of race came primarily from his own artistic experience of life and not from reading modern biologists and anthropologists. Originally aroused by Chamberlain, his intuitive observations of nature and history led to the conclusion that life's outer and inner forms (Gestalten) always correspond to each other. The same laws of life apply to man as well as beast. Although it was impossible to ascertain these laws by experimentation with human life, history was the great experiment of life and the keen observer instinctively saw them operative in history. It was this inner intuitive instinct which guided Chamberlain when, due to the unadvanced state of the racial science of his day, he had to admit that the so-called 'Aryan race' was, strictly

¹ Cf. Poliakov, Le mythe aryen, 219ff, who goes so far as to characterize the second half of the 19th and early 20th century as the 'Aryan Era' (263ff).

² A. Gobineau, Selected Political Writings (London, 1971), 41. Cf. Poliakov, Le mythe aryen, 229ff, 237.

³ Poliakov, Le mythe aryen, 297.

speaking, more an abstract idea than an empirical reality. Nevertheless, with Chamberlain, Rosenberg believed that racial research and self-consciousness, along with political and cultural success, would eventually demonstrate the concrete reality of the Aryan.¹

Rosenberg always insisted upon the scientific character of his racial views. Racial science, as he told Germany's military leaders, represented a scientific revolution as definitive as that of Copernicus. Just as Copernicus sought to give a rational account of the universe, racial science tried to explain human character (Menschentum) in terms of its inner laws.² Racial science, as he told history teachers, was the crowning culmination of 400 years of scientific discovery; it represented, not contemporary phantasy, but 'scientific certainty'. Yet it also co-incided with the rising Germanic instinct of the 20th century. The combination of these two developments presented an inexplicable but monumental phenomenon which, thanks to the Nazi Movement, was not only an historical fact but the foundation for the politics and history of the future.³

Rosenberg's own version of this Copernican revolution concerned the allegedly scientific discovery of the racial soul. This supposedly revolutionary discovery denoted the attempt of a higher German self-consciousness to explain and evaluate itself; to fathom not only the laws of the universe but also those of the psychological, intellectual, and moral life of races and peoples. Body and soul could not be abstracted from each other in that the laws of physical heredity were reflected in the spiritual outlook of a given human type. Nazi racial science meant the new knowledge—or perhaps better, a new confession (Bekennntnis)—that history was the dramatic struggle of various races and peoples, and thus between various worldviews and ethnic

¹Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 72f, 106, 125. LA, 129f.

²Berlin, 7.3.1935 (B&E 2, 296).

³Eger, 2.4.1939 (B&E 4, 268).

characters. This was the ultimate knowledge attainable by 'creative historical science'.¹

As the Nazi ideologist told the military, racial science was simply 'man's very humble confession regarding the unchangeable laws of nature,...life, and modern necessity'.² The task of history was in theory to discover more of these alleged natural laws of the spiritual realm, though in actual practice Rosenberg did little by way of specific formulation or explanation. This reticence was doubtless due to the fact that race was something awesome, mysterious, inexplicable, and rather indefinable. Perhaps the closest Rosenberg came to a definition was a passing remark in his memoirs: 'an hereditary human type maintaining certain biological characteristics'. In the Mythus race was presented as a physical reality but always in organic connection with its immaterial side: Race was the symbol (Gleichnis) or the outer image (Aussenbild) of a given soul. Soul was understood collectively as racial soul. 'Now soul signifies race seen from within, and race is conversely the outer side (Aussenseite) of a soul'.³

By means of the racial soul concept Rosenberg stressed the organic unity of the physical and the spiritual, blood and character, nature and freedom. As he wrote as early as 1920: 'We now know how intimate is the connection between race and mind (Geist)'. Or again in 1932: 'We understand today that a rather definite mental attitude goes together with man's outward appearance'.⁴

The Nazi ideologist always resented the charge of materialism, emphasizing

¹Munich, 7.9.1934 (B&E 2, 209f). Cf. Berlin, 22.2.1934 (B&E 2, 33).

²Rosenberg in Nationalpolitischer Lehrgang der Wehrmacht (Berlin, 1937), 59.

³Mythus, 2,23,529. LA, 127.

⁴B&E 1, 242f (NSMH, Nov. 1932), 197 (AGD, 3.12.1920).

more the spiritual side of race. Racial science was psychologically-based (seelisch-begründet), essentially the science of the soul (Seelenkunde) or racial psychology (Rassenseelenkunde). The details of the physical and scientific side of race he left to the racial anthropologists like Eugen Fischer, who stressed the role of Mendelian genetics in racial science. It was enough that Fischer and his associates should maintain the hereditary character of psychological as well as physical attributes, and that the intellectual differences between races rested upon the same laws of heredity applicable to both the physical and spiritual realms.¹

Rosenberg's anthropology rested on the assumption that there is no essential difference between human and organic nature—man is subject to the same laws which govern the plant and animal world. In opposition to popular Darwinism heredity was decisive, as opposed to an antiquated and superficial milieu-theory whereby man is nothing but a product of his environment. Human worth and personality was a matter of collective racial soul rather than individual freedom. 'Man is nothing "in himself" (an sich), he is personality only so far as he is psychologically (geistig-seelisch) integrated into an organic ancestral line of thousands of generations'.²

The Nazi ideologist wrote a great deal about race and races but without precision or consistency. There was, positively, the original Aryan race identified with the 'Nordic-occidental race' of northern Europe, the racial stock underlying the various Germanic peoples, especially the Germans. Aryan, Nordic (or Western European), Germanic, and German meant practically the same thing. For the details regarding the other European racial types Rosenberg depended on such racial theorists as H.F.S. Günther; speaking of the Alpine, Mediterranean, Dinaric (and perhaps East-Baltic) races as opposed to the

¹Rosenberg to Lammers, 9.6.1939 (BA: NS 8/165, 133ff). Cf. B&E 2, 13, 36; 4, 87.

²Mythus, 634, 498. Nuremberg, Sept. 1933 (B&E 1, 347).

Germanic or Nordic type.¹

On the other hand, there was, negatively, the oriental racial stock represented, for example, by Mongols, Syrians, and Semites—sometimes spoken of as races. The Jews were supposedly, following Chamberlain, a cross between Syrians and Semites and thus should be designated a people rather than a race. Yet Rosenberg customarily characterized them in racial terms and sometimes inconsistently called them a race. Following Fischer and in opposition to Chamberlain, he also rather inconsistently denied that racial crosses could produce new races and actually spoke of 'pure races' presumably in contradistinction to hybrid ones.² Finally, he often spoke of the white race as distinct from the black race and yellow race. The white race was somehow identified with the Aryans or Nordic race, while the Jews were linked to the black and yellow races to constitute a sinister threat to the white race as a sort of underworld of inferior humanity (Untermenschentum).³

Often race, people, and ethnic character (Volkstum) were basically synonymous in Rosenberg. Yet he maintained a certain distinction between race and Volk. Race referred to physical identity (physische Wesenheit); ethnic character, to intellectual and cultural achievement developing out of the racial soul. 'Races are predispositions, potentialities (Anlagen, Möglichkeiten); peoples on the other hand are the real products (Wirklichkeiten) of a common political destiny, of language, of nature. This means then that in historical life race is probably never equal to Volk'.⁴

The peoples of the West were the result of racial combinations and systems of political discipline. Yet each people supposedly received the essential

¹Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 73f. Mythus, 85f, 170, passim.

²Rosenberg to Lammer, 9.6.1939 (BA: NS 8/165, 135f).

³Mythus, 675ff, 447, 362.

⁴LA, 128. B&E 2, 175f; WK 2:8 (15.4.1925), 366.

creative forces behind its political system and entire culture from its Nordic class (Schicht). No European people was racially uniform (rassich einheitlich), including the Germans. But beyond a doubt the cultural achievements of each was due to the Nordic race, especially in Germany. For German life had been shaped by Nordic blood.

Ethnic character is to be sure not only uniracial (einrassig) but also characterized by historical and geographical factors. Yet it is nowhere the result of a balanced combination of various racial elements but despite all variety is always characterized by the preponderance of the predominant race (Grundrasse) which determines life-style, ideology, politics, art, and culture.¹

Thus the dominant racial factor (Rassendominante) prevailed in the formation of a people and its ethnic character, though this was conditioned by the course of history. Opponents completely missed the point when they rightly contended that the German people was not a pure race.

The various primary races (Grundrassen) of Europe are biological-psychological facts. Peoples, however, are in their total inner structure the result of many thousands of years of history....The dynamic of the various racial nuclei (Rassenkerne) determines then the content and form [i.e., myth and type] of ethnic and political entities in the course of long historical developments.²

Consequently the most concrete reality of actual historical life was not race as such but Volk or ethnic group—though race was, of course, the invariable determinative factor in ethnic development. But this was due to both 'racial predisposition (Rassenanlage) and environment'.³ Blood was the predominant factor in conditioning a people's inner character and spiritual outlook. But political consciousness was formed primarily from without by environment in the form of historical forces, political destiny, and geographical conditions.⁴ Each Volk was an organism and thus more than simply the sum

¹Mythus, 529, 576, 291. Yet Rosenberg could contend rather inconsistently that racial hybridization (Rassenmischung) could not breed nations only a Völkerverchaos (B&E 1, 347).

²Unpublished Article, 28.7.1938 (BA: NS 8/51, 90f).

³Rosenberg, Der Zukunftsweg der deutschen Aussenpolitik (Munich, 1927), 22.

⁴Lübeck, 31.5.1934 (B&E 2, 96f). Cf. Speech in Reichswehrministerium, Berlin, 4.10.1934 (BA: NS 8/39, 158f).

total of its living members. A people included both ancestors and posterity. Every ethnic group constituted a living body and soul. The ethnic soul (Volksseele), presumably rooted in the racial soul, formed a collective ethnic personality (Volkspersönlichkeit). History was, at bottom, the development of ethnic personality as a primary phenomenon constituting the ultimate mystery of existence.¹

Although prepared to admit the limited role of environmental factors in history, Rosenberg stoutly opposed any notion of geographical or geopolitical determinism. The fact that so many different ethnic groups had developed on the same great plain from the Elbe to the Urals proved that man, not geography, makes history. Ultimately man—that is, human character (Menschentum)—is the decisive factor in historical development despite the genuine role of geography. 'The historical fact is, that man not environment is the most important thing!'.²

Moreover, the racial view of history did not preclude the decisive role of great men in historical development. Speaking in Hitler's presence, the Nazi ideologist once gave credit to the great men who, as incarnations of the racially-conditioned ethnic souls of the various nations, have shaped history.³

Furthermore, the racial view of history did not preclude the significant role of ideas in historical development. Rosenberg laid great stress on the awesome force of ideas and ideologies (Weltanschauungen) in history. This amounted to an ideological determinism on the basis of the maxim: 'Every idea in its practical execution entails necessary results'.⁴ During the

¹Mythus, 270f, 313, 362, 437. Cf. B&E 2, 223; 4, 347; S&R 2, 590.

²Riga, 16.5.1942 (BA: R 6/35, 69). Cf. Berlin, 27.3.1942 (BA: NS 15/112); Bad Schachen, 14.10.1943 (BA: R 6/6, 120).

³Parteitag der Freiheit 1935 (Munich, 1936), 52. Cf. Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 73.

⁴VB, 17.4.1921 (S&R 2, 443).

Third Reich Rosenberg often quoted Nietzsche's aphorism that the world is ruled by ideas walking on doves' feet. Unobtrusive ideas, thoughts, hypotheses, confessions were behind the great revolutionary upheavals of world history. Once a racially-conditioned ideology, or even an anti-racial worldview (eine gegen das Blut gerichtete Weltanschauung!) gained a footing, it entailed decisive consequences for centuries.¹ The deepest reason for the changes of world history was the inner repudiation of the faiths or ideas of the past in favor of a new authority or worldview. Outward historical events, such as political struggles and revolutions, in the final analysis only confirmed what had already been decided within the inner world of ideas.²

Rosenberg was fascinated with the stubborn tenacity of myths and dreams in world history. Myths bred tenacious types which in turn established and entrenched their progenitors' hold on men's minds, thus directing the course of history. There were, for example, the ancient dreams of God and Paradise, now 'dreamed out' (ausgeträumte Träume) at least in their ancient forms. Besides creative dreams there were, not to mention the practical outlook of ruinous men without dreams, also destructive dreams, both powerful enough to produce historical reality. Indeed, history had turned out to be a grandiose battle of dreams: the creative Nordic dream of honor, empire, and culture in conflict with the destructive Jewish dream of money, divine election, and world rule. History was now at the crossroads in the face of what was perhaps the final conflict between two inimical racial souls, the German genius and the Jewish demon.³

Thus world history was at bottom the history of myth, of religions and the conflict between them. Yet history was supposedly not simply intellectual

¹ Lübeck, 22.6.1938 (B&E 4, 135f). Cf. Berlin, 14.11.1934 (B&E 2, 379).

² NSMH 3:35 (Dec. 1932), 533. Cf. Lübeck, 20.6.1939 (B&E 4, 331).

³ Mythus, 453ff: The Germanic dream was epitomized by Lagarde's idea of a Germanic national, non-historical, mystical religion with the mission of replacing Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism.

history (Geistesgeschichte), intellectual processes occurring in 'racial cloaks' but not traceable to 'racial causes'.¹ But however real these racial causes might be, one could not analyze them in detail presumably because race and racial soul (i.e., Destiny) were inseparable, inscrutable, 'mystically intertwined'.² Therefore historical science was confined practically to the history of ideas. Certainly Rosenberg himself, despite all the emphasis on ultimate racial causes, portrayed history primarily in idealistic terms. History was the struggle of ideals, myths, worldviews correlated with ethnic character and race.

Nevertheless Rosenberg insisted on a biological approach to history. History was basically biology: both in the metaphysical sense that historical reality was fundamentally biological reality, and in the methodological sense that historical knowledge was mediated primarily by means of biological categories. Historical reality, insofar as it could be understood at all, could only be understood in biological terms. In his reflections on history the Nazi philosopher continuously utilized the concepts of modern biology: life (in the biological sense), race, instinct, struggle for existence, natural selection, symbiosis, parasitism, and so forth. Human history was simply a continuation of natural history and could only be comprehended in the naturalistic terms of biological science.

Strictly speaking there was no real world history as such, that is, no history leading all peoples and races to a planned end or consummation. There was no overall plan or purpose including all men, such as the Church's Christianizing the nations or Liberalism's educating mankind. On the contrary, the history of peoples and nations simply represented 'an independent life-cycle all its own' (Lebenskreis für sich).³ 'World history so-called unfurls

¹Manuscript Review, Winter 1935 (BA: NS 8/40, 209).

²WK 6:66 (June, 1929), 278.

³Berlin, 22.2.1934 (B&E 2, 36f). Cf. Cologne, Oct. 1933 (B&E 1, 258).

itself today not as a struggle between abstract principles, nor as the fulfilment of any "plan" ultimately the product of man's mind, but as a dramatic struggle between various races and their souls'.¹

History was thus an end in itself, the endless cycle of human life on earth. History was not teleological development toward a goal in the sense that one age was the preparation for another. The essence of historical reality was not development but struggle (Kampf); not essential change, progress, improvement, but grandiose conflict among nations, peoples, races. The meaning of 'world history' was not to be found in development toward any abstract humanity but in struggle among concrete human beings and their inherent characters.

It is not so that history has been acted out as a planned development (Ablauf) from childhood to manhood to old-age, but men and forces of very different sorts just happen to bump into each other at very different stages of development. And the end of this struggle among various human characters and powers, this is what we call the history of men and nations. We no longer look for a secretive plan for humanizing mankind (Humanisierungsplan) behind what happens but understand what happens itself as a phenomenon of life which cannot be explained further.²

Rosenberg's view of history as a dramatic but ultimately meaningless struggle gave it a melodramatic as well as tragic character. History was a simplified, sensational, and finally sad story. The myth of the blood was a tragic tale indeed. Modern intellectual and scientific developments as well as the shocking events of the early 20th century precluded any superficial optimistic theory of historical development or faith in historical progress. The view of history as dramatic tragedy flowed from Rosenberg's life-long interest in sagas and early predisposition for 'great epic tragedy'.³

¹NSMH, Nov. 1932 (B&E 1, 243). Cf. Mythus, 1ff, 43, 50, etc.

²Brunswick, 20.5.1936 (BA: NS 8/44, 15f). Cf. Mythus, 23, 678, 682.

³EA, 27.12.1918 (S&R 1, 62); LA, 24, etc.

HISTORY, RACE, AND NAZISM

If history was ultimately a tragic drama, Rosenberg's racial ideology was a dramatic attempt to overcome history as meaningless tragedy. The purpose of the myth of race was to overcome relentless historical flux. Brute biological existence was to be overcome by biological categories. His Nazi ideology tried to give some meaning to otherwise meaningless historical reality by means of a racial and ideological reinterpretation of the course of history. The Nazi Movement had to have a distinctive historical consciousness and historical identity.

Prehistory still presented many riddles, but modern science was beginning to provide definitive answers. For instance, while astronomy had stretched space to infinite dimensions, historical geology had expanded time by millions of years. These discoveries had rendered untenable the old Biblical view of creation followed immediately by the development of the Jewish people followed in turn by the Christian history of redemption culminating in the catastrophic Last Judgment.¹ The meaning of history could be seen no longer in terms of Christianity, nor in any abstract plan or humanity; but rather in the concrete development of culture—from racial soul to ethnic character to national personality to cultural circle (Kulturkreis)—constituting a relentless and eternal biological cycle (Kreislauf).²

Genuine culture as the life-style of a race, or the conscious expression of unconscious racial life, was racially-conditioned and thus 'metaphysically rooted'. The key to prehistory was an alleged prehistoric Nordic cultural center in Europe from which adventurous Nordic emigrants carried culture to Asia. The so-called 'meaning of history' did not flow from East to West but vice-versa—borne by a blue-eyed, blond-haired race. This involved the

¹Bremen, 29.9.1935 (B&E 2, 295ff).

²Berlin, 18.12.1934 (B&E 2, 228f). Cf. NSMH 9:98 (May, 1938), 387.

migration of the Atlantans to North Africa, the Aryans to Persia and India (followed by Dorians, Macedonians, and Latins!), and in historical times the Germanic migrations and the colonization of the world by the Germanic West.¹

Rosenberg appealed to such scholars as Gustav Kossinna and Hans Reinerth in maintaining that his theories on prehistory were scientific and not 'unfounded fantasy'.² He did not, however, consider his own Mythus fantasy and lamented 'the numerous, uncritical, often fantastic publications on Germanic prehistory' burdening the Nazi Movement with fanatics (Schwarmgeister).³ Prehistory served an ideological and educational purpose. But as Rosenberg put it in a letter to Albert Speer regarding plans for a museum, prehistory was not so much a matter of sentimental ideologies regarding the past, but of the 'broadening of historical consciousness in general'.⁴

Ancient history—whether in India, Persia, Greece or Rome—was fundamentally the story of the conflict between the Nordic or Aryan racial soul and native populations. A predominantly Nordic-European migration of peoples subjugated an area and formed a ruling class (Schicht) which segregated itself with strong racial legislation from the conquered peoples. In resistance to the new environment an Aryan culture arose predominantly characterized either by philosophy (India), religion (Iran), art (Greece), or political creativity (Rome). Wars diminished the ruling class, and racial crossing caused the Aryan culture to lose its distinctive form as the conceptions of the subjugated took over. Cultural achievement arose from what Rosenberg, incredibly, called

¹Mythus, 24-28, 116f. Cf. BA: NS 8/24, 76, 103.

²Foreword, 16.10.1940 (BA: NS 8/62, 139). Cf. LA, 94, 163, 198.

³Erlass, 1.3.1934 (BA: NS 8/128, 1).

⁴Rosenberg to Speer, 22.6.1940 (BA: NS 8/167, 76). See Bollmus, Das Amt Rosenberg, 153ff for a lengthy discussion of the controversy over prehistory in the Third Reich.

'creative blond blood'; cultural decline was supposedly due to the 'exhaustion of Aryan blood'.¹

The conflict of ancient history was both racial and spiritual. For example, in Greece it boiled down to that between the constructive, chaos-ordering Apollonian principle of light and the destructive, chaotic Dionysian principle of darkness. The bastardization of the blood was at the same time an intellectual bastardization, the crossing of myths and values. Heroic racial man (Rassenmensch) was overcome by the frightful subhuman (Untermensch) from the Asiatic-African underworld. Rome's struggle with Phoenician Carthage was with the Asiatic Untermensch which had to be destroyed. The downfall of old Rome was due to racial intermarriage producing ethnic chaos in the Roman Empire. In the meantime Jewish fanaticism and Etruscan Satanism gave rise to the superstitious worldview of medieval Christianity. All cultural and political decline was the result of racial and thus spiritual degeneration.² Despite Rosenberg's protestations to the contrary, there was a fantastic reading back of his own conception of contemporary history into the past.

For Rosenberg the center of world history was Northern and Western Europe. Western civilization was the result of an unholy synthesis of Germanic character and Christian superstition. But the West was primarily the product of Germanic creativity not the mythological ideology of the Völkerverchaos. The Christianizing of the Germanic peoples was 'a great ethnological and psychological riddle'. But it involved simultaneously the Germanizing of Christianity. The history of Europe consisted in the tension between Germanic particularism and Christian universalism. It was the struggle of Nordic man against the spiritual tyranny of Christian Rome in league with the non-Nordic racial underground of Europe—symbolized, for example, by the

¹Mythus, 35, 45, 28ff. Cf. the summary in BA: NS 8/23, 139f.

²Mythus, 34ff, 48f, 51f, 55f, 65.

conflict between emperor and pope.¹

The Nazi ideologist had mixed feelings toward the Middle Ages. On the one hand, he shuddered at the spiritual and political tyranny of the Medieval terror and the papal dictatorship. His sympathy lay with the heretical movements of the Middle Ages, which he traced back to Germanic character, especially the late Medieval mystics. After Meister Eckehart everything great in European culture came from an anti-ecclesiastical, anti-clerical spirit. There was not only a frightful Middle Ages but also a great Germanic Middle Ages. On the other hand, Rosenberg admired the mythical and institutional might of the Church as well as the Medieval unity between the ideal and the practical, the spiritual and the political. This unity, however, concealed the inner tension between Germanic and Christian elements. It was an explosive unity which gave way to the Humanistic Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution.²

Toward these three expressions of distinctively modern history Rosenberg had an ambivalent attitude as well. Positively, all three were allegedly a result of the rebellion of Nordic blood and the Germanic spirit against the spiritual tyranny of the Medieval period. The Renaissance was allegedly a Germanic rediscovery of the Nordic culture of ancient history; Humanism enriched Europe from the previously closed sources of the spirit of pagan antiquity. The Reformation was understood primarily as a Germanic reawakening and, in terms of the typical völkisch and neo-Kantian interpretation of Luther, as the incarnation of the distinctively German conception of inner freedom co-existing with outer authority. The Scientific Revolution was welcomed as the heroic struggle of the Germanic search for truth against Medieval superstition. But, negatively, all three aspects of the modern intellectual revolution failed to provide a suitable substitute for the

¹Mythus, 82ff, 107, 171, 191. Cf. BA: NS 8/23, 61; B&E 4, 117.

²Mythus, 85ff, passim. Cf. Sonthofen, 26.3.1939 (BA: NS 8/55, 72).

unified and comprehensive Medieval worldview. The Renaissance led to the humanistic Rationalism of the liberal Enlightenment, the Reformation to the religious sectarianism of the modern period, and the Scientific Revolution to the cultural disintegration of the modern technological and industrial age—all resulting in ideological disunity.

The Age of Liberalism was also viewed with mixed emotions. Even though Liberalism was dead, no one would be so small-minded as to condemn the whole Liberal epoch. To characterize the Liberal spirit as simply a 'Jewish heresy' would be a gross oversimplification of a profound historical problem.¹ Liberal Rationalism was a necessary and laudable reaction against Medieval authoritarianism and superstition. But it proved incapable of creating a new order and led to the disintegration of the 19th century. The greatness of the Enlightenment was its opposition to Medieval intolerance; its tragedy, that it proclaimed a boundless, subjectivistic tolerance on the basis of individual autonomy.² Moreover, the 18th century was not only rationalistic but superstitious, as evidenced by its preoccupation with alchemy. Liberalism was in many ways merely a 'secularized Middle Ages'.³ The mind of the Age of Rationalism was really 'unhistorical' (geschichtslos) in that its abstract idea of humanity denied differences in the historical development of peoples. It forgot that ethnic groups are in various stages of development and that all men cannot be uniformly educated on a European model.⁴

In the realm of political history, the Enlightenment led to the levelling of achievement, the denial of the aristocratic laws of nature, and the

¹ Stellungnahme, 5.8.1940 (BA: NS 8/62, 107). Cf. BA: NS 8/24, 34.

² Bad Tölz, 4.2.1939 (BA: NS 8/54, 79f). Cf. BA: NS 8/23, 29, 68f, 78.

³ Speech, 13.12.1944 (BA: NS 8/70, 55); Freimaurerische Weltpolitik, 8.

⁴ Berlin, 14.11.1935 (B&E 2, 379ff); Speech, 1936 (BA: NS 8/73, 9).

opposite of natural selection (Gegenauslese).¹ The French Revolution was an historical necessity, the inevitable and justifiable revolt against the spirit of the Inquisition and the degenerate age of petty dynastic strife. But the Revolution was, in the final analysis, a catastrophe in that it led to the Age of Democracy.² It broke the old political chains but did not create a new stable political form or type. The French Revolution was not the birth of a new political order but merely the collapse of the old. The ideology of the 18th century was powerful enough to destroy old ties but unable to create new ones. The result was Democratic anarchy.³

Moreover, the same Enlightenment which opposed 'Jewish intolerance' inconsistently emancipated the Jews in the wake of the French Revolution. The Jews were thus able to enter the confused spiritual and political vacuum and use the ideology of liberty, equality, and fraternity for their own unscrupulous ends. The Age of Democracy was dominated by the rise of industrialism and industrial Capitalism. Thus Liberalism meant practically Jewish Democracy in league with Jewish Capitalism in a 'dying, reactionary, democractic, capitalistic era'.⁴

The possibility of intellectual freedom and personal development was a good feature of the Age of Democracy. But its anthropological presuppositions were erroneous, in that racial inequality was not taken into account, producing an epoch of degeneration.⁵ The Jewish 19th century was an era of unbridled

¹Das Reich, 31.1.1943 (BA: NS 8/28, 86).

²Paris, 18.11.1940 (NSMH 12:130, Jan. 1941, 5). Cf. B&E 2, 103,228; 4, 289.

³Der Schulungsbrief 6:6 (Jan. 1939), 220f. Cf. BA: NS 8/27, 170.

⁴WK 3:6 (Dec. 1926), 560 (B&E 3, 480).

⁵S&R 2, 284,288 (1923); B&E 4, 217f,256,293ff (1939).

subjectivism in every area of culture with a shallow materialistic view of life and history. Scientific research and technological development produced a great legacy of valuable facts; but there was a fundamental discrepancy between these facts and the Liberal ideal, which simply could not keep in step with the march of science. Viewed ideologically the 19th century produced many isolated empirical facts but no unified organic worldview.¹

All of modern history was viewed as a transitional period from the sunset of the Middle Ages to the dawn of the Nazi Age. Returning to the Christian universalism of the First Reich was out of the question in that it was alien both to modern science and that unchanging Germanic or German character (Germanentum/Deutschum) which gave continuity to German history. After the catastrophic Thirty Years War, Prussia saved the 'Germanic substance of the German character'.² This led, some two centuries later, to Bismarck's founding of the Second Reich. But unfortunately 1871 represented mere political unification without ideological unity—an impossible conglomeration of dead Christian Conservatism, living German Nationalism, and chaotic anti-national Liberalism. The Second Reich, as Lagarde maintained, was a mixture of clay and iron not blood and iron. This fundamental ideological weakness, coupled with the Jewish conspiracy, led to the collapse of 1918 when Germany was stabbed in the back.³ The Third Reich would save the German racial substance anew by initiating the Nazi Age of Peoples and Races to replace both the Age of Liberalism and the Middle Ages.

Rosenberg's racial ideology was a conscious attempt to solve the problem of ideological and political disunity in modern Germany by means of the idea of race. It was also a conscious reaction to alleged racial degeneration

¹Nuremberg, Sept. 1938 (B&E 4, 155ff). S&R 2, 191,251.

²Introduction to H.v. Treitschke, Deutsche Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert. (Berlin, 1937), viii-xi. Cf. B&E 1, 177ff.

³S&R 1, 446f. Mythus, 198,206,457,517.

occasioned by the universalistic anthropology of Christianity and the Enlightenment. To be sure, Chamberlain's Kantian conception of man as both nature and freedom was generally assumed. The organic unity of objective nature and subjective freedom constituted human personality. But 19th century science had destroyed the rationalistic notion of the uniformity and equality of human nature. Man was no abstract homo sapiens. Contrary to the 18th century concept of an abstract humanity, mankind was made up of concrete races and peoples, unequal in capacity and character, by virtue of heredity and natural selection.¹

In his political speeches Rosenberg constantly set forth his version of history and appealed to the scientific basis of Nazi racial ideology. Nevertheless he candidly related the birth of the new racial science (Rassenkunde) to the origin and rise of the Nazi political struggle. Racial science was identified with the mysterious experience of the racial soul which gave rise to the Nazi Movement. Ultimately Nazi racial science resulted from a search for the unity of life and a new sense of commitment (Bindung). With its assertion of the unity of the physical and the spiritual, racial science was to provide that unity of life lacking in the Medieval and Liberal worldviews. The racial worldview had its scientific side but was not primarily the result of scientific research. 'In the final analysis...we have derived the soundness of this outlook not from science but afresh from life itself'.²

Many of Rosenberg's speeches stressed the historical crisis symbolized by the World War and presented Nazism as an attempt to overcome the history which allegedly produced it, namely the process of ideological dissolution

¹VB, 8.5.1937 (BA: NS 8/79, 4). Cf. S&R 1, 411ff, 10, xlviiiif (Baeumler's account of Rosenberg's anthropology).

²Kurhessische Landeszeitung, 14./15.11.1936 (BA: NS 8/26, 65). Cf. similar articles and speeches, BA: NS 8/26, 4; 8/76, 30; 8/84, 49.

and disintegration since the end of the Middle Ages. The Nazi Movement was an answer to the resultant nightmare of November 1918 and its infernal perpetrators. Nazism was a reply to the resultant despair and search for a new meaning for life—past, present, and future. The Nazi ideology had to do with the mythical memory of the German racial soul.

It is not dry chronicles that live in ethnic souls but a people's legends, its epics, its imaginary hero figures, i.e., the works of art which depict the inner regularity (Gesetzlichkeit) of history from the contingency (Zufälligkeit) of human events. This is what a people as a whole upholds for itself. And the memory of a people—this is its history.¹

As Rosenberg once put it, world history very often is ruled not by what is really true but by what men think is true. 'Thus it is often the case that it is not the content of faith as such (Glaube an sich) that is decisive but faith in this faith'.²

A remarkable speech at Ulm in 1936 began with the observation that the very fact that one could speak to thousands on the subject of history demonstrated the great change which had taken place in Germany. The days when history was an occult science (Geheimwissenschaft) for the privileged few were over, in that ideological and historical issues were matters which not only concerned a distant past but the contemporary life of the Volk as well as the private life of each individual. The racial ideology of history was concerned not so much with time as with eternity.

In contrast to the research of the 19th century, we are not so much interested in so-called "development" (Entwicklung), that which is mutable amid the political and historical flux of millennia. But we are more interested now in eternity (Ewigkeit), that is, the eternal existence of those attributes and of that character and that blood which has maintained itself through the millennia despite all influences and developments. This reflects an inner aversion (Abwendung) [i.e., to historical flux] in the field of history as well as in that of biology and politics. Today we do not want to tie ourselves politically to any passing, time-conditioned epoch of German history; but we are relating to any age where, transcending temporal relativity (über das Zeitbedingte hinweg), the eternal values of the Germanic character were defended in Germany and before the world.

¹Guben, 13./14.6.1938 (BA: NS 8/50, 149, 142ff, 144, 148).

²Berlin, 7.3.1941 (BA: NS 8/63, 137f).

This results in a much more dramatic picture of historical reality (Geschehen) than when one wants to make everything conform to one single line of development (Entwicklungslinie) so-called. If we correctly understand the concept of development from this standpoint, development is nothing other than the outworking, unfolding, and portraying of this character which remains eternally the same.¹

Recognizing the ideological nature and function of history was particularly important in facing the 'incomprehensible destiny' of the German collapse of 1918 and its consequent spiritual disarray, disunity, and despair. The outward collapse was the occasion of an inner protest on the part of the unchangeable German character and attitude to destiny. 'When we speak of German history, we mean that there is in the midst of the many changes in this history something which remains (ein Bleibendes) without which one cannot understand German history at all. And this something which remains (dieses Bleibende) is of more interest than that which changes (das Veränderliche)'. It was this constant factor, this worldview or attitude in the face of destiny rather than that which is variable, which was the essence of history. Without this Germanic Weltanschauung, the substance of the German nation would cease to exist, and there would be no such thing as German history past, present, or future.²

Rosenberg repeatedly asserted that race was the heart of Nazism, faith in the significance of blood the 'primary presupposition' (Ur-Voraussetzung) of the Nazi worldview.³ The enemies of the Movement rightly attacked racialism as the nerve of Nazism. It was simply the heroic, heretical attempt of the German people to understand itself, both outer form and inner psychological structure, resulting in the assertion that blood and character are merely two different words for the same reality.⁴ There was to be academic freedom in all areas of scientific research but one: racial science, in

¹Ulm, 18.10.1936 (Wehrmacht Fachschule, Mar. 1937, 62ff, 64). Cf. Ulmer Tageblatt, 19.10.1936 (BA: NS 8/77, 128).

²Bookholzberg, 17.6.1939 (BA: NS 8/86, 30).

³Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus, 12. Cf. NSMH 2:13 (Apr. 1931), 146.

⁴Berlin, 4.10.1934 (BA: NS 8/39, 158).

which the Party had an immediate vested interest. 'In no area must we be more careful than in the field of racial research simply because it is here a matter of the most important concept of our Weltanschauung'.¹

There can be no doubt, in the light of the Nuremberg Laws and the Final Solution, that race was decisive in the Nazi Movement. But why was race so important to the Nazis? Why was racialism essential to Nazism? What role did the racial idea play in the Nazi mentality? Why were Rosenberg's political speeches filled ad nauseam with the racial ideology of history?

Nazi racialism as represented by Rosenberg gave the Movement a religious faith as a basis for political action. Modern science had rendered the Christian theology of history a relic of history. The Liberal and Marxist secularizations were likewise doomed to historical demise. The idea of race and racial science provided the Nazi faith and political movement with some semblance of scientific respectability, just as the Marxist faith found an alleged scientific basis in 'scientific Socialism'. But as in Marxism scientific conviction was made to serve an apocalyptic vision of history. The mythological conflict between Aryan and Jew, a seemingly unwitting secularization of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic, gave otherwise meaningless life and history a new meaning—thus providing a religious philosophy of history to take the place of Christianity, Liberalism, and Marxism. Anti-Semitism provided a metaphysical enemy in the form of the diabolical Jew; Aryanism, a metaphysical object of religious faith.

In summary, the racial idea played a religious role in the Nazi mentality by providing a metaphysical faith in the face of 20th century historical relativism. Identification with that which was Aryan, Nordic, Germanic, or German provided some sense of historical identity and security amid relentless historical flux. Rosenberg's Mythus was an attempt to overcome historical relativism, to apprehend and comprehend biological life in process, by means

¹ Rosenberg to Hilgenfeldt, 6.3.1942 (BA: NS 8/202, 195). Cf. Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1944 (BA: NS 8/24, 137).

of the mythical idea of race. It is no accident that he employed the metaphysical concept of 'substance' (Substanz) for race or ethnic character (Volkestum). Indeed, the Party's political struggle for existence was a fateful struggle for 'spiritual substance in general' (seelische Substanz überhaupt).¹ In the midst of the inexorable stream of history's unfathomable flux, race was the straw at which Rosenberg and his followers grasped.

¹Münster, 6.7.1935 (B&E 2, 352); Lübeck, 26.6.1935 (B&E 2, 243). Cf. K. Saller, Die Rassenlehre des Nationalsozialismus in Wissenschaft und Propaganda (Darmstadt, 1961), 36ff, for Nazism's static doctrine of race and its supporters in Germany.

5. THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF NAZISM

Ostensibly the Nazi Movement was first and foremost a political movement. Nazism's unabashed aim was absolute power in Germany; and it always emphasized the primary importance of political, as opposed to economic or social, considerations and solutions. Yet from the beginning Nazism also stressed the primacy of Weltanschauung over politics in the sense that ideology ultimately determines the character of political movements.

As chief Nazi ideologist it fell to Alfred Rosenberg not only to justify Nazism as a political movement, but also to interpret the Nazi political phenomenon to the German people. The purpose of this chapter is to present Rosenberg's political ideology, his interpretation of National Socialism as a domestic political movement. The main point is to show that, even as a political phenomenon, Nazism was to a significant extent, non-political in the sense that it met and exploited a fundamentally religious need by means of a political religion. Moreover, Rosenberg's political ideology is not irrelevant to understanding the actual character of the Nazi political phenomenon. For example, the Nazi Movement was often more concerned with spiritual matters than with concrete political, economic, and social realities. Both Nationalism and Socialism were spiritualized, or sublimated into the spiritual realm. Ultimately they meant the same thing, namely the religious solidarity of the racial community in conscious opposition to the 'demonic' Jewish threat.

After a brief consideration of the nature of politics and the role of Weltanschauung in political life, there follows a discussion of those alien political ideologies opposed by Nazism, then of the nature of Nationalism and Socialism, and finally of the character of the Nazi political revolution.

WELTANSCHAUUNG AND POLITICS

For Rosenberg politics as such was a matter of this phenomenal world, the realm of brute biological existence where power was the sine qua non of survival. According to the Mythus Callicles in Plato's Gorgias preached the wisest gospel: it is the law of nature that the superior should rule the inferior. Politics was unfortunately an unavoidable fact and aspect of life. As Rosenberg wrote in 1919, striving for power, even on the part of the Jews, was in no way to be condemned without qualification. It was often even a moral necessity. 'In opposition to all pacifists I can see no crime in the will to power as such; the decisive factor is solely the character of the people or personality which stands behind it'.¹

With Hitler Rosenberg characterized politics as 'history in the making' (werdende Geschichte), which could not be divorced artificially from historical reality as racial struggle.² But historical reality did not involve merely the external history of political struggle in the phenomenal world; it was ultimately a matter of the internal history of the ideal world of the human mind. There was an indissoluble organic connection between practical politics and theoretical thought, myth, faith, ideology, or—to use the favorite term—Weltanschauung.

The primacy of Weltanschauung in politics was Rosenberg's constant theme song. Through the centuries man's worldview^s had decisively influenced political as well as intellectual life. For example, the political struggle with atheistic Bolshevism was simply the exterior side of a deeper ideological conflict. In reality no one ever came to power without the political ideology which brought him to power.³ The Third Reich, and with it the

¹ S&R 1, 307-308; Mythus, 51.

² Rosenberg in G. Leibbrandt (ed.), Probleme des Ostraumes (Berlin, 1942), 9. Cf. Hitlers Zweites Buch (Stuttgart, 1961), 46ff.

³ Strasbourg, 5.9.1943 (BA: NS 8/68, 9); Interview, 1.7.1938 (BA: NS 8/51, 8); Berlin, 12.1.1935 (B&E 2, 250).

hoped-for rebirth of Europe, was ultimately the result of faith in an idea. For the German, politics was not the continuation of business by other means but the 'symbolic acting out (Darstellung) of an inwardly-accepted order which one could believe in as worth defending'.¹

According to Rosenberg National Socialism was not only or primarily a political movement; but an allegedly undogmatic ideological attitude (weltanschauliche Haltung) supposedly stemming from the Germanic character, as opposed to any abstract political doctrine as such. The primary task of the political movement was to enforce and establish this outlook in every area of life with a view to providing all Germans with a lasting foundation for their existence. The Nazi worldview, by no means a purely intellectual affair, was the foundation of all the activity of Party and State. The Nazi political movement, as Rosenberg never tired of repeating, stood or fell with its Weltanschauung. According to his funeral sermon for Gauleiter Josef Bürckel, the Movement was simply 'the tangible exterior of a great inner experience and a great idea'.²

The Nazi ideologist once declared that the NSDAP, more than any other political party, had taken the trouble to give an account of the ideological struggles which, transcending the political and social, stood behind daily political events.³ Not to mention others, Rosenberg himself spent 25 years discussing such issues in the Völkischer Beobachter and elsewhere. It was his life's work. The rationale behind it he once expressed in the

¹Neugeburt Europas als werdende Geschichte, 15.

²Heidelberg, 3.10.1944 (BA: NS 8/69, 230); B&E 2, 224,300; BA: NS 8/62, 1f; 8/66, 210.

³VB, 25.7.1937 (BA: NS 15/159a). Rosenberg was referring to ideological struggles with other parties not within the NSDAP, though he himself was involved in both. No one can deny the fact of voluminous ideological verbage in Nazi publications. In evaluating the significance of this fact, one must keep in mind both the propaganda motive and the peculiar personal character and anti-intellectual content of Nazi ideology itself. These factors go a long way in explaining the evidence for the supposed insignificance of Nazi ideology.

following terms:

Whatever forms political struggles may have taken in other nations, power struggles in Germany have always had an ideological, for the most part even a religious background....It is clear from the character of the German people that a struggle for power can only be carried out with lasting success when the will to rule the future (Wille zur Zukunft) is founded upon a unified Weltanschauung which gives every deed its goal and stamp of approval.

Gradually many more people are beginning to realize that the present involves a break with the spiritual powers of the past such as occurs perhaps once every half millennium. Many outward forms have collapsed almost without resistance as the outward expression of inwardly decayed erstwhile philosophies of life (Lebensauffassungen)....The slogans by which millions are moved to march point to the standard of a certain feeling for life (Lebensgefühl). A man fights and dies only for that in which he really believes. Formerly thousands died for the Cross or for the "heathen" faith of their fathers. Later they fought for Confessions, then for Kings or Republics. Although many statesmen today may wage this or that war, they cannot openly use the slogans of the past. A Christian crusade is just as impossible a battlecry as a Protestant war. Even the time really to fight for democracy, humanity, and equality is irretrievably gone. For Democracy one will profiteer and barter but no longer die. This fact alone proves the complete break with past and present but also points the direction of the future.

The struggles for ethnic character (Volkstum)—in the deeper sense for racial character (Rassentum)—have become the symbol for an ideological rebirth (weltanschauliche Neugeburt). The völkisch or Nazi Movement believes that in German ethnic character and Nordic racial character lie hidden the eternal forces of the religious, moral, and political rebirth....

The Middle Ages are dead, royal Absolutism has passed away, subjective Democracy is rotting before our very eyes. There are, however, two systems which are lining up for the decisive battle, around which all other forces will ultimately cluster:

The one, Communism, signifies the last violent attempt to depersonalize the West under the tyranny (Gewaltherrschaft) of one single terroristic will.

The other, völkisch National Socialism, means the recognition of the strong-willed feeling for life of the European races, which involves the repudiation of dictatorship (Zwangsstaat) as an end in itself as well as of boundless economic subjectivism. Religion, government, politics, economics, art are not autonomous spheres but means for securing race and national character....This passionate seeking for a new view of life—together with the will, if necessary, to cast off much that is dear from the past—was from the beginning the hallmark of the Nazi struggle.¹

Rosenberg's conception of National Socialism is incomprehensible except against the background of the ideological and political crisis of the early 20th century. The ideological crisis was applied to political thought as follows: Once Christianity tied society together, created a Christian community (Gemeinschaft), and underlay cultural unity in Germany. But this

¹WK 4:43 (July 1927), 291-294. This most significant article, entitled 'Der Nationalsozialismus, der Staatsgedanke des 20. Jahrhunderts', is an excellent summary of Rosenberg's political thought as found in the VB during the 1920's. Cf. VB, 24./25.5.1925 and B&E 1, 201-203.

unity was shattered by the Protestant Reformation and Humanistic Renaissance. The organic unity of life was broken up into various autonomous spheres and the various areas of culture isolated from each other. The situation at the beginning of the 20th century was one of every sphere for itself. The great problem was: is it at all possible, given the multitude of confessional and political parties, to produce a unity between thought and political action in Germany? The Nazi solution was not a doctrinaire program but 'a genuinely spiritual revolution...carried out politically'.¹

The cultural disunity produced by the ideological crisis building up since the end of the Middle Ages led to art forms without real style, religious sects without true religion, philosophical schools without genuine Weltanschauung, political parties but no real leadership for the German people. 'Politics "as such" became an independent aspect of life'.²

It was a simple fact of history that the old Christian intellectual foundations of political life in the West—the foundation on which Churches, Emperors, Kings, and even atheistic Republics rested—were gone. National Socialism was attempting to lay another. It was impossible to drive a wedge between Adolf Hitler's Reich and the Nazi Weltanschauung since it was only the spiritual outlook which gave birth to the political reality. The Nazis had not fought for 'a State or bureaucracy without ideology' but for a 'new German spiritual community' (Seelengemeinschaft).³

Genuine Germanic rebirth (Wiedergeburt), was not a political, much less economic, matter alone but involved an inner spiritual transformation, learning and living a dream. Experiencing (Erleben) and living (Leben) this dream was the reflected glory of eternity anticipated, the mystical mission

¹Dresden, 20.5.1936 (BA: NS 8/76, 3).

²Lübeck, 22.6.1938 (B&E 4, 132f).

³Sonthöfen, 25.3.1939 (BA: NS 8/55, 81-85).

of the German people to become what it really was.¹ It is no wonder that Rosenberg spoke of the Nazi political mission to struggle for and save racial substance as a 'metaphysical mandate'.²

ALIEN POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

Before examining Rosenberg's conception of National Socialism as such, it would contribute to our understanding of his political thought to review his negative critique of the political ideologies and forces of his day.

According to Rosenberg, 19th century German society was not upheld by one binding idea as a focal point around which millions could rally. Even the August days of 1914 could not affect a lasting bond. The individual German was especially torn between various competing ideologies and parties in that Germans took them more seriously than other peoples. Four basic political ideologies were competing for the German soul: religious Confessionalism, dynastic Conservatism, democratic Liberalism, and socialistic Marxism. The so-called Revolution of November 1918 was no ideological or political revolution at all; it did absolutely nothing to change this state of affairs, except to weaken dynastic Conservatism.³

The first principle of the Nazi Movement was that one could never conduct a great struggle in world history with any hope of lasting success as long as one remained in the ideological camp of the enemy.

One cannot make a great revolution and one cannot achieve political successes in the long run, if one finds himself within the ideology (Ideologie) of his opponent, if one moves within the worldview (Weltanschauung) of those whom one has to fight, those whom one would like to overcome. This is an old law of history which only too often has been forgotten.

The postwar period presented a classic example:

The middle classes (die Bürgerlichen) could not fight against Marxism because they themselves were already half Marxists; and Social Democracy could not overcome bourgeois Capitalism because the Social Democratic

¹Mythus (Zur 3. Auflage, Oct. 1931), 15-18.

²Eger, 2.4.1939 (B&E 4, 265). Cf. B&E 2, 343, 353, 365.

³Berlin, 7.3.1935; 18.12.1934 (B&E 2, 289-291; B&E 2, 225).

leaders were already three-fourths Capitalistic bourgeois (kapitalistische Bürger).¹

Once, in the context of discussing Freemasonry, Rosenberg maintained that every historical movement has three basic factors to consider: first, the worldview through which it has to come to life as an effective entity; second, its organization as a structured organism; and third, its methods in struggling for the realization of its basic idea.² In discussing the political movements of his day, the Nazi ideologist was interested primarily in the Weltanschauung underlying each, rather than their organization or methods.

The primary representatives of religious Confessionalism in German political life were the Roman Catholic Zentrum and Bayerische Volkspartei (BVP). Their early opposition to the NSDAP in Bavaria as a fundamentally heathen movement occasioned bitter criticism from Rosenberg throughout the 1920's and early 1930's. The chief sin of political Catholicism was its refusal to join hands with the NSDAP in fighting the common enemy, namely anti-Christian Marxism. By dragging religious faith into the arena of political struggle, it divided the German body politic (Volkskörper) by means of confessional strife. 'At a time when the Jewish Antichrist tarries and tyrannizes on earth, all Germans and Christians should stand together against him'.³

Rosenberg showed no appreciation of development or change within the Confessional camp. Political Catholicism was simply the necessary external side of the Jesuit ideology. The leaders of the Catholic Center served the anti-racial Roman Catholic myth against the generally protestant and heretical Germanic character. Political Catholicism, as many of its pundits openly advocated, meant a radical return to the Middle Ages, perhaps a new Inquisition and a new Counter Reformation. Criticism of the Catholic Center

¹Berlin, 18.12.1934; 7.3.1935 (B&E 2, 225f; B&E 2, 291).

²Rosenberg, Freimaurerische Weltpolitik, 5. ³VB, 9.12.1922 (S&R 2, 605f).

tended to end in mockery of its antiquated Medieval Weltanschauung.¹

Political Catholicism put confessional interests above the German people, the universal Church above the national State. This sin was compounded by its hypocritical and unholy alliance with the Marxist Social Democratic Party (SPD). The one elevated Confession, the other class, over the interests of the Volk. Rosenberg never took the trouble to explain how the Center Party could serve purely confessional interests and co-operate with the SPD at the same time. His explanation for the Zentrum-SPD coalition was that both were motivated by a common hatred for the German National State due to their common Jewish Weltanschauung. Political Catholicism could ally itself with materialistic, atheistic Marxism while branding German Nationalism the greatest of all heresies. This strange attitude Rosenberg could never comprehend. The only possible explanation for this amazing phenomenon was the inner ideological harmony between Romanism and Marxism.²

Dynastic Conservatism constituted another reactionary political force. This was in principle the degeneration of the originally organic Nationalism which arose toward the end of the Middle Ages against the universalistic ideal of the Holy Roman Empire. Its 20th century expression was to be found in the bourgeois parties of the right such as the Deutsche Volkspartei (DVP) and the Deutschnationale Volkspartei (DNVP), the successors of the National Liberals and the Conservatives of the 19th century. They had learned nothing from the 1918 revolution, believing it possible to return to 19th century conditions. The DNVP—though claiming to be strictly nationalistic, even völkisch—allegedly was tied to plutocratic Democracy. To Rosenberg these men were Byzantine reactionaries, the representatives of the nobility and

¹Mythus, 183, 472-476, passim.

²NSMH 2:13 (Apr. 1931), 191 (B&E 1, 54ff). Cf. VB, 25.5.1925 (B&E 3, 336ff). Rosenberg likewise opposed any attempt at a distinctively Protestant involvement in German political life (B&E 1, 61ff).

bourgeois middle classes who no longer had any firm ideological or political convictions. Somehow they represented the small-minded bourgeois outlook (Spiessbürgertum) with its longing for the good old days, forgetting that it was the representatives of the good old days who were responsible for the collapse of a great State.¹

The basic criticism was that the bourgeois parties of the right were without ideas (ideenlos), that nothing could be expected from the intellectual resourcelessness (Ideenlosigkeit) of the bourgeois. The sooner they, including the Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei (DVFP), recognized their immobility as a political movement (Bewegungslosigkeit ihrer Bewegung), the better. Organization alone, without ideas and imagination, would never enable the reactionary parties of the right to withstand the unscrupulous propaganda and agitation of the Social Democrats and Communists.²

Whatever their differences, reactionary religious Confessionalism and political Conservatism would naturally join hands against the NSDAP. This was supposedly illustrated by the authoritarian, dictatorial government of Franz von Papen with his class (or caste) rule from above and antiquated ideas about the divine origin of all political authority!³

Despite later claims that democratic Liberalism had been given a fair chance in 1919 and failed, Rosenberg's earliest writings demonstrate an aversion to democratic and humanitarian ideals. Parliamentary Democracy

¹VB, 31.7.1925. Cf. Rosenberg, Der völkische Staatsgedanke (Munich, 1924), 5f, 20f. Rosenberg capitalized on the tendency of dynastic Conservatism and capitalistic Liberalism to grow together in the nationalistic euphoria that was 19th century Germany. By the early 20th century the conservative upper classes had tended to become bourgeois and liberal; the liberal middle classes, reactionary and conservative. The assumption was that Liberalism had become tainted with Conservatism and vice versa.

²VB, 18.12./25.11./7.9.1926 (B&E 3, 519, 470f, 456-458).

³NSMH 3:3 (Oct. 1932), 472-474.

inevitably led to anarchy and confusion and ended in political tyranny and economic dictatorship (Finanzdiktatur), as history from the French Revolution to the Weimar Republic allegedly illustrated. The equal right to vote was an immoral and demoralizing principle in that it rested upon an anonymous quantity devoid of responsibility rather than upon recognized quality conscious of responsibility; since it granted the incapable, the lazy, and the ignorant the same rights as the most capable, diligent, and learned men. There was therefore no more unstable form of government than Democracy. Lack of continuity and continuous voting disturbed the rational implementation of national and political necessities. Such anti-democratic sentiments filled the pages of the early Völkischer Beobachter. Bismarckian-sounding statements were the order of the day: 'Ultimately majorities and ballots do not decide the fateful issues of a people's destiny but the consciousness of strength and justice'.¹

The Nazi publicist was reflecting a strong tradition of anti-democratic as well as völkisch sentiment in Germany. Parliamentary Democracy was allegedly alien to German history, unsuited to the racial soul of the German Volk. A democracy which might have made sense among Nordics (e.g., the English), when carried over to alien and inferior races, could only lead to self-emasculation and enslavement. One supposedly knew from history that 'the bastard philosophy of Democracy' could only lead to cultural decline and regression into chaotic barbarism. Liberalism simply had no basis in organic truth in that it opposed the fundamental realities of nature, the brute fact of differences among men. When Liberalism taught liberty, free trade, parliamentarianism, human equality, equality of the sexes, women's emancipation, etc., it simply sinned against natural law.²

In criticizing Liberalism Rosenberg was primarily interested in its underlying ideology. Viewed philosophically Liberalism represented at once

¹ S&R 2, 454, 431-435, 315; 1, 329n, 417ff, 433ff, 558f.

² Mythus, 503. Cf. WK 2:16 (Nov. 1925), 724f.

both universalistic humanitarianism and subjectivistic individualism, both of which were inimical to an organic Weltanschauung. It entailed a worldview as universalistic as that of the Middle Ages. But there is no absolute, universally valid truth or justice. This is both a philosophical and practical impossibility. As for humanitarianism, the ideal of human equality was the product of an abstract reason utterly out of touch with the real world of nature and history. Whereas the Liberal worldview began with human equality, National Socialism started with inequality. This simply led to different political philosophies and practices: the one in conformity with nature, the other in opposition to it.¹

Subjectivistic individualism was likewise unnatural in that it destroyed life's organic unity by abstractly isolating the subjective human spirit from the reality of physical nature. The realm of the mind was cut loose from its concrete racial and ethnic moorings. Instead of the collective racial soul Liberalism put forth the absolute autonomous spirit or individual ego. The spiritual was stressed at the expense of the physical much as Medieval thought stressed the soul at the expense of the body, playing havoc with the organic harmony of nature. Liberalism's subjectivistic worldview led to an unhealthy individualism in every area of life, which could only end in ideological, religious, and cultural confusion as well as political, economic, and social chaos. Liberalism meant only an apparent external freedom. This **subjectivistic conception of individual freedom** led straight to Bolshevism.²

Liberalism was not only theoretically but also practically stupid when applied to the political realities of the 20th century. It was an antiquated ideology simply incapable of coming to grips with 20th century political problems. Nazi successes seemed to support this sentiment. The democratic

¹Interview, 7.4.1936 (BA: NS 8/43, 186); Berlin, 4.3.1936; 3.3.1938 (BA: NS 8/43, 127; 8/82, 14-17).

²Cf. BA: NS 8/76, 90; 8/25, 45; 8/54, 84; 8/84, 48f; 8/76, 30. These are common themes in Rosenberg's speeches and articles during the Third Reich.

ideas of a Thomas Masaryk, for example, were merely 'the senile talk of a dying representative of a rotting political ideal, who no longer understands the life of the present and the future'.¹

Economically and socially Liberalism according to Rosenberg stood for reactionary bourgeois Capitalism which, given the common Jewish materialistic worldview, necessarily led in turn to revolutionary proletarian Socialism. Practically Democracy always meant Plutocracy, the rule of Jewish Capitalism in league with Jewish Marxism. Liberalism was two-faced in that it was at once both revolutionary and reactionary. On the one hand it was passé, a dying ideology incapable of meeting the demands of the 20th century. On the other it was the ideological and political harbinger of Marxism and Bolshevism. Whether reactionary or revolutionary, ~~two~~-faced Liberalism would violently oppose National Socialism. Whatever their differences, reactionary Conservatism and democratic Liberalism were one in persecuting the harbingers of a völkisch state.²

Democratic Liberalism, Rosenberg was convinced, was inevitably the ideological and practical breeding-ground of socialistic Marxism. Marxism was the 'direct ideological consequence' of the plutocratic idea and the Liberal ideals of human equality and brotherhood. During the Liberal 19th century naïve Europeans were thus easy prey for Marxism's materialistic and unnatural ideas. In the practical sphere plutocratic materialism, bourgeois individualism, and industrial capitalism only created an economic and social situation amenable to Marxist propaganda. In short, the democratic idea plus the social crisis were the ideological and practical presuppositions of the radical Marxist movement. Moreover, Democracy's moral uncertainty, political instability, and anti-völkisch policies could only wear down the

¹Rosenberg, Novemberköpfe (Munich, 1939), 324. Cf. BA: NS 8/23, 186; 8/24, 34; 8/84, 231, 239.

²Rosenberg, Der völkische Staatsgedanke, 10ff.

people's resistance to Marxism. Liberalism only fed the Marxist monster.

One would expect only bitter hostility between capitalistic Liberalism and socialistic Marxism. But, as the Weimar Republic had shown, the democratic parties were quite willing to come to terms with the so-called workers' party against the patriotic parties of the right. It was most remarkable that purely political considerations outweighed ostensible economic interests. The only possible explanation was that the leaders of both the Liberals and the Marxists were Jews. There was no other explanation for the sympathy for Marxism in bourgeois, democratic, and capitalistic circles (e.g., the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung).¹

There is no indication in Rosenberg's critique of Marxism that he ever studied its major theoreticians such as Marx himself, Engels, or Kautsky. His references to Marxist literature were limited to occasional allusions to political tracts by Lenin, Trotzky, or Zinoviev. His knowledge of Marxism seems to stem from the Marxist propaganda and periodicals of his day. To him Marxism boiled down to a utopian ideology subversive of all nations: stressing the international solidarity of the proletariat, class warfare, pacifism, and the denial of the concept of private property. Marxist Socialism was not simply or primarily a matter of economic struggle but a general worldview: an intolerant, anti-religious, materialistic dogma, whose success was due to the masses' ignorance of history and their own ethnic soul. Marxism was the denial of everything ethnic (völkisch). Its doctrine of class struggle was brutality elevated to 'religion'.²

Characteristically, Rosenberg's critique concentrated on Marxism as a worldview rather than an economic, social, and political program. In his earliest unpublished jottings he maintained that Marxist Socialism, its emphasis on 'personality' and 'freedom' notwithstanding, riveted all its attention on revolutionizing life outwardly at the expense of the inner

¹Ibid., 11-13. Cf. S&R 1, 446; 2, 196, 693.

²S&R 2, 191ff, 306; 1, 315ff. B&E 2, 27ff.

man. Its superficial materialistic worldview could never satisfy the German worker in the long run.¹

The Nazi ideologist once attempted a critique of Marxism on the basis of Kant's philosophy. The organic union in man of the otherwise alien realms of nature and freedom was the essence of humanity, but the intellectual autonomy of each had to be maintained in order to guard against both scientific and religious dogmas. Marxism, however, artificially mixed the two, and its doctrine opposed both organic nature and spiritual freedom. The Marxist political, economic, and social program belonged to the realm of nature (i.e., to man's biological drives, to egoism); and as such had nothing to do with the realm of freedom, morality, art, religion, or culture in general. The Marxists, confusing nature and freedom, failed to see that culture does not necessarily depend on social conditions. Moreover, Marxist materialism's doctrinaire encroachment on the realm of freedom meant the rape of mankind. Marxist materialism meant the end of freedom, responsibility, morality, personality, creativity, culture, and religion. Thus Marxism could never be a creative, but only a destructive force in society. This was to be expected given the Jewish origin of Marxist 'philosophy'.²

Rosenberg stressed Marxism's alleged Jewish origin and character both as an ideology and a conspiracy. Apart from Jewish materialism and messianism, the racial instinct and the 'historical hope', Marxism was incomprehensible. At the same time there were long-range historical factors, both ideological and material, which explained its origin and success. Ideologically Marxist doctrine was simply the logical consequence of the liberal Enlightenment. In the material realm the Marxist movement was the result of economic and social conditions which developed during the 19th century. Financial and

¹EA, May/10.7.1918 (S&R 1, 52, 105ff, 109f).

²VB, 12.7.1922 (S&R 2, 638ff, 642f).

industrial Capitalism occasioned a class struggle from above. This in turn brought about a justifiable reaction, namely the proletarian class struggle from below. Industrialization, urbanization, and specialization produced a whole generation alienated from nature (and history), men who saw no sense or goal to their daily work. The crucial question was whether the bitter disillusionment which followed would mean the ruin of the world, or whether there was still some way out of the 'madhouse of Marxism'.

It is a tragedy without compare that about the middle of the 19th century a great prophet did not arise for the proletarian masses (Arbeiterheeren); one who, through a personality totally rooted in his nationality (Volkstum), could have bound past and present together to present millions with a worldview for the future. But in the place of such a prophet an incomprehensible quirk of fate put two Jews: Marx and Lassalle. The opportunity to give the legitimate workers' movement struggling for its naked existence a religious content (einen religiösen Gehalt) was missed.

Originally Socialism was a romantic idea, and the workers' movement a genuinely social struggle for power. But romantic Socialism was not heightened but rather adulterated to become plutocratic Marxism. Ideologically the Jew Marx did not fortify this natural protest against a whole age, but instead gave the workers the same materialistic worldview cherished by those against whom the workers were struggling, namely the financial and industrial capitalists!

Instead of giving the workers a new idea, Marx stole the "worldview" of the practical materialist. Instead of preaching to the enslaved worker a religious, liberating ideal (ein religiöses, befreiendes Ideal), he tossed him ideological trash (Weltanschauungskitsch) of a lowdown, dreary, Darwinistic sort. Instead of giving him a real homeland and the achievement of an ethnic culture (Volkskultur), he more and more loosened him inwardly from the soil of his fathers, taught him to hate the history of his people and believe in a fanciful International....

The struggle for an existence worthy of man was justified of course but the momentous opportunity (weltgeschichtliche Gelegenheit) to give birth to a new ideal out of the workers' distress was let slip.

Since Marx the workers' movement had become a struggle of the hungry capitalists against the rich capitalists in that the struggle was conducted on the basis of the same liberal, capitalistic worldview. The 'ideological' foundations of bourgeois Liberalism and socialistic Marxism were thus the same. The common materialistic outlook, plus the Jewish leadership in both camps, explained why plutocratic Democracy and so-called Social Democracy could pursue the same politics in the Weimar Republic.¹

¹ Rosenberg, Börse und Marxismus (Munich, 1924), 8-11. Cf. WK 1:1 (1.6. 1924), 3-5 (B&E 3, 280-282). Cf. Zukunftsweg (1927), 132f where Rosenberg substitutes 'an ideologically sure content' (einen weltanschaulich sicheren Gehalt) for 'a religious content'.

An essential feature of Rosenberg's critique of Social Democracy was the charge of hypocrisy. The SPD preached one thing and practised another. Social Democracy only masqueraded as Socialism; it was neither social nor socialistic, that is, it neither promoted reconciliation among social classes or any real opposition to Jewish Capitalism. It was not a declaration of war on the Age of Materialism but bowed down to the god of mammon. Social Democracy with its internationalism, class warfare, and pacifism had nothing to do with true Socialism, that is, the 'spirit of community' (Gemeinschaftsgeist).¹

According to Rosenberg the SPD had opposed all the social legislation of Bismarck and the Second Reich since its real aim was power and not the social betterment of the working classes. It demanded the nationalization of the means of production but not of credit, of industrial but not financial capital. Moreover, many Social Democrats were not really Marxists by conviction but simply bourgeois bureaucrats for one reason or another dissatisfied with the old conservative State. Thus the SPD was too full of bourgeois cowardice to make a real social revolution in 1918 and in the Weimar Republic simply played along with capitalistic Democracy in both its domestic and foreign policy. Rosenberg exploited the ambiguous character (Zwitterhaftigkeit) of Social Democracy and the hypocrisy (Unwahrhaftigkeit) of Marxism in general.²

Nevertheless the Nazi ideologist could not appreciate or acknowledge any development or essential changes in the Marxist camp. The original character remained ever the same despite apparent changes due to force of circumstance. Given its essentially Jewish character, Marxism as such could not alter its essence, only its tactics. There was, for example, no essential difference

¹ S&R 2, 125, 192f; 1, 507f.

² Novemberköpfe, 278; Mythus, 525f; B&E 3, 430, 487, 497; S&R 2, 334f, 585f. Cf. Rosenberg to Editor of Nationen (Stockholm), 30.10.1928 (BA: NS 8/115, 83f).

between Social Democracy and Communism. Although Socialists of all stripes appealed to Marx, the Bolsheviks had the most right to do so. They were his true heirs and followers. They claimed to be the genuine executors of the Marxist legacy, and rightly so. The Bolsheviks were simply the more courageous adherents of the Marxist worldview. 'Bolshevism is consistent Marxism in ideology and practice'.¹

The Jewish character of Communism was clear to Rosenberg from the beginning on the basis of supposedly 'naked facts'. It was no accident that Jews were the leaders of chaos and anarchy in Russia, Hungary, and Germany with a view to erecting a ruthless dictatorship. Conspiracy, cruelty, anarchy, and tyranny were the hallmarks of Bolshevism. But Communism was not simply a political conspiracy but the culmination of a long process of ideological decline and decay, the index of cultural crisis and collapse, the horrifying symbol of a great spiritual sickness. Without precedent in European history Bolshevism represented an ideological and political danger which had to be overcome. He who would look the 20th century in the eye had to come to grips with Communism. No nation would be spared deciding for or against it, and the problem of 'Nationality (Volkstum) and Marxism' had to be faced by all.²

In summary, Rosenberg's political ideology opposed both left and right (Rotfront und Reaktion) in typical Nazi fashion. It meant anti-Confessionalism, anti-Conservatism, anti-Liberalism and, above all, anti-Marxism. Marxism in the form of Bolshevism was the most immediate enemy in that it presented the most immediate danger and possessed the most consistent appeal. Democracy was a living corpse. It was only a question of time before it would be replaced by Communism or some form of ethnic ideology such as Nazism. Contemporary economic, social, and political upheavals were only

¹S&R 2, 586,193; 1, 247.

²Berlin, 22.2.1934 (B&E 2, 30f). Cf. S&R 1, 111ff,245; 2, 208ff,233f,239.

the external signs of an inner instability and lack of faith on the part of millions. People no longer believed in the blessings of the Middle Ages or the Age of Democracy. The decision of the future was: either to follow the course of the 19th century to its bitter end, namely Communism; or to reverse and overcome this development by having the courage to subject the spiritual and political doctrines of the past to a searching re-evaluation. This would demonstrate, in the absence of any ruling idea among the nations, that the German Weltanschauung was the only real replacement for the ideologies of the 19th century.¹

THE IDEA OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Thus National Socialism, as the political expression of the German ideology, was Rosenberg's answer to the practical political problem of how to provide effective opposition to Communism. Confessionalism, Conservatism, and Liberalism could provide no answers for the political realities of the 20th century. None of the old spiritual or political forces was capable of withstanding Bolshevism. The old political parties viewed the Communists as simply one radical party among others and not as the symbol of the end of an era comparable only to the decline of the old Graeco-Roman world. Communism could not be overcome by civil or military force but only by means of a new political ideology. 'One cannot suppress the Communist movement through police power but only through a new worldview and through genuine social righteousness'.²

The means of salvation from Communism was to be found in Nazi ideology, in the NSDAP as a political movement, and in Adolf Hitler as the incarnation of both. Rosenberg's political ideas, and especially the idea of National Socialism, were not original. Chamberlain and other völkisch authors provided the negative side: namely, anti-Confessionalism, anti-

¹Munich, 7.9.1934 (B&E 2, 215f). WK 2:3 (1.2.1925), 127.

²Interviews, 31.5./6.12.1935 (BA: NS 8/41, 82; 8/42, 215f).

Liberalism, anti-Marxism, and above all anti-Semitism. But Chamberlain and many other völkisch authors were in many ways politically conservative. Hence it would seem that the practical idea of a revolutionary National Socialism, of combining racial Nationalism with state Socialism, came primarily from Hitler himself. Certainly Rosenberg always attributed National Socialism as a political idea to Hitler, although in his earlier writings he did refer to the political tracts of Party-founder Anton Drexler and Sudeten Nazi Rudolf Jung.¹ Moreover, he referred to Hitler and Mein Kampf in his own exposition of National Socialism as a political ideology, acknowledging the Fuehrer as the creator of the NSDAP and master in the sphere of practical politics. It is interesting that Rosenberg also appealed to Chamberlain's admiration for Hitler and enthusiastic Nazi confession in his old age.²

For 25 years the official Nazi ideologist interpreted National Socialism to a whole generation of Germans. Although Rosenberg had no part in drafting the Nazi Party Program, he wrote in 1922 a commentary on it, which constituted the Party's first official publication: Wesen, Grundsätze und Ziele der NSDAP (1923). The booklet was dedicated to Hitler and written to provide a handbook of Nazi ideas since the Fuehrer's promised work would not be published for some time. The work stressed the racial idea as the basis of the Nazi political program. By 1930 when Nazi electoral gains occasioned a new edition, 100,000 copies had been sold and well over 800,000 copies by early 1942.³ In the meantime Rosenberg had continuously discussed the nature of National Socialism and every sort of political question in countless articles and speeches, not to mention several books

¹S&R 1, 508n; Die internationale Hochfinanz, 69. Cf. LA, 90ff. Later in the context of his controversy with the Strasser brothers in 1927 over the meaning of National Socialism Rosenberg declared that Jung's work was not authoritative for the NSDAP (BA: NS 8/67, 139; 8/143, 97ff).

²WK 4:43 (July, 1927), 296ff/309ff. Cf. Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 52f.

³Honorarberechnung, 11.4.1942 (BA: NS 8/144, 16). S&R 2, 117 (Vorwort, Jan. 1923), 131, passim. Wesen, Grundsätze und Ziele der NSDAP (Munich, 1930), 4.

and booklets including Der völkische Staatsgedanke (1924), Das Wesengefüge des Nationalsozialismus (1932), and the Mythus itself whose latter third is devoted to political, social, and economic issues.

Rosenberg maintained that völkisch or Nazi political thought rested on three pillars: one, Nationalism, or the protection of Volk and race; two, Socialism, or the idea of social justice; and three, the idea of the will to power (Wille zur Macht), or the conviction that these can only be realized and maintained by attaining power. Ethnic character (Volkstum) plus Socialism plus power constituted the Nazi political ideal.¹

True Nationalism meant above all the protection of Volk and race, which meant in turn state control over economic life (Privatkapitalismus) and the ruthless carrying out of all measures promoting economic recovery. A nationalistic foreign policy (Nationalpolitik) meant securing the nation's power position. Nationalism in domestic politics meant Socialism or security for the individual.²

According to Rosenberg the early 20th century was witnessing everywhere a new nationalistic awakening in reaction to the Liberal epoch. This new Nationalism was unconditional, recognizing only one standard: whether an action strengthened the inner resources of the nation, or not. Any movement which wanted to save the German Volk had to combine this völkisch ideal of national power with an unconditional demand for social justice. In other words Marxism had to be superseded by State-Socialism (Staatssozialismus), that is, social justice toward all classes of the German people implemented without discrimination by the power of the State on the basis of the principle of ethnic obligation to the people as a whole. Only National Socialism, with its fanatical will to make this new political synthesis a reality, consistently applied the new Nationalism. This was to be contrasted with

¹Der völkische Staatsgedanke, 23ff, 28f, 33. Cf. Die internationale Hochfinanz, 67ff; WK 5:68 (Aug. 1929), 346.

²VB, 29.8.1923 (S&R 2, 712f).

the old Nationalism unfortunately poisoned by reactionary Dynasticism, democratic Liberalism, and plutocratic Capitalism. The old bourgeois Nationalism was dying, and it was necessary to proclaim a new racial (völkisch) Nationalism (allegedly a return to the old German Nationalism of Fichte and Arndt, Blücher and Stein) instead of the old 'democratic pseudo-Nationalism'.¹

The Nazi idea was born from the 'myth of the nation' and developed through the experience of the homogeneity (Gleichartigkeit) of those two great 19th century movements, Nationalism and Socialism, both purified from the poison of a materialistic age.²

The myth of the nation entailed the myth of race. In Das Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus Rosenberg stressed the practical importance of the racial idea as the creative intellectual basis of the Nazi Movement in opposition to the insipid eclectic approach of combining many ideas in one's political theory. Faith in the significance of the blood was the primary presupposition (Ur-Voraussetzung) and central idea (Kerngedanke) of National Socialism. The Nazi racial struggle signified a gigantic attempt to make the aristocratic laws of nature and race victorious by means of political power (mit politischen Machtmitteln). The racial idea was not a destructive element but a cohesive one. In fact, the idea of race was the only means of binding the German people together and leading them to unity and a strong political life.³

True Socialism, as Rosenberg wrote in 1920, represented an organic idea of the State based upon the fundamental diversity and inequality of human

¹WK 6:68 (Aug. 1929), 342,339ff,345ff,350. Cf. B&E 1, 151; Mythus, 540f.

²Rosenberg, Führer zum Reichsparteitag der NSDAP 1929 (Munich, 1929), 14,16.

³Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus, 11-18. Cf. B&E 1, 242.

gifts and functions within a society. Genuine Socialism was thus 'aristocratic Socialism', stressing both natural selection and the individual personality. At the same time it meant subjecting egoistic drives to the interests of the State (not social class) in the interest of securing individual freedom. German Socialism, represented by Fichte's Idealism and Bismarck's State-Socialism, valued creative personality, quality, authority, Genuine Socialism was really German Idealism, whereas Marxist Socialism was merely Jewish materialism.¹

In the Mythus Rosenberg defined Socialism as 'the securing of the individual (or whole communities) against any exploitation of their labor (Arbeitskräfte), implemented by a collective (Kollektiv)'. Whether a measure was truly socialistic or not, depended upon its end result; that is, whether it served and protected the Volk as an organic whole, as well as the individual, against the lust for private profit. The nationalization of public utilities, for example, was truly socialistic in that it protected both the nation and the individual against capitalistic exploitation. True Socialism, as exemplified by Stein or Bismarck, was pragmatic and not dogmatic, being neutral toward private property as such. A state which would arbitrarily confiscate one's property could hardly be a Fatherland.²

The Nazi ideologist defended the right of private property as such on the ground that, as congealed work, it is the result of the irresistible urge of nature to accumulate and bequeath possessions. But there was a distinction between property which is the result of creative work and that which is the result of speculation and the exploitation of work; between stationary agricultural and industrial capital bound to the soil and liquid international loan-capital (Leihkapital), or financial capital (Finanzkapital). The latter should be either confiscated or taxed away by the

¹S&R 1, 506f.

²Mythus, 534ff, 543n. Cf. VB, 1.1.1926 (B&E 3, 370).

State; the former, preserved untouchable as an indispensable incentive for achievement. Distinguishing between the two was merely a matter of the racial character of those possessing the property, ultimately a question of the Germanic sense of justice (Rechtsgefühl).¹

Rosenberg's Nazi ideology did not include any very sophisticated economic thought, as he had little interest in economic matters as such. He was, admittedly, no expert in economics.² Any notion of economic determinism—for example, Walter Rathenau's statement that the people's destiny lay in economics ('Wirtschaft ist das Schicksal')—was anathema. Despite the appeal to scientific laws in other areas, Rosenberg had only scorn for so-called economic science and economic laws, whether Liberal or Marxist. A just economy, like justice itself, was simply that which served the people as an organic whole.³

In the early years of the Nazi Movement Rosenberg simply repeated economic demands similar to those of the Party Program: protection of the national economy (Volkswirtschaft), a sound middle class, breaking the interest slavery (Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft!), nationalization of banks, socialization of stock exchanges, renunciation of the gold standard, profit-sharing for workers, social security for the aged, some sort of agricultural reform, and the general decentralization of economic life. Above all, he stressed the primacy of ideology and politics over economics, without which all specific economic measures would be either impossible or in vain. Before the economic struggle could begin, the racial and political battle had to be settled. On the one hand, the disastrous connection between economics and politics had to be overcome; on the other, the notion that they represent autonomous spheres independent of each other.⁴

¹Mythus, 581-588. ²Rosenberg to Lammers, 16.11.1935 (BA: NS 8/18, 24).

³Mythus, 122f, 590f.

⁴S&R 2, 126, 143ff, 147, 409, 413, 462, 624, 634. In economic matters Rosenberg simply repeated the standard Nazi line of Feder and Hitler. Cf. WK 6:61 (Jan. 1929), 1, 16-18; 4:43 (July, 1927), 299ff, 304.

The purpose of the economy, like the political system itself, was to maintain the race. Its chief task was to strengthen the Volk in the struggle for existence with alien powers without and within. Only when the 'biological mission' of the economy was clearly recognized, could one pass judgment on various economic systems. Economics, like everything else, was ultimately a matter of character; economic prosperity depended on the nation's general political destiny. Moreover, agriculture deserved special attention. One had to beware of overindustrialization and develop a healthy peasantry as a source of racial renewal.¹

The primacy of the peasantry was not to be understood in any pseudo-romantic sense, and throughout the Third Reich Rosenberg stressed the importance of technology in the Nazi Revolution. It was impossible to change everything all at once. It was not in the Nazis' power to alter many existing political and economic realities but simply to develop what was there. Moreover, one had to be extraordinarily careful not to disturb 'such a complicated apparatus as German economic life' with naïve socialistic and revolutionary measures.²

In a 1939 speech to Nazi economists on the relationship between ideology and economics, Rosenberg maintained that, according to the Nazi worldview, economic competition as such was absolutely necessary to stimulate the economy and should in no way be disturbed. But this should be bound to an ethic of honesty and hard work. One could make a political revolution in a few years; whereas a genuine social and economic revolution would require decades, especially given the difficult international situation. An economic revolution was like trying to repair a running clock without being able to

¹Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus, 32-35. In matters of Agrarpolitik Rosenberg was dependent on the works of one-time Nazi Minister of Agriculture, Walther Darré. Cf. Mythus, 86; NSMH, Nov. 1931, 391.

²Brunswick, 20.5.1936 (BA: NS 8/44, 11). Interviews, 7.4.1936 (BA: NS 8/43, 187); 17.5.1939 (BA: NS 8/85, 5; 8/86, 6).

stop it. Nazi economic policy was unthinkable apart from an ideological basis, but this had nothing to do with economic dogmas. Once this worldview was shared by all, it would be possible eventually to try various measures to improve the economy.¹

The immediate aim of Nazi economic policy was an organic, healthy, national economy (Volkswirtschaft/Nationalwirtschaft)—as opposed to a private economy (Privatwirtschaft) or an international economy (Weltwirtschaft)—for the sake of freedom in foreign policy. Economic and social problems would be solved ultimately by applying the Führerprinzip and the old Germanic work ethic and aesthetic to economic life. The secret of Nazi economic success was 'heroic work' and an 'heroic economy', elevating work and economic life into the realm of the heroic by making it serve higher goals than simply making a living.

The end for which one works, gives work its nobility and glory. Work had no honor in Capitalism where one only works for economic gain. How can work be noble which is only done to get the means of merely existing temporarily? How can economic life, whose meaning is simply earning money have any honor? But without glory neither work nor economic life can be fruitful in the long run....

What use are dreams of a paradise on earth when indeed it is only a paradise of meaningless pleasure, frightful monotony and inactivity, in exchange for that which is noble in us? Peoples have always been happiest when they accomplished the most....The nation must be so alive in us that we do not ask: what am I getting out of it? We ask: what have we produced and how well have we worked? Only thus are we a people on the march.... The economy does not ask the costs of political idealism, but the economy is nourished by the ethnic and nationalistic will.

Obviously all material need will soon disappear....But should the economy and the nation then sit down to a sort of petty bourgeois pensioner's existence (Kleinrentner-Dasein)? The principle thing has not yet been accomplished....The glory of work does not consist in the fact that the worker is permitted merely a higher material existence. The honor of work has nothing at all to do with material things but with far more: with the future of the Reich, our humanity (Menschentum), our freedom, and our creativity. We are not yet free, not all of us. We are too poor to be free. We live a bourgeois life if we have the material means for it; and if not, we would like such to be able to live a bourgeois life. Yet how hollow is this bourgeois life! Just as hollow as the bourgeoisie itself....

We must first have once again a new culture to be able to be free, to be able to be what we are....²

¹Rosenberg in Europäisches Wirtschaftszentrum (Munich, 1939), 98-100.

²Heroische Arbeit, Spring 1936 (BA: NS 8/43, 181-185). Cf. BA: NS 8/51, 3ff; 8/55, 84; 8/56, 90; 8/76, 5.

With regard to Rosenberg's opinions on social issues, it is not necessary to catalogue them all but simply to indicate the major emphases. For instance, he advocated in typical Nazi fashion the de-urbanization and de-proletarianization of the masses to alleviate their alienation from nature; also the emancipation of women from the women's emancipation movement, while at the same time allowing women broad educational opportunities according to their natural abilities. His concept of the ideal society was opposed to abstract individualism and collectivism in favor of the organic ethnic community or Volksgemeinschaft. The goal of society was to do away with rulers and subjects, lords and servants, in favor of a genuine Volks-gemeinschaft based on achievement and character, not on charity. Such a social revolution was a matter of a new culture, a new way of thinking and acting, and would take years to achieve. At the same time the Volksgemein-schaft did not exclude life's natural struggle and selection with its demand for character and achievement. Like eternal nature itself, the Nazi Movement and Nazi society would further the strong and creative, culling out the weak and unproductive, to produce an aristocracy of achievement, a new nobility. Collectivism, in the form of a levelling attitude at the expense of great personality, was the mortal enemy of every people.¹ Social equality was obviously impossible, but apparently equality of opportunity and aristocracy of achievement was to exist side by side.

Like other Nazi leaders Rosenberg capitalized on the trench Socialism of World War 1: 'The Front Socialism of 1914 means today National Socialism, a sense of national community' (Nationalgemeinschaft).² He who would be a Nationalist had to be a Socialist and vice versa. Socialistic and nationalistic demands were one and the same. As the Nazi ideologist proclaimed at the 1929 Party Congress, there was a philosophical basis for the essential unity

¹Cf. B&E 4, 106, 193; 2, 160, 233, 312, 90; 1, 122f. Mythus, 539, 483ff, 512, 550ff.

²WK 4:43 (July 1927), 307.

of Nationalism and Socialism: both were expressions of one and the same organic life. Social values and racial instinct were one!¹ As he put it on another occasion: 'National honor and social justice are one and the same'.²

In Rosenberg's conception of National Socialism he obviously pushed Socialism out of the realm of concrete economic and social reality into the ideal realm and identified it with racial (völkisch) Nationalism. Moreover, there was no doubt that Socialism had no independent significance apart from Nationalism and was subservient to it.

In an early VB article the Nazi journalist distinguished 'National Socialism' (Nationalsozialismus) from 'national Socialism' (nationaler Sozialismus). The former symbolized a new synthesis emphasizing the inseparability of the two concepts, whereas the latter could mean national Marxism. Economic Socialism, even if on a racial basis, was not the goal but rather a free national character (Volkstum) as such and its self-assertion in all areas of life. The völkisch idea was primary. 'Socialism as an economic idea is an expedient measure (Zweckmäßigkeitserforderung) for securing the Volk and the inner strengthening of the State in order to secure a free existence for the nation as a whole in the struggle between races and peoples'.³

In early 1927 Rosenberg defended this version of National Socialism in a VB article covertly directed against the so-called National Bolshevism of Goebbels and the Strasser brothers. Nationalism, not Socialism, was the chief concern of National Socialism. 'The eternal reality which we want to preserve through all mutable forms is the Volk. Everything, but everything,

¹Nuremberg, 21.8.1929 (B&E 1, 155). Cf. Mythus, 538f.

²Interview, 6.12.1935 (BA: NS 8/42, 216.

³VB, 1.9.1923 (S&R 2, 722f).

must serve to strengthen those racial foundations which guarantee the superior worth of the nation'.¹

This standpoint was repeated in a letter to Gregor Strasser, who had replied in the Nationalsozialistische Briefe to the effect that National Socialism must displace Jewish Capitalism with 'a totally different form of economic life'. According to Rosenberg his own viewpoint was the foundation of the Nazi Movement; he who denied it denied the Movement. Those who put the chief emphasis of the Nazi Revolution on changing the economic system stressed outward forms in the tradition of Marxist propaganda at the expense of that inner transformation of racial consciousness without which no significant economic changes were possible. Furthermore, it was not true that Nationalism and Socialism were nothing without each other since the eternal Volk would remain even if Socialism were not realized, whereas Socialism would remain unrealized if the Volk should disappear.²

In 1943, when Rosenberg began a renewed stress on the socialistic side of Nazism in the interest of strengthening the war effort, he repeated this outlook in reviewing his controversy with the Strassers. The issue was fundamental: 'Is National Socialism a new Weltanschauung or only a new economic program (Wirtschaftsforderung)?' National Socialism in plain German was nothing other than Volkskameradschaft. In the context of the charge that Nazism was interested in mere power at the expense of social justice, the welfare state was expressly rejected in the interest of individual initiative.

Social justice can only consist in each one's receiving, through applying the sum total of his abilities within the structure of the Volksgemeinschaft, the place which corresponds to his total achievement. For the National Socialist State affirms a certain social gradation (eine bestimmte Rangordnung)Social justice is definitely conditioned by a gradation of rank

¹VB 1.2.1927 (B&E 1, 125). In this controversy Rosenberg could and did appeal to Hitler's pithy programmatic statement in Mein Kampf on the primacy of Nationalism to Socialism: 'To win the masses for the national rising, no social sacrifice is too great' (WK 4:43, July 1927, 306n).

²Rosenberg to G. Strasser, 24.2.1927 (BA: NS 8/143, 97ff).

(Rangordnung) in national (völkisch) life. Otherwise, were this not the case, the striving of the individual would cease.

The German people are accused of setting up striving for power as the philosophy of their existence. At bottom this striving is an obvious fact in the whole of human life. Striving for power, for glory and honor, etc., is a matter of course; and every human being who in some way or other has an inner value wants to have this value realized....This means an absolutely sound competition in life (Wettstreit des Lebens)....Even the musician wants power; he wants power over men's souls to force them to have the same experiences which he had when he composed a certain symphony. This vanishing law is also valid for the politician. A politician who does not want power should leave it alone. To accuse a politician of the will to power is exactly the same as denying a musician the will to practice music.

We have here, I believe, every right to add somehow, when we speak of social justice, that we are against the idea of a patriarchal welfare state (Versicherungsstaat), where everybody without exception is secure from the cradle to the grave. All competition, producing ideas and inventions, is excluded; and the end result is that a creative people goes to ruin. In the end we all shall have become nurses for the sick, and then no National Socialist Revolution can help us any more. A collectivism or a levelling process may be permitted in no area. If we tolerate this in principle, we give up the principle of gradation (Rangordnung) and the foundation of the Nazi worldview.¹

The third pillar on which Nazi political thought according to Rosenberg rested, was the will to power. In one sense all cultural and political problems ultimately boiled down to the problem of power. Yet power could not be achieved without a comprehensive ideology or worldview. There was thus an organic unity between power (Macht) and culture (Kultur); a close connection between religion, politics, and political and economic power.

'A religion and a worldview will only really be durable if a political power stands behind the idea'. For example, early Christianity, the Lutheran Reformation, or the Counter Reformation could not have entrenched themselves without the use of force in the form of Roman emperors, Protestant princes, or Catholic rulers. Nazism allegedly united the German religious spirit with the German sense of power, and the Nazi Revolution meant the fulfilment of an historic mission to establish the Nazi worldview by struggling for the soul of each individual by means of both ideas and force.

¹Berlin (?), 29.4.1943 (BA: NS 8/67, 143f, 132ff, 140, 142).

It was the function of political power to protect propaganda for the Nazi idea. But political power had no meaning in itself but was only 'intellectually legitimate' when it was 'the bearer of a new and great ideal'.¹

Throughout the Third Reich the Nazi ideologist stressed that political power is only justifiable insofar as it protects and promotes spiritual culture. 'National Socialism does not lay claim to power for its own sake (Macht an sich), but it wants to possess power in order to be the champion of a certain Weltanschauung'.²

THE NAZI POLITICAL REVOLUTION

As chief Nazi ideologist Rosenberg interpreted the political significance of the Nazi Revolution to the German people. Before 1933 political revolution obviously meant opposition to Weimar 'law and order' and Nazi accession to power. Opposition to the 1918 revolt in no way meant condemnation of revolution as such (Revolution an sich) or approval of evolution as the only model of organic development. The Nazi Revolution was to be an organic revolution: a biological, racial, anti-Semitic revolution against unnatural Christianity, Dynasticism, Liberalism, and Marxism. But revolution as such had no virtue. A revolution which preached 'absolutely new ideas' to an ancient people had to be inorganic and unpatriotic. Revolution or evolution was only genuine as means to restore a nation's eternal values. National Socialism's greatness consisted in its representing the age-old Volk-ideal in modern forms. Nazis most heartily affirmed the modern era and wanted to operate with up-to-date methods.³

Political revolution was, however, alien to the German temperament. As Rosenberg remarked in an interesting 1932 interview with an Italian Fascist, 'Germany has never been good soil for revolutions'. Thus the need for

¹Europäisches Wirtschaftszentrum, 100-101. Cf. WK 2:16 (Nov. 1925), 739.

²Frankfurt, 6.10.1934 (BA: NS 8/72, 112).

³NSMH 2:1 (Jan. 1931), 2f; WK, Nov. 1928 (B&E 1, 49f).

patient ideological preparation. 'We want to mold a great force, which spontaneously and irresistibly should bring forth its own political form'. This was to occur not through external political action but through internal spiritual, organic, 'social' revolution.¹

After 1933 Rosenberg affirmed, on the one hand, that the ~~Third~~ Reich was bound to all rebel ideas; on the other, that the Nazi Revolution was a 'conservative revolution' in the sense that it went deeper than others in preserving eternal völkisch values. It was also more revolutionary than others in that it was beginning to sweep away century-old forms. Its conservative character did not mean returning to out-moded political and cultural forms but preserving the eternal values of Germanic character. Nazism by virtue of its organic character was both in continuity with the past and 'an original phenomenon of the 20th century'.²

Political revolution was easy compared to social and economic revolution, which like ideological revolution could not be realized by the quick use of force. Social revolution, though distinguished from ideological revolution, was for Rosenberg basically a matter of worldview, psychological attitude, even religious outlook, with little reference to concrete economic realities. Revolution had no virtue in itself, and he opposed the 'revolutionaries as such' (Revolutionäre an sich) in politics, economics, and culture. 'The political revolution of National Socialism is the first important stage of the Movement. But it is only genuine because it means the external side of a spiritual and intellectual transformation (seelisch-geistige Umgestaltung) of German humanity'.³

¹BA: NS 8/9, 96f. The transcript of this interview, to be published in Il Regime Fascista, is not dated, but internal evidence indicates 1932, probably during Rosenberg's November visit to Rome.

²NSMh, June 1933, 244, 242ff. Cf. Halle, 16.8.1934 (BA: NS 8/72, 87); Hildesheim, 18.9.1933 (BA: NS 8/72, 5).

³VB, 7.7.1933 (B&E 1, 248); VB, 14.7.1933 (BA: NS 8/25, 23). Cf. Brunswick, 20.5.1936 (BA: NS 8/44, 6, 11).

In a VB article written shortly before the 1934 Blood Purge, the Nazi political theorist maintained that the significance of a revolution lies locked in the character of its leaders or leader. Hence the character of a revolution is determined as much by the fact of seizing power as by the practical implementation of necessary reforms. The true nature of any great upheaval (Umwälzung) can really only be realized by those who have led the movement in its struggle for its own significance. Nazi rule was not a transitional phenomenon (Übergangszeit) for the benefit of the current upheaval (Umbruch) but rather the firm foundation for the coming German Reich, which carried its own right to exist in itself and could not be described by any alien formula such as the 'secularized State'. The Nazi Revolution provided an historic opportunity for the creation of new political forms to mold every area of human life. To this end the Nazi State would occasion the process of natural selection which would see to it that in time greatness and achievement would prevail. 'The meaning of the Nazi Movement is thus not the establishment of any system, even a one-party system, but the expression of vital energy striving for totality, grasping all areas of existence with a mighty hand and transforming them from inside out'.¹ The Nazi Revolution, in line with Rosenberg's longing for totality and finality, was not to be one revolution among others but 'the decisive revolution of German history'.²

Rosenberg the politician was not silent on the subject of Nazi revolutionary morality. Obviously one could not make a political revolution and maintain power with the conventional bourgeois mentality, morality, and methods. Theoretically there could be no universal ethical standard. Practically so-called Germanic moral sensitivity (Sittlichkeitsgefühl) and the preserva-

¹VB, 19.6.1934 (B&E 2, 104, 102-106). Cf. B&E 2, 136f, 145 on the important principle of Auslese as stressed by Rosenberg at the 1934 Parteitag.

²Berlin, 17.1.1935 (B&E 2, 257). Cf. VB, 30.1.1935 (B&E 2, 264).

tion of the race functioned as absolute standards, the formal and material principles of his political ethic. Nazi brutality at Potemka was defended by means of Nazi ideology. Things were perhaps carried too far, but what happened was the expression of the nation's self-preservation instinct. SA men could not be put on the same level with sub-human Communists. Men's souls were not equal and some were inferior to others. The Nazi goal was the promotion and protection of a strong German humanity and everything—moral, social, political, and economic life—had to serve this purpose.¹

Nazi terror after the seizure of power was also justified on the principle that the end justifies the means. The goal was the establishment of a strong, unified national State with social justice within and freedom without. All means that led to this goal were good, those which did not were bad. This was the one and only moral canon that could be laid down. Which means were expedient only one man, the Fuehrer, had the right, earned before the bar of history, to decide.²

The Party was the initial instrument of revolution. The Nazi Movement called itself a 'Party' because it realistically recognized that power would never be achieved through a non-partisan (Überparteilich) association of patriotic people, but only by a militant, disciplined organization of fanatical revolutionaries. The destiny of peoples in world history was decided always by single-minded minorities. Party membership should remain small and never become a majority of the people. The NSDAP was not, however, simply the representative of party interests, one party among others, but the organic representative of the people as a whole. In line with Rosenberg's biological outlook, the Nazi Party was allegedly the product of organic growth, 'a self-contained organism having grown from the soil of contemporary

¹B&E 1, 73f (VB, Aug. 1932). Cf. Wesensgefüge, 41ff.

²VB, 14.3.1933 (B&E 1, 167).

confusion'.¹

Party organization was not a primary interest of the Nazi ideologist; his province was its underlying Weltanschauung. He did, however, discuss Party organization in terms of the leadership principle (Führerprinzip) and the order principle (Ordensprinzip). Since the Party was to function in a sense as the State, these principles applied to the Nazi State as well. Rosenberg's view of the relationship between Party and State was not very clearly thought out beyond the following maxim: 'The Party creates and develops the ideas; the State is the administrative apparatus which puts them into practice'.²

Despite Nazi reluctance to theorize Rosenberg did try to develop a theory of the State. Historically the origin and backbone of the State supposedly lay in a determined, disciplined male organization (Männerbund). Examples were: Egyptian priests, Chinese scholars, Indian military castes, Jewish rabbis, monastic orders, Teutonic Knights, Jesuits, Freemasons, the Prussian Officer Corps, the German Army, the Free Corps, the SA and NSDAP. It was necessary to distinguish between the outer form of the State and its inner content, that is, its character and ideological justification. 'The essence (Wesen) of the State can vary according to content (inhaltlich); viewed formally it is always power' (Macht).³

Attaining and maintaining power in this world was a life and death struggle. There could be no 'natural' idea of the State since the struggle for existence and process of natural selection was no adequate basis for the State. These factors left to themselves would mean the death of every

¹Berlin, 22.2 1932 (B&E 2, 40). S&R 2, 127f, 585, 679.

²Interview, Summer 1937 (BA: NS 8/46, 59).

³Mythus, 502f, 485ff. Cf. B&E 4, 280.

culture and State. The very meaning of the State was securing the individual from the war of all against all.¹

A 'Christian' view of the State based on the noble principle of private charity was likewise impractical in the light of biological reality. Moreover, modern man could not accept the spiritual tyranny of a Medieval theocracy (Gottesstaat) with its death penalty for heretics. The confessional, feudal, or dynastic State was likewise unacceptable. Liberalism's feminine formal State (Formalstaat), a technical apparatus without any real ideological content or basis, had to be rejected also in favor of a masculine State (Männerstaat) based on a modern myth. Needless to say, Marxism's class state (Klassenstaat) with its proletarian dictatorship was also out of the question. The idolized absolute State of Hegel had to give way to a national or racial State which existed to serve the German people (Volksstaat/Nationalstaat). The State was not to be an end in itself but simply one means among others for the preservation of the people. Political forms and laws come and go, but the Volk abides forever.² 'The State for us is not organization and power as such but power organized for the purpose of protecting the Volk and race'.³

What specific form of government was the Nazi racial State to adopt? Before 1933 Rosenberg in characteristic Nazi fashion maintained that this question was comparatively unimportant and that it could be resolved only after coming to power. The Nazi Movement was allegedly above the outmoded controversy over monarchical and republican, federalized and centralized, forms of government. 'The concept of the Volk stands for us above that of any form of government (Staatsform)'.⁴

¹Rosenberg, Der Sumpf (Munich, 1939), 50. Mythus, 537.

²Mythus, 236, 502f, 525f, 537. ³WK, Oct. 1924, 20.

⁴VB, 10.7.1925 (B&E 3, 368); VB, 6.5.1926 (B&E 1, 29). Cf. S&R 2, 141, 182, 697.

Nevertheless the dictatorial character of the coming Nazi State was unmistakably clear. There would be 'a tight, centralized, political leadership'.¹ Shortly before the 1923 Putsch and during the 1920's Rosenberg declared that the time was ripe for 'a völkisch dictatorship'.² This would mean monarchy in some form.

We are inclined today to treat the monarchy-republic controversy as a mere issue of form. The German revival movement declares a self-consciously nationalistic republic better than a democratic Jewish monarchy (Kaisertum). Without a doubt, Here it is really not a matter of form of government at all but of words. The young German freedom movement demands, as the only hope of purifying German life, a single-minded, lengthy dictatorship (eine zielbewusste langjährige Diktatur) with a view to leaving the decision of what to call the future German Reich to the coming generation's feeling for life (Lebensgefühl). Now dictatorship, in recognizing inequality, is already an instance of the monarchical principle, no matter how much the dictator concerned insists that he is a republican. What is decisive, however, is that when a political structure finds itself in danger and must assemble all its powers of self-defense, it always returns to a certain monarchical absolutism....

Should Germany remain a republic, it is clear that it must be a republic with strong leadership at the top and an aristocracy of achievement (Leistungsaristokratie). This means, however, that this republic will have recognized the monarchical principle of nature as the only one which can preserve the State and the inequality of social classes (Ungleichheit der Stände) as a necessary indication of differentiation in value to the society.³

In the Mythus Rosenberg asserted that no one knew whether the coming Reich would take on an imperial, monarchical, or republican form of government. 'We cannot sense in advance the future's feeling for form (Formgefühl) in detail'. But imperial and republican forms had discredited themselves, which left only the old Germanic idea of kingship as a viable alternative. The future doubtless would see to it that a Nazi popular monarchy (Volkskönigtum) would come into being. The guarantee that the longing of the present would take on suitable forms in the future was life's eternally pulsating, progressive force with its process of natural selection (Ausleseprozess der Natur).⁴

¹VB, 14.10.1927 (B&E 3, 543).

²VB, 3.11.1923; VB, 18./19.4.1926 (B&E 3, 415).

³Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 52f.

⁴Mythus, 558-560.

Before 1933 Rosenberg stressed the practical importance and necessity of the leadership principle (Führerprinzip) in the Party and afterwards characterized the Nazi State as one organized on this principle, that is, as an authoritarian state (Führerstaat). To be realized in action and in concrete forms, the Nazi idea, like every living myth (Lebensmythus), needed to be inseparably tied to a human leader as its incarnation in time and space. Hence it was impossible to separate idea and leader as was the case with many who joined the Party in the childlike faith that it would be a nice forum for their petty plans. The Party could not be a public debating society for those who confused idle talk with problem-solving. 'Before National Socialism can become a fixed doctrine hard as steel, first it will have to be borne by the Fuehrer through the flames of the present. Everyone who is really true to this idea will therefore emphasize the present inseparability of Fuehrer and idea'.¹

The Hitler State was the exact opposite of the parliamentary system, where ultimate responsibility is in the hands of anonymous masses. 'The Fuehrer elected for life appoints his representatives. These have authority over those below and responsibility to those above. Thus in every case a definite person bears responsibility'.² Legitimacy was inherent in the representative character of the Fuehrer. 'For us a leader or ruler is not to be appointed or annointed by an ecclesiastical institution; but he is the symbolic representative of all the volitional and creative powers of a great nation having successfully faced a difficult destiny, and needs on this earth no sort of legitimation from any other quarter whatever'.³

¹VB, 3.5.1930 (B&E 1, 161-163). Cf. Schulungsbrief (Sept. 1938), 288.

²Rosenberg, Entwicklung der deutschen Freiheitsbewegung (Munich, 1933), 6.

³Führen und Erziehen, 1.12.1943 (BA: NS 8/68, 236).

TP In his interpretation and explication of the Führerprinzip the Nazi theorist made use of four models: the natural, the military, the feudal, and the monastic.

In the first place, the Führerprinzip was in accord with the order and organization of nature itself. Celebrating the end of the parliamentary system in 1933, Rosenberg declared that the democratic principle of popular representation was hostile to nature (naturfeindlich). 'The German nation found out more and more that this form of popular representation did not correspond to its nature, that as the natural order in all areas of life was that of leader and following (Führer und Gefolgschaft), this principle also would have to prevail in political life as well'.¹

Moreover, the leadership principle was also in accord with German military tradition. This point was made loud and clear in speeches to officers. In carrying over the tested and tried military principle to civilian life, Nazism effected 'the transfer of the soldierly Führerprinzip to political life'.² The 'soldierly principle of unconditional leadership and discipline' was the self-evident presupposition of the practical action of the Hitler Movement. The principle was absolutely necessary in the light of the fact that every nation continually finds itself in a military situation (Kampf).³ In the defense of the nation it made no sense for a disciplined army to be in the hands of weak parliamentary leaders. The Nazi Führerstaat was in this respect a conscious declaration of war against 150 years of Liberal political thought. The Movement was moving toward a form of government (Staatsform) modeled upon a monastic order (Ordensstaat). The Führerprinzip of the Teutonic Knights, reproduced in the Prussian Officer Corps, was as

¹VB, 7.7.1933 (B&E 1, 86).

²Berlin, 4.10.1934 (BA: NS 8/39, 154).

³Berlin, 7.3.1935 (B&E 2, 301f).

an order of knights (Ritterorden) still an exemplary model.¹

For years Rosenberg had been fascinated by the historical durability and influence of monastic orders, a common interest of völkisch thought. He believed it necessary in the long run that the Nazi Party and State take on such a form for the sake of political and historical continuity. This he began to preach openly in late 1933 and early 1934. A striking presentation was given in a much-publicized programmatic speech at the Marienburg fortress in April 1934:

The Nazi idea of the State had to be instinctive and autonomous, independent of doctrinaire dogmas and justification from without. Thus it was necessary to go back to the 'feudal constitution' (Lebensverfassung) of the Germanic Middle Ages. This was not a matter of an impersonal bureaucratic hierarchy (Beamtenhierarchie) nor of a god-like Caesar but of 'the personal relationship between feudal lord and vassal'. Although ostensibly opposed to a 'feudal state' in any ecclesiastical sense, the Nazi ideologist often stressed the feudal character of the Nazi State, that its outer form ultimately was based on 'the immediate, personal sense of loyalty of following to Fuehrer'.²

The historic opportunity presented by the Nazi seizure of power and the immense popular enthusiasm for the Fuehrer was unique. It was therefore necessary to do everything humanly possible to find and develop a political form (Staatstypik) which, corresponding to the German character, could secure the State in the long run by building a lasting bridge between the

¹Oldenburg, 10.1.1935 (BA: NS 8/73, 1).

²Marienburg, 30.4.1934 (B&E 2, 75f, 70ff). Cf. Nationalsozialistische Beamtenschaft, 15.4.1934 (B&E 2, 68f): It was a matter of the old Germanic principle of the king or duke and his personal retinue (Herzog und Gefolgschaft) bound together by means of a personal oath, relationship of obligation (Pflichtverhältnis), and feeling of loyalty. Cf. B&E 1, 372f; 2, 18; BA: NS 8/25, 75; 8/39, 244; S&R 1, 521ff.

political genius of the present and an uncertain future when the present Fuehrer was no longer at the helm. The principle of a monastic order of knights was the necessary complement of the feudal idea of the duke and his retinue. The order principle (Ordensprinzip) meant that the Nazi Movement was to select and train young men to realize the Nazi dream of combining absolute authority with proximity to the people (Volksnähe). The Fuehrer of the Nazi Order, at the same time Fuehrer of the Nazi State or Reich, was to cultivate a living contact with the masses.

The Nazi State, to use old concepts to characterize a new phenomenon, was 'a monarchy on a republican basis'. In line with the Nazi worldview the Nazi State did not rest upon a universalistic principle proclaimed from above but on organic growth from below. 'Authority without Caesarism, popular ties (Volksverbundenheit) without chaotic Democracy, pulsating life instead of deadening hierarchy'—this was the presupposition for the future Nazi Council of the Order (Ordensrat) or Senate. Historical precedents were seen in the old Roman Senate, the old Germanic War Council, the Papal College of Cardinals, and of course the Council of the Teutonic Order. Stability of leadership demanded that after various views were aired, criticism should cease, and all should stand united behind the newly-elected Fuehrer. Only Adolf Hitler could decide whether the Fuehrer would name his successor (Stellvertreter) as leader of the German Order in his own lifetime, or whether the Senate would choose the new Fuehrer after his death. The order principle did not mean, of course, that the Nazi Party and State should adopt the ascetic, monastic worldview of the Middle Ages. It was, however, necessary for the Nazi Weltanschauung to entrench itself by means of similar methods and forms.¹

Rosenberg was obviously trying to influence Hitler. He incorporated

¹ Marienburg, 30.4.1934 (B&E 2, 77ff, 80f, 83ff). Cf. Weimar, 3.3.1934 (BA: NS 8/72, 33); Cologne, 13.10.1934 (BA: NS 8/39, 136ff).

these ideas into the Mythus and proclaimed them during the Third Reich. In 1935 he linked the order idea to the SS. The Nazi form of government was based on the Führerprinzip. But it was necessary to create a durable form of leadership (Führungsform), in which the principle of 'unconditional leadership' and 'sworn blood brotherhood' (verschworene Kameradschaft) would ensure continuity and stability after a Führer's death. This was the order as a community of leaders (Führungsgemeinschaft) grounded in a world-view and exhibiting the strictest discipline. 'The SS too has the great task of already exemplifying and idealizing in its communal life this order form (Ordensform), and of leading this form into absolute unity with the content of the Nazi idea'.¹

It was, according to Rosenberg, very difficult to apply traditional political forms to the Third Reich. The Hitler State was unique, a 'Germanic democracy', to use one of Hitler's phrases. This did not mean the rule of the masses but the leadership of those who had done the most for the people; the representation of people by strong personalities, not numerical majorities. It meant aristocracy and monarchy. But what kind of monarchy? Details were uncertain, but by early 1939 Rosenberg could say:

At any rate, however, one principle has doubtless become dominant; namely, **that one person determines our entire destiny and plans (zeichnet!)** responsibly for this destiny. According to this principle the Nazi Movement and Reich is doubtless a monarchy, but not an hereditary monarchy [or an elective monarchy] but an adoptive monarchy (Adoptivmonarchie); i.e., the Führer, a Führer, will adopt his successor in that he determines him as his successor in his political testament. This means he has to choose from among all the men of the German nation; and he, in consideration of the probable political situation to come, will select for himself one person who presumably will be the most suitable for this era according to human considerations.²

Of course every form of government had its weakness, but it was best to follow

¹Das Schwarze Korps, Feb. 1935 (BA: NS 8/25, 66). Cf. Mythus, 180f, 520f, 546ff, 556, where Rosenberg spells out the character of the Nazi Ordensstaat in somewhat more detail.

²Sammelheft ausgewählter Vorträge und Reden, 184. Cf. B&E 2, 344f.

the Fuehrer's judgment.¹

From 1933 on Rosenberg repeatedly maintained that the Nazi regime was not a dictatorship or tyranny in the traditional sense. It was not the rule of a small group of men who by means of violent revolution forced themselves on the people against its will. The leadership principle of Fuehrer and following was creating a new type of state (Staatstypus) which could be explained theoretically perhaps only at a later date.²

The Nazi regime did not mean political and economic tyranny or spiritual inquisition. Economic dictatorship thrived on the exact opposite of the Fuehrerprinzip, as the capitalistic system supposedly demonstrated. Furthermore the basic principle of tyranny was mob rule, that of the Fuehrer 'the inwardly willing following'. Nazism outwardly demanded unconditional obedience just like the Roman Church. But while the outer form was similar, the inner content, substance, ideology, or myth was decidedly different. For the Nazi worldview stood for intellectual freedom; the Movement's outer organization was only a secondary means to this end. Nazism demanded only a basic attitude of respect for Germanic values; it was tolerant in matters of religious belief and scientific research. The Germanic concept of freedom stood for 'strict external commitment within the political community and internal spiritual infinity'.³

Nevertheless the Nazi regime involved an authoritarian form of government. This corresponded to, and demonstrated itself expedient for, the German character. Many authoritarian dictatorships had appeared on the stage of world history; the evaluation of such, however, was first and foremost a matter of their inner content or underlying ideology.⁴

¹Bad Tölz, 4.2.1939 (BA: NS 8/54, 90).

²Berlin, 4.3.1936 (BA: NS 8/43, 128f). Cf. B&E 1, 356; 2, 387.

³Das Schwarze Korps, 2.4.1936 (BA: NS 8/26, 31). Cf. Paris Soir, 11.9.1933 (B&E 1, 353).

⁴Interview, 15.7.1940 (BA: NS 8/62, 90). Cf. B&E 1, 353.

At the 1938 Party Congress Rosenberg spoke on the relationship between authority and freedom in Hitler's presence. The Germanic concept of freedom and authority—as originally exemplified by the elected duke and his retinue bound to him by oath for the duration of military conflict—drew a sharp distinction between the authority of a leader (Führerautorität) and the power of a tyrant (Tyrannenmacht). The political conception had an alleged philosophical basis:

That which German philosophy in Luther, Kant, and Goethe preached regarding subjection (Gebundenheit) without and freedom within as the Germanic conception of life—this has become the political principle of our Movement and our State, without its always being consciously taught in detail. We understand that a freedom without commitment is no freedom. Freedom is only possible within a type; otherwise it fashions no creative form (Gestalt) but is—especially in Jewish hands—a destructive force....

The Nazi Movement...cannot proclaim a freedom divorced from high values but only a living character (eine lebendige Gestalt) symbolizing the indissoluble bond between freedom and authority: the authority of the Fuehrer elected once for all at a decisive historical moment on the basis of brilliant achievement; and a freedom which indeed has the courage, on the basis of research and a new outlook, to give answers to the present age, answers which today seem impossible to men allegedly free but still basically unfree as a result of the outmoded conventions and economic slavery of a disappearing Medieval and Liberal past.¹

The Nazi ideologist likewise rejected the notion that the Nazi State represented traditional absolutism or so-called totalitarianism. It was not a matter of the absolute character of the State as such but of the totalitarian character (Totalität) of the Nazi worldview and of the Nazi Movement as the embodiment of this Weltanschauung. The State was no longer absolute, an end in itself, but merely 'the tool of the Nazi worldview'.²

The Nazi Movement is not striving for the totalitarian character of the State but of the Nazi worldview in every area. This has an immediate consequence for every citizen (Volksgenosse) and especially for every public official. The German public official, including the German judge, no longer sees himself responsible to a merely formal State, but he stands suddenly face to face with the living Volk and its living Fuehrer. The personal obligation of Volk to Fuehrer has arisen in lieu of official obligation to some paragraph or other....The NSDAP has certainly not been victorious through a program as such (an sich) but only because its ideas

¹Rosenberg, Verteidigung des deutschen Kulturgedankens (Munich, 1939), 12,22-26. Rosenberg mentioned the idea of 'the elected Fuehrer' in his 1922 commentary on the Party Program (S&R 1, 185).

²VB, 9.1.1934 (B&E 2, 21,20-22).

found their living embodiment in one great man....The Fuehrer is in our eyes never a tyrannical commander (zwingherrnhafter Befehlshaber) but the crowning climax of the secret will of healthy, untold millions.¹

Rosenberg had a good deal to say about the Nazi idea of law and justice similar to that of the NSDAP's authority in this area, Hans Frank. Abstract Roman law needed to be replaced by German common law organically rooted in the Volk. Contrary to Medieval and Liberal juridical thought, absolute morality and universal justice was a figment of human imagination, a product of human wish fulfillment. In line with Nazism's totalitarian claims, it would develop a legal philosophy on the basis of biological thinking, in opposition to universalistic and individualistic ideas. This was, however, not a matter of a comprehensive, detailed legal code but of one's worldview. Rosenberg wrote in 1919 that morality rested on deep inner feeling; and that the deeper this feeling for right and wrong, justice and injustice, was rooted in a people, the less the need for a complicated jurisprudence.²

In the Mythus the Nazi philosopher raised the age-old question of the relationship between justice (Recht) and politics, that is, whether right was to prevail over might or vice versa. The question, however, was falsely put since both justice and politics were not absolutes in themselves (absolute Wesenheiten) but were rather racially conditioned and thus organically one. Law, like religion and art, was a matter of race. Justice and injustice were not abstract concepts, but justice was what Aryan men deemed right and injustice that which they condemned. If politics in the best sense was the statesmanlike securing and strengthening of national character (Volkstum), 'justice' meant that which served the interests of the nation. Justice existed to produce and protect the organic life of the

¹Berlin, 18.12.1934 (B&E 2, 230f).

²S&R 1, 282f. Cf. BA: NS 8/52, 317f; 8/38, 34f; 8/82, 16f. H. Frank in NSMH 1:7 (Oct. 1930), 287ff.

Volk. Justice and politics were simply two different expressions of the same will to uphold the racial honor of the people. Each people created ~~its~~ own law, and justice was 'embodied in the Volk'. The organic concept of justice was inimical to the arbitrary hegemony and universalistic tyranny of the so-called 'God' of Israel and the Church.¹

This outlook, as Rosenberg once said in a speech to jurists, would appear subjectivistic and relativistic to those not schooled to think organically. In reality, however, it was the allegedly absolute morality and universally valid justice which was a thoroughly relative phenomenon in contrast to the eternal wisdom of organic thought corresponding to organic reality.²

During the struggle for power Rosenberg maintained that only German justice should prevail in Germany. Traitors to the Fatherland had no rights. For these he advocated 'lynch justice' since every German had the right to take the law into his own hands if the State could not protect ethnic honor. It was self-evident that Jews and Marxists would have no civil rights in the coming Nazi State. Everything which disturbed the law and order of German justice would be ruthlessly suppressed. The Nazi ideologist had learned from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion that every movement which came to power after subverting and suppressing a political system had to make use of dictatorial means to support its authority at least at the outset.³

This was not, however, the ideal. The use of terror was justifiable in principle; but force alone could never be the foundation of any political regime, including the Nazi State. Both before and after 1933 Rosenberg declared that National Socialism was no friend of a police State. The guarantee that such would not develop was the ideological and cultural

¹Mythus, 563f, 571f, 574, 576, 591, 598. Cf. BA: NS 8/26, 125f.

²Weimar, 3.5.1934 (BA: NS 8/25, 49). Cf. Wesensgefüge, 61f, where Rosenberg appeals to 'the religious attitude' and 'the religious sensitivity' (Religionsgefühl) of the Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz principle.

³S&R 2, 302f, 438, 721, 733, 735. B&E 3, 401f, 447.

rebirth as well as the supposed soundness of the German character after the people had been racially decontaminated.¹ In the meantime it was necessary to make use of the concentration camp and firing squad for incorrigible political criminals and traitors. He who refused to acknowledge the fateful necessity of Nazi rule, could not expect police or legal protection.²

From the Party Program (Points 4-9) it was clear that the coming Nazi regime would enact racial laws affecting the Jews. At least as early as 1925 it was clear to Rosenberg that the protection of the race also meant no more special care for the racially inferior; indeed, stern measures were to prevent the multiplication of the mentally ill, the incurably sick, and habitual criminals by medical means. 'Humanity' was not first a matter of the individual but of the race as a whole. 'It is not a question of humanity, but of the life-struggle (Lebenskampf) of our people pure and simple'.³

In the Mythus Rosenberg called for the most ruthless realization of racial protection for the sake of the racial idea. This was the most important task of the State. In order to make the idea a living reality, eugenics and euthanasia were indispensable as physical presuppositions for protecting the Nordic racial substance (Rassenbestandteile) of the German people. The Nuremberg Laws, as he wrote in the VB, were the expression of an inner ideological transformation and would have a long-range historical significance. In protecting the strong at the expense of the weak the Nazi State was simply bowing reverently to life's eternal laws as expressed in natural selection. The elimination (Ausscheidung) of the Jews was a symbol

¹Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus, 64. Cf. NSMH 3:26 (May 1932), 228, where Rosenberg says with reference to the SPD: 'When faith in an idea once withers, then no organization, no police, helps anymore'.

²Berlin, 3.3.1938 (BA: NS 8/82, 21,29). Cf. Diary, 28.6.1934; 7.7.1934 (PT, 44ff).

³VB, 2.3.1927. WK, Nov. 1925, 727f. S&R 2, 135ff, 139.

of this intellectual and spiritual revolution.¹

Nazism according to Rosenberg was ultimately not an economic and social, not even a political affair. No mere political revolution could save Germany from substandard humanity (Untermenschentum). Hence the goal of the Nazi Movement was not simply economic or political recovery but the rehabilitation of the race (Gesundung des Blutes) in the form of euthanasia, sterilization, deportation, and other racial measures. But all this was simply a means to effect an ideological revolution resulting in an exclusive faith. 'One does not begin to understand National Socialism when one approaches it from the economic side, nor even when one wants to comprehend it as a purely political phenomenon'.²

In summary, as he himself admitted, even Rosenberg's political ideology was at bottom a religious Weltanschauung. Nazi ideology existed to meet a religious need. National Socialism was ultimately the spirit of religious community (Gemeinschaftsgeist). The Nazi Party was to be a religious order. The Nazi State was not a matter of an incidental political change but the outer form of an ideological and religious transformation hardly begun. The task of the Nazi Revolution was not a partial one but that of 'changing the mentality (Gesinnung) of a whole society'.³

¹VB, 31.12.1935 (BA: NS 8/25, 146). Mythus, 575ff.

²NSMH 2:10 (Jan. 1931), 2f. Cf. VB, 8.7.1926 (B&E 1, 128f).

³Rowno, 5.6.1943 (BA: NS 8/71, 115). Cf. Stellungnahme, Winter, 1935 (BA: NS 8/40, 212).

6. THE SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Nazi Movement manifested a remarkable religious dimension both ideologically and practically. For Alfred Rosenberg Nazism was not merely, or even chiefly a political phenomenon, but ultimately a spiritual and cultural revolution. His distinctive contribution was: to take the lead in stressing this aspect of the Movement, and to give open expression to its religious character.

It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss the distinctively religious element in Rosenberg's Nazi ideology, especially in relationship to Christianity. The burden of the chapter is that Nazism for Rosenberg and his followers was a substitute for Christianity. This Nazi religion, while doubtless unconsciously a substitute for traditional Christianity, was consciously a substitute for distinctively modern Christianity in its post-Kantian anti-metaphysical and anti-historical form. Its roots lay, negatively, in the modern scientific revolution and Kant's philosophical critique of orthodox Christianity; and, positively, in a distinctively German mystic and pietistic tradition having degenerated into völkisch religiosity. Nazi religiosity appealed to those who, having lost faith in traditional or modern Christianity, were open to some sort of völkisch religion paying lip service to modern science.

An account of the Nazi cultural revolution according to Rosenberg is followed by his view of religion, of the Nazi conflict with the Churches, and of the Nazi religious revolution.

THE NAZI CULTURAL REVOLUTION

From the very beginning Rosenberg stressed the intellectual, cultural, and religious aspect of Nazi ideology. Weltanschauung played a very important role in the Völkischer Beobachter and especially in the Weltkampf. For instance: the Jewish problem was only one issue of world politics, anti-Semitism only one side of the contemporary world struggle.

This struggle demanded the positive revaluation of the values of the past. Thus it was necessary to stress the cultural side of the political movement, appreciative of the fact that before power politics (Machtpolitik) could speak an authoritative word it had to flow from 'a fundamentally fixed worldview'. The political struggle was the sign of a spiritual transformation; it meant the search for a new life-style (Lebensstil) in the form of 'a unified culture'.¹

In the light of the contemporary cultural crisis, political power struggles were only surface phenomena. Commitment to the Church had been thrown off in the early modern period, but unfortunately individualism degenerated into subjectivism and did not produce a genuine national culture. By keeping natural science out of religious life, the völkisch ideology could promote once again 'a genuine Western religiosity'. Modern culture and art reflected 'ideological chaos', and it was necessary to create out of this chaos a new cultural synthesis. The task of the present was to prepare the way for ethnic and racial commitment (Bindung) by overcoming cultural disintegration and lack of commitment (Bindungslosigkeit), or sink into 'civilized barbarism'. Hence it was necessary to be cultural and artistic as well as political revolutionaries; the function of political power was to provide the presupposition for the development of a genuine ethnic culture in every area. The völkisch worldview demanded not simply a petty reformation but a new inner conversion followed by 'a certain new religious attitude'. True religion was not faith in an alleged absolute or in an historical event—but 'the struggle for religion is already religion'.²

These views were not simply presented in periodicals but promoted through

¹WK 2:22 (Oct. 1925); Vorwort zum 2. Jahrgang (Dec. 1925), ii.

²WK 2:23 (Nov. 1925), 721ff, 727ff, 730ff, 734ff, 740f. Cf. B&E 1, 204ff.

the Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur (KBDK) which Rosenberg founded in 1928. His appeal: Christianity brought a new civilization to Europe, and the victory of church canons and dogmas created the apparently stable culture of the so-called Middle-Ages, which Protestantism and Liberalism (Freigeisterei) managed to disintegrate. The Thirty Years War left behind a political and cultural wasteland until the old Germanic character began to produce a truly German culture in Prussia. But, unlike Christianity, this culture had no real worldview or ideological basis, as the history of the 19th century from the defeat of 1806 to the collapse of 1918 clearly demonstrated. Meanwhile the emancipation of the Jewish sons of chaos signified the revolt of the rootless and materialistic subhuman (Untermensch) against all true spiritual culture. The only effective answer to this 'mulatto and negro culture' was the Nordic racial ideal. The political and economic collapse of Germany was the symbol of an inner lack of faith in German character (Deutschtum); the haphazardness of German politics was due to the lack of a 'common national, political, and cultural ideal'. But courage was derived from the faith that the struggle against the powers of chaos by means of the ever-growing consciousness of racial, national, and social solidarity would become one day a 'mythical force'.¹

The KBDK received its inspiration from Nazi circles but directed its appeal to all patriotic Germans, including those who might differ with the NSDAP on purely political issues. Rosenberg pointed out, however, that no other cultural organization had the popular support which the NSDAP could muster for the KBDK. Among those who responded to Rosenberg's appeal were völkisch-minded authors, publishers, noblemen, clergymen, physicians, military officers, and university professors. Among the number were Nobel-Prize-winning physicist Philipp Lenard, Roman Catholic philosopher

¹WK 5:53 (May 1928), 193-195, 210f; 6:61 (Jan. 1929), 18-19.

Othmar Spann, Gobineau specialist Ludwig Schemann, General Ritter von Epp, publisher Hugo Bruckmann, and the daughters of Richard Wagner, including the widow of Houston Stewart Chamberlain.¹

In connection with the KBDK the Nazi ideologist began to do a good deal of public speaking. This afforded the opportunity to spread his message with rhetoric as well as by the printed page; for example, in a 1932 radio speech from the chambers of the Berlin Philharmonic Society on 'The Struggle for German Cultural Renewal'.² By means of his writings and speeches Rosenberg became the unofficial Nazi spokesman on cultural affairs.

Before 1933 a large part of Rosenberg's journalistic work was taken up with a running criticism of the democratic 'culture' of the Weimar Republic. This critique covered practically all aspects of culture and consisted primarily of comments on excerpts from contemporary periodical literature. Much of this material from the years 1927-1930 was published in Der Sumpf (1930), which presented aspects of the so-called 'intellectual' life of Weimar in the form of a documentation of its Unkultur. The sarcastic style and crude methods were in the worst tradition of anti-Semitic and racist literature. The racial issue and alleged racial subversion played a dominate role. Weimar 'culture' was in short Niggerkultur symbolized chiefly by jazz or Niggermusik. Both Niggers and Jews found their salvation in sacred jazz (geheiligter/alleinseligmachender Jazz) since the same 'nigger blood' flowed in both. The 'black plague' supposedly was ravishing the Fatherland in the form of the triumph of negro and Jewish blood over the old Aryan culture.³

¹WK 6:61 (Jan. 1929), 23f; 5:53 (May 1928), 210f. Apparently Rosenberg originally put NS before KBDK (Rosenberg to Prof. Keihn, 9.12.1927—BA: NS 8/123, 15) but later dropped it with a view to the KBDK's having a wider appeal.

²Berlin, 6.9.1932 (BA: NS 8/37, 1).

³Der Sumpf (1939 ed.), Verwort, 7ff, 26ff, 221, passim. After 1933 Rosenberg continued to remind the German people of what Weimar chaos and confusion had been like (cf. BA: NS 8/43, 211ff).

An interesting feature of Rosenberg's critique was the charge of immorality and irreligion. Democratic Weimar, he claimed, witnessed the unscrupulous pollution of the theatre and other forms of culture together with the mockery of clergy, military, patriotism, and racial science. Those who extolled 'moral' pacifism and castigated 'immoral' anti-Semitism had little to say about 'filth and trash' in public life, about the immoral milking of the masses by the pornographers. The Jewish and Liberal defense of pornography, obscenity, prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, belly-dancing, and the like passed for 'intellectuality' and 'culture', whereas it was in reality 'intellectual Bolshevism' and 'conventional Communism' (Salonkommunismus). Liberals and Marxists defended poor, persecuted criminals like Sacco and Vanzetti as crime increased in the democratic paradise. These 'intellectuals' castigated the 'barbarous' death penalty but were curiously silent about Soviet atrocities. The day would come when one would clean out the Aegean stables--'with the usual German thoroughness'!¹ Thus Rosenberg's critique took on the guise of a moral crusade.

Moreover, the Nazi publicist accused Weimar society of irreligion and anti-Christianity. He constantly made capital out of the traditional and formal respect for things Christian by appealing to the express anti-Christian sentiments of various Jewish, Liberal, and Marxist publicists. For example, he could appeal to Marxist and Liberal ridicule of the Lord's Prayer, religious instruction in the schools, and confirmation; as well as to liberal Christianity's mockery of traditional Christian faith, for example, denying the necessity of converting the Jews.²

Liberal intellectualism, even in the guise of Christianity, could not satisfy the spiritual needs of men. Proof was the proliferation of sects in the 1920's, a particular concern of Rosenberg's. Nineteenth century ration-

¹Der Sumpf, 141ff, 108, 115, 167, 186, 189, 161, 166.

²Der Sumpf, 76ff, 89f, 122.

alism, plus the emotional shock of the World War, had occasioned an irrational mood; and, alongside the progress of science, an uncritical leap into philosophical and religious superstition. Irreligious materialism and phantastic mystagogy (Mystagogie) went hand in hand to produce rigid Churches and a vast army of sectarian prophets. The Churches either froze or compromised with Liberalism and Marxism; while anthroposophy, astrological 'science', and prophets of doom multiplied among souls devoid of faith. These would not find their way home until 'the myth of the nation' should transform them all and integrate them into a new way of life!¹

Cultural despair was the psychological backdrop of Rosenberg's Nazi ideology. The two extremes of modern atheistic impiety and ancient Bible-believing piety, as well as any attempt to reconcile the two, held no promise for the future. In 1925 he wrote: 'The madness of the contemporary world, beginning with the street-sweeper to the highest "thinkers" and "statesmen", is greater than ever on this mad planet'.²

A significant aspect of Rosenberg's critique of Weimar was satirical attacks on its leading politicians and publicists collected in Dreissig Novemberköpfe (1927). Particular targets of abuse were the so-called 'intellectuals', for instance, Walter Rathenau, F.W. Foerster, Kurt Tucholsky, and the turncoat Thomas Mann. These traitors dragged in the mud all that was holy to Nazis and called it morality. These servants of chaos were the representatives of a democratic era dying and rotting away as the result of 'boundless subjectivism' in every area of culture. Having thrown off all the past's culture-creating commitments (kulturbildende Bindungen), the democratic cultural ideal was unable to create any positive cultural commitments (Kulturbindungen) once the ecclesiastical ideal had become insufferable. Only the 'mythical experience' of the eternal aspects of

¹WK 6:66 (June, 1929), 278f. Cf. Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 22.

²WK 2:1 (Jan. 1, 1925), 28.

racial character could produce a new culture and life-style.¹

Thus the Nazi Revolution was by nature a cultural revolution, not only in the sense that it was to transform the outward forms of culture, but also in that it signified an inward spiritual transformation. Beginning in 1934 the Nazi ideologist declared that, whereas the political revolution was over, the metamorphosis of minds (Umwandlung der Geister) in the spirit of the Mythus had only begun.²

The theme of a homogeneous culture based on the unity of life was a constant emphasis of Rosenberg's speeches during the Third Reich. This meant, first, ideological unity. Second, it meant unity not only within the noumenal realm but primarily between the noumenal and phenomenal spheres. Rosenberg expressed this unity in a variety of ways: unity between life's meaning (Lebensgehalt) and life's form (Lebensform), between doctrine (Lehre) and life (Leben in the purely biological sense); between idea, worldview, culture on the one hand; and power, politics, the State on the other. It was to be a unity between human freedom and nature, art and science, culture and civilization. The aim of the Nazi Movement was supposedly similar to that of Otto the Great: to unify the German people in religion and politics.³

There was an organic union between culture and power. Culture was only genuine when its bearers were prepared to use force to defend it and, if need be, die for it. Power was only meaningful when it was the protector and patron of culture. Power without an interest in culture was raw; culture

¹Novemberköpfe, 7, 113, 201, 205, 333f. Cf. Der Sumpf, 243ff, 262ff.

²Mythus (Zum 150. Tausend, May 1934), 18.

³Cf. B&E 2, 236f, 271, 320, 327, 330f, 363; 4, 173. BA: NS 8/51, 114f; 8/73, 20, 41; 8/84, 90, 99.

not willing to exercise force was sick. Culture was prior to power, since spiritual faith was the ultimate presupposition of healthy political development and the worthy exercise of political power. Power was vital to culture in that, given brutal biological reality, culture could not maintain itself without force. Thus there had to be unity between 'the tragic-heroic will to culture' and 'the will to power'.¹

In a remarkable speech to 9,000 SA leaders Rosenberg asserted that the Nazi State and the German Army rested upon the unity of idea and action. It was the task of the Nazi Movement to find a new unity of life on the basis of a new ideological synthesis. In order to find unity and commitment the Nazis maintained 'the unity of the political with all other aspects of life' (Einheit des staatlichen und sonstigen Lebens).

What we seek is not only an internal administrative reform, not only the realization of a new German Reich, nor even the building up of a strong and ideologically reliable military, but the transformation of life in general (Umformung des Lebens überhaupt).

If one asks us: Now if you indeed reject so much of the past, what resources do you give me to form the new? What are you in a position to put in the place of the old? Then we must answer these fearful people.... as follows: We are not at all willing to give or grant anything, but we expect them to struggle for the inner meaning (Gehalt) of our era exactly as we did for 14 years.

We are convinced that in great historical moments it is not feasible to be able to settle down easily from one warm spiritual bed into another already prepared, but that at such times it is necessary to walk through a cold dark corridor.... We are also convinced that no God will demand more from us than this struggle for the highest ideals and noblest and firmest values of the German people....

All of you...will have the feeling in your work that there is something more than the trivia of every day life alone, that you all are standing in a great past, present, and future.... And we believe that the meaning of this life really consists in our being willing to defend the best and greatest in German character (Volkstum) and values.²

If the goal of the Nazi Revolution was the unity of life, its scope embraced the totality of human life. As early as the spring of 1933 Rosenberg repeatedly asserted that the Nazi Revolution was not only a 'conservative revolution' but a 'child of the 20th century' and as such

¹Cf. speeches in BA: NS 8/72, 2,4f; 8/40, 194ff,202; 8/37, 3ff,7.

²Stuttgart, 26.4.1936 (BA: NS 8/76, 30f). Cf. Der SA-Führer, Mar. 1939, 48ff (BA: NS 8/84, 47-50).

laid claim to all of human existence (Totalität des Menschentums).¹ The Nazis claimed the whole man. The Nazi Revolution was even creating a new language for its own self-expression. There was no area of life which was not 'ideologically conditioned' or escaped ideological education, not even the art of gardening. It was the essence of the Nazi Movement to be 'the administrator of an ideological and thus total renewal'.² Political power was only the prerequisite for shaping the German people spiritually, intellectually, and ideologically. 'National Socialism embraces, over and above politics, the whole of life (Über die Politik hinweg das gesamte Leben); and if such were not the case, it would not be a great revolution'.³

The Nazi worldview claimed the right to educate the whole man from his youth in what Rosenberg once called, in a speech to Nazi teachers, the greatest educational enterprise ever attempted. The schoolmaster had to be a master of life by virtue of experiencing the Nazi rebirth in order to mold future generations in the Nazi faith.⁴ The Nazi ideal was for every child to be under the Nazi 'hypnosis' from the cradle to the grave. The Nazi Movement wanted to possess not only the German people but their souls! Rosenberg quoted Ernst Moritz Arndt: 'To be one Volk is the religion of our time'.⁵

The Nazi ideologist's most influential forum for his message was the Nuremberg Party Congress' annual Kulturtagung which he organized and shared with Hitler himself. There from 1934 through 1938 he preached the spiritual and cultural revolution. For instance, in 1936:

¹NSMH, June 1933 (B&E 1, 181). Cf. B&E 2, 182, 195, 212.

²Stellungnahme, 1935 (BA: NS 8/40, 212). Cf. BA: NS 8/11, 27; 8/26, 44; 8/72, 33.

³VB, 6.12.1934 (BA: NS 8/25, 60). ⁴Leipzig, Oct. 1934 (B&E 2, 181ff).

⁵Weimar, 4.11.1938 (BA: NS 8/83, 211); Vogelsang, 22.11.1937 (BA: NS 8/47, 108).

Under Adolf Hitler's leadership we have restrained chaos. But it can only be overcome forever through a conception of the future (Zukunfts Idee), not by a return to ideas and forms which once fell apart and have consequently proven themselves incapable of saving us spiritually (innerlich) and politically. The breath of our revolution is not as short as many others. It proceeds quietly, surely, and deeply. It embraces not one generation but all. This is our mission....¹

At the 1937 Kulturtagung Rosenberg declared the NSDAP to be not only the political but also the spiritual home of all Nazis, the great confessional front (Bekenntnisfront) of the German people. The speech prepared for the 1939 event, entitled 'Towards Unity' but undelivered on account of the War, maintained that no great revolution—the Nazi like the Medieval, Liberal, or Marxist Revolutions—was ever satisfied with power alone but endeavored to penetrate all aspects of existence. Furthermore, political and military power alone was not sufficient to maintain the Nazi Revolution and Reich without ideology. The alleged absence of metaphysical conviction did not preclude great art, true culture, and 'genuine religiosity'. In the speech prepared for the main session of the Congress the Nazi ideologist affirmed that in Germany the Nazi Movement, except for directly religious phenomena, had taken the place of the Medieval Church as the spiritual leader of men's souls after 400 years of 'spiritual and political lack of commitment'.²

Since Rosenberg defined religion as 'commitment' (Bindung), that which binds men together in society,³ it is evident that he conceived of the Nazi cultural revolution in religious terms. His constant use of religious, and especially Christian language to express the true significance of the Nazi phenomenon, is not surprising given his lifelong interest in religion.

ROSENBERG AND RELIGION

Fortunately Rosenberg has given us an account of his early contact with religion. His father, who died when he was eleven, never attended church

¹ Parteitag der Ehre 1936, 50-51. Cf. B&E 1, 146f (1934).

² BA: NS 8/59, 174, 69ff, 71f; B&E 4, 73, 77.

³ Mythus, 601; PT, 242, 247. Thus Bindung (commitment) perhaps could be translated 'religion' in some of the passages above.

and apparently felt that he had outgrown Christianity. But the two paternal aunts who raised him were churchgoers and saw to it that he was brought up under the auspices of the Lutheran Church. According to the pastor his mother had been 'very devout'. She apparently came from a believing family background. Certainly her sister's family in Baku were convinced and active Protestants. Very concerned for their nephew's soul, they diligently tried, though in vain, to convert him in his youth.¹

The future Nazi philosopher received regular religious instruction in school from several different Protestant pastors. He was taught morning prayers, Luther's catechism, the attributes of God, the history of the Christian Church, etc. Church worship services for children (Kindergottesdienste), where the Bible was explained and questions answered, were a regular part of his education. He simply accepted Protestant Christianity as a fact of life without question. Gradually, however, he became 'rather skeptical' of the Bible even though he tried to overcome this skepticism.

Rosenberg's confirmation experience in 1909, instead of confirming his faith, only awakened 'heretical feelings'. Pastor Hahn was a sincere symbol of both German nationality (Deutschtum) and unbending Protestant orthodoxy with respect to the historical religion of the Old Testament. Refusing to entertain the idea that the Bible itself must be viewed 'critically' (i.e., approached with 'historical criticism'), the pastor appealed to miracles in the history of Christian missions to illustrate the reality of God's palpable intervention in history even in the present age. Rosenberg's inner negative reaction was strengthened by reading a confirmation gift from his guardian on the history of world-wide Protestant missions. What remote connection could there possibly be between these black women and

¹This information on Rosenberg's mother's sister's family is from his underling in the Ostministerium, Otto Bräutigam (So hat es sich zugetragen, 150f). Bräutigam became acquainted with Rosenberg through his aunt in Russia. The family was later brutally persecuted by the Communists. Rosenberg visited his aunt in Baku in 1912 (S&R 1, 3).

children and his religion? He put the book away and began reading another confirmation gift on the history of art.

Then Chamberlain introduced him to the modern critique of traditional Christianity as well as to a different religious outlook. Henceforth he became preoccupied with 'the problem of Christianity'. From his reading Rosenberg came to the simple conclusion that the traditional creed of historic Christianity as believed in the Bible and the Churches was no longer tenable. The history of religions recounted numerous sons of God, virgin births, resurrections, and ascensions. In fact one could find the whole of the Christian doctrine of redemption in the mystery cults of the Hellenistic age. The victory of Christianity was due to its identification with a unique and definite historical personality to whom the apostles bore personal witness. But their witness to the ministry, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus was, in Deussen's words, a 'pious fraud' (pia fraus).¹

Nevertheless the evangelical 'fact' was victorious over all the legends and mysteries of the Völkerchaos at the end of the ancient world, probably because the Redeemer of the oppressed would have the last first in his heaven. Hellenistic faith united with Jewish religion (Jahweismus) in the growth of Christianity until Constantine saw it as a political tool. Old Testament superstition and intolerance then flooded Europe and overcame the Germanic world until the Copernican discovery meant the end of the Credo. Until Copernicus everyone could honestly believe in the legend of the Ascension within the framework of the Ptolemaic universe. But with Copernicus the 'fact' of the Ascension reverted to the level of legend, and Luther rightly concluded that if the learned Pole were right the Bible had lied. Afterwards the 'pious fraud' was exploded further by the modern

¹Cf. P. Deussen, Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Religionen II/2: Die biblisch-mittelalterliche Philosophie (3rd ed., Leipzig, 1920), 227.

textual and historical criticism of the Bible as well as by scientific discoveries in biology and geology.¹

This outlook is found in Rosenberg's earliest extant writings, where he suggested a reform of religious instruction **in the schools**. Natural science had killed any honest faith in the Biblical account of creation and Biblical miracles, and had shown such to be manifest metaphysical mythology. Thus any dogmatic faith in the old sense (i.e., in relation to this phenomenal world of nature) was likewise dead. Moreover, historical science had demonstrated that the Old Testament was not a book given by God to an elect people but a conglomeration of erroneous traditions, borrowed myths, and manifest forgeries welded into an apparent unity. As Kant put it, historical faith was dead by itself and could have no moral value. Consequently only one sphere remained for genuine religious faith, namely, that of the inner world of ethical values. But religious instruction continued to inculcate a dogmatic and historical faith as if modern science did not exist. Both traditional religion and modern science were taught as the truth, but obviously they were mutually exclusive. In the long run such a contradiction could only lead to the ridicule of religion and to a momentous 'spiritual and moral catastrophe'.²

The Bible and the Catechism had to be replaced with something else. Instead of traditional Christianity derived from the Jews religious instruction should inculcate the anti-dogmatic, anti-historical, ethical religion of the Aryans by contrasting the history of Aryan religion from ancient India to the conversion of the Germanic tribes with intolerant Semitic religion. This Aryan religion was identified with some sort of anti-ecclesiastical 'Christianity' after the manner of Chamberlain's Religion

¹This narrative is based on LA, 16,19,25,29,273-277 (1945-1946); and BA: NS 8/22, 34-37,59 (1935). There is no good reason to doubt these later accounts of Rosenberg. Both accounts agree, appear straightforward, and the views attributed to his youth are confirmed in part by earlier sources, e.g., his early unpublished jottings (EA, 1917-1919) as well as by Bräutigam (see previous note).

²EA, 2.7.1918 (S&R 1, 88,79ff). Rosenberg was referring to Kant's Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft (1793), III, 1,6.

Jesu with its Aryan Christ. There was to be great reverence for the incomparable personality of Jesus, the hero of the New Testament, upon whom the whole of Western culture was founded. Christ's personal worldview (Weltanschauung Christi) was 'genuine Christianity' falsified by the Church for 2,000 years. Piety and ethics were to be promoted by examples of Germanic character and the Germanic sense of duty, not through the slavish fear of God. Real religion had to do with inner experience alone, with the mythology and mysticism of autonomous freedom, not with any stupid faith in the natural world or in historical legends and lies.¹

In 1919 and 1920 Rosenberg publicly and explicitly endorsed the negative side of Kant's philosophy of religion with its rejection of any objective rational or historical basis for faith and relegation of religion to the subjective realm of existential, ethical experience. The positive faith for which Kant's philosophy made room in Rosenberg's case was true Aryan religion: the tendency to long for eternity, not a faith clamoring after a materialistic basis in 'reason' and 'science' after the manner of Judaism, Freemasonry, or Catholicism. 'Religion is faith, expressed in various forms, in something ultramundane (ein Überweltliches), a metaphysical confession of the soul which, not stemming from reason, as such aims at eternity conceived in some way or other'.²

The would-be philosopher of religion was especially concerned to attack Jewish religion. The Jews, according to Rosenberg, allowed for no mystery in religion, for no metaphysical symbolism. All was plain and simple: God literally created the world with the historical plan and promise that the Jews should eventually rule over it. The sum of Judaism was, in brief, the dogmatic tautology 'God is God' plus the messianic or 'historical hope'.

¹S&R 1, 80ff, 97, 108, 55; BA: NS 8/19, 58 (EA, 2./10.7.1918; May, 1918; 28.12.1918).

²S&R 1, 455ff, 299, 420.

Jewish 'religion' was purely an external affair of dogmatic and historical reality with no respect for inner religious feelings.¹

The 'natural religion' of Freemasonry was a contradiction in terms since religion worthy of the name is something set over against nature (ein der Natur entgegengesetztes Prinzip). Nevertheless superstitious religion related to nature would always dwell among men. This was, however, not an unfortunate thing but an indication of faith. 'Superstition is only the other side (Kehrseite) of faith and a thousand times better than skeptical unbelief'.²

Rosenberg's negative attitude toward Roman Catholicism was conditioned by his Protestant background, as well as by his experience in Bavaria during a visit in 1911 and residence in Munich from 1919 to 1933. He had viewed Russian Orthodoxy simply as a childlike expression of oriental religion and had actually derived aesthetic pleasure from Russian church services. But he was profoundly shocked to see Germans really believing in Roman Catholic superstition. Being in Bavaria forced him into a 'decisive debate' with that Rome which hindered the Germans from becoming a real Volk and having a 'common religious feeling as a people'.³

The open attack on Rome began in 1920. Rosenberg understood Catholicism traditionally in terms of the consistent Jesuit position. In pursuing this-worldly political ends, Roman Catholicism made a mockery of all religion. Its spirit was one of subjection and servility, intolerance and inquisition. The character of Jerusalem and Rome, Rabbi and Jesuit, was one and the same. Every honest Roman Catholic had to ask himself whether one could reconcile the German character with Rome.⁴ This violent attack did not mean that the

¹S&R 1, 155, 224ff, 274, 284, 307. Rosenberg appealed to Rabbi Leo Baeck's standard Das Wesen des Judentums (1905) to support the contention that Judaism was without mythology and mysticism.

²S&R 1, 536, 477, 534.

³Wie der Mythos entstand, Nov. 1935 (BA: NS 8/22, 53-58). PT, 118; LA, 274f.

⁴S&R 1, 517ff, 552-554.

transplanted Balt could not appeal at the same time to Roman Catholic anti-Semitism and to Christ as the incarnation of opposition to the Jewish spirit.¹

Many good men no longer had any connection with the Church. They had rejected dogma but not yet found their way to faith. Others day-dreamed in their loneliness. But religion which could contribute culture to an entire people had to promote a certain feeling of togetherness. The individual needed to draw strength from the whole, and there were few who could go it alone without serious psychological harm. It was high time in church and school to replace Biblical history with the treasures of Indo-European thought. It was necessary to separate the pure Christian spirit from the sordid Jewish spirit, to divide the Bible drastically into Christ and Antichrist. Only then could cultural regeneration take place.²

There was, according to Rosenberg, an impending second Reformation just around the corner. The Jewish spirit would be completely jettisoned and the New Testament finally detached from the framework of the Old. The coming Reformation would be the revolutionary work of a German who, following the Copernican and Kantian revolutions, would create God in his own image. Its threefold task was to eradicate everything Jewish, rectify all attempts at harmonization, and advance the modern scientific worldview (Weltbild) with its resultant consequences. The Germans, no longer children intellectually, were beginning to become ever more self-conscious. When this process was complete, then this messianic figure would rise as from the dead and preach German Christianity with elementary force. Spiritual conversion would have to come eventually, even though it might take millennia.³

Rosenberg called for a reinterpretation of Christianity. Given the

¹Cf. Foreword to Gourgenot des Mousseaux, op. cit., 8 (May 1920).

²S&R 1, 321f. ³S&R 1, 312, 611ff, 614, 618f.

alleged incredibility and immobility of both the Catholic and Protestant Churches, it was necessary to pour new content into the old forms to produce a Christianity commensurate with Germanic character. Negatively, German Christianity was to be distinguished sharply from the dogmatic and materialistic spirit of both Jerusalem and Rome. Depending upon such renowned Biblical scholars as Stade, Wellhausen, Renan, and Friedrich Delitsch, the ~~would-be~~ theologian ridiculed the Old Testament as a hodge-podge of religious traditions contrary to the spiritual religion of the New Testament.¹

Positively, Germanic Christianity, derived mainly from Chamberlain, was supposedly personal in nature, revering the personality of Christ as opposed to the impersonal law of the Old Testament. Christ's worldview was reinterpreted in terms of Kantian philosophy ('Christ anticipated Kant's ideas in seed form'). This Kantian religion consisted in 'the fulfilment of all our duties as if they were divine commandments'. Its essence was reverence for the divine in man. The Christianity of the heavenly kingdom within saw the external world as a symbol. Genuine Christianity wanted to spiritualize the material whereas Judaism wanted to materialize the spiritual. Only Kant's religious philosophy—whereby scientific discoveries in the realm of nature cannot touch the realm of freedom, personality, religion, the kingdom not of this world—could solve the modern religious crisis.²

Throughout the 1920's Rosenberg held to Chamberlain's ideal of an anti-Semitic, anti-ecclesiastical, Germanic Christianity. One could experience this religion outside the realm of space and time, and did not need to hold to myths and legends or cover up the 'pious fraud' which Jews and **priests** made out of the original gospel of the kingdom of God within.

¹S&R 1, 575ff, 580.

²S&R 1, 586ff, 595f, 597, 605, 613. Rosenberg's views on Germanic Christianity in 1920 to some extent reflected Eckart's as well as Chamberlain's.

According to Kant's intellectual revolution, science and knowledge had to do with this world, as it confronts us under the intuitive forms of space, time, and causality.

But genuine religious experience for Aryan man has always been spaceless, timeless, and without causality, i.e., unmaterialistic, unhistorical, irrational....Genuine, Germanic tolerant religiosity asks first not concerning the What of a worldview but concerning the How. Is it free and personal or unfree and impersonal?....Our whole generation will go this way of Chamberlain or it will become decidedly anti-Christian as well and thus perhaps lose everything.¹

Rosenberg's religious thought was amplified in the Mythus. Modern knowledge, in the form of the scientific and philosophical revolutions of Copernicus and Kant, had rendered traditional Christianity and its Jewish presuppositions incredible. The God of the Bible (Jahwe) was as dead today as Wotan 1,500 years ago. Modern man could no longer tolerate the unapproachable, awesome God who, having created everything out of nothing and enthroned over all, was to be worshipped with fear and trembling. The monstrous Biblical doctrine of God's creating and foreordaining all things was mere oriental superstition and despotism inimical to human personality and freedom. Every 'god' was the product of human imagination, and Rosenberg's 'god' could not be the Creator created by the Jews. There could be no causal connection between God and events in this world. To the Aryan creation in nature and redemption in history amounted to 'blasphemous materialism'. The Biblical history of redemption with all its legendary 'miracles' led to the 'materialistic historicism' of the Churches. Finally, the Christian doctrine of sin and the Christian ethic of love and pity was simply contrary to nature. As history had clearly shown, the edifice of the organized 'religion of love' had been erected hypocritically on the foundation of force.²

¹Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 83, 93f, 82ff, 92-94.

²Mythus, 127ff, 132ff, 146ff, 156, 169, 237, 243, 246ff, 395ff, 462.

The Mythus constituted a violent attack on ecclesiastical Christianity both in its Roman Catholic and Protestant forms. Rome received the brunt of the assault. Traditional Roman Catholicism was assaulted with ammunition provided by the scholarship of theological modernism. The Roman Church was full of heathen and Jewish beliefs and practices. Superstitious priestcraft was the essence of Catholicism. Rome demanded a magical faith in the medicineman philosophy of the Pope. The history of the Roman Church was simply the attempt to realize this demonic worldview in the arena of world politics. Jesuitism with its blind obedience (Kadavergehorsam) was the most consistent expression of the Catholic system; while its keystone was the Vatican Council's promulgation of papal infallibility by which the Pope, the Church, and oriental superstition took the place of Jesus.¹

Traditional Protestantism fared little better than Catholicism. Its great sin was accepting the letter of the Old Testament and the catholic theological tradition instead of imbibing the spirit of medieval German mysticism. Lutheran Orthodoxy swore allegiance to the letter of the Jewish Bible, was closed to spiritual life, and with Rome preached static reality or being (Sosein) instead of the dynamic reality of organic existence (Dasein). Both Romanism and Protestantism represented a negative Christianity in constant struggle with that positive or Germanic Christianity awakening the powers of Nordic blood anew!²

The positive religion of the Mythus was the religion of race: that is, the religion of the blood coupled with the myth of human freedom. This was to take the place of the naive Biblical faith of Protestantism as well as the equally irrecoverable faith in the divine character of the Roman Church.

¹Mythus, 160ff, 172ff, 244ff. Rosenberg used Karl Adam's standard Das Wesen des Katholizismus (1924) and Erich Przywara's Religionsphilosophie katholischer Theologie (1926) as examples of Roman Catholic doctrine.

²Mythus, 79, 128f, 215f, 218f, 250f.

Now then a new faith is being aroused today: the myth of the blood, the faith actually ready to defend the divine essence of man pure and simple with blood if necessary; the faith, organically joined with the latest scientific knowledge, that Nordic blood constitutes that mystery which has overcome and replaced the old sacraments....Alongside the myth of the soul eternally free stands the myth, the religion of the blood....¹

The content of Rosenberg's religion was Germanic freedom, freedom even with respect to God; in brief: 'the gospel of German mysticism' in opposition to the letter of the Jewish Old Testament and Christian ecclesiastical system. Rosenberg saw in German mysticism as represented by Meister Eckehart the phenomenon of Germanic men reborn, the spiritual birth of German culture, and an anticipation of Kant's critical philosophy. German mysticism preached an explicit pantheism, the identity and equality of God and the soul in opposition to the seemingly inexterminable view that God and the self are essentially different. 'God' was the mere creation of man's mind—much like the ideas of time, space, and causality—the religious man's expression of the philosophical 'thing in itself' ("Ding an sich"). God was simply another expression for autonomous freedom, the freedom of the human soul and will.²

Redemption was realizing oneness with God as opposed to the hated Pauline and Augustinian doctrine of sovereign grace with its condescending anthropology. All this meant dethroning the tyrannical despot of the Old Testament (Jahwe) in the interest of 'Nordic mysticism'. The sovereign God of the Bible, of foreordination and predestination, was hostile to the god in one's own bosom and had to be replaced by the ideal of absolute autonomy and personality. German mysticism worshipped the 'uncreated soul' as the god of one's own destiny within the inner realm of freedom as over against a dreadful destiny in the outer realm of nature. 'The God whom

¹Mythus, 114,258; cf. 22,615,671.

²Mythus, 217ff,222ff,231.

we worship would not exist if our soul and our blood did not exist'.¹

Ostensibly the Mythus was not aimed at those still firmly believing in traditional Christianity and satisfied in their Churches but expressly to all those who had lost this faith without having found their way to another myth. Thus it was necessary to work toward the coming German national Church. This Church would not proclaim metaphysical dogmas or historical revelations, which one had to believe to be saved. The traditional Jewish and Christian doctrine of redemption by blood, of the crucified Lamb of God, would have to give way to the heroic Aryan Christ of Nordic art. The whole German future depended on an inner religious conversion (Umkehr) or rebirth (Wiedergeburt) in the direction of an ethnic faith, a German national religion (Volksreligion). There was, however, to be no religious persecution and a strict separation of Church and State. To be fair to all religious groups, all Churches would have to be supported by voluntary contributions. There would be no use of force against the Churches. But it was necessary to create the prerequisites for 'a religious life-style with cultural and political implications'.²

In the Mythus Rosenberg again made reference to the mysterious religious genius and Reformer to come, who would exemplify a new type of religion alongside those already in existence. The fact that he **had not** yet been given, meant that no responsible German would advocate that true believers leave their Churches. This would only unsettle them spiritually, lead to psychological schizophrenia, and provide no genuine substitute for their lost faith. Still it was necessary to prepare the way until the time was ripe for 'the great one' to teach and to live that which previously millions had been able only to stammer. The necessary fifth gospel would be the creation of a man who had experienced the longing for purifying the gospel

¹Mythus, 701, 235f, 246ff, 395ff.

²Mythus, 615, 2f, 599f, 609ff, 615ff.

just as deeply as he had researched New Testament science.¹ The coming religious genius would be a second Meister Eckehart, who would embody and fashion a German spiritual community. The new community of salvation (neue rettende Gemeinschaft) would be founded only by a later generation. The great teacher of German history would finally come when myth had become life.²

THE MYTHUS AND THE CHURCHES

During the 1920's Rosenberg generally referred to the Party Program's Point 24 when confronted with the issue of Nazism and the Churches. This demanded religious freedom for all confessions as long as they did not offend the moral sensitivity of the Germanic race. According to his commentary religious liberty was politically necessary to gain the support of all Germans, but no religion could be tolerated which was offensive to the Germanic race. All morality and religion was relative to race. What was good to one race was bad to another; one's God was another's Satan. The Party as such represented a 'positive Christianity', without binding itself to any definite confession. Positive Christianity was anti-Jewish Christianity. It was the responsibility of the NSDAP to preserve this Germanic Christianity in the face of anti-Christian Marxism. Positive Christianity was, however, opposed to any mixing of politics and religion (Konfession). At the same time, only the Nazi Weltanschauung based on the German communal spirit could unite all classes and confessions under the swastika.³

¹Cf. Rosenberg to Sonntagsblatt (Duisburg), 30.4.1931 (BA: NS 8/16, 70)—where, in defense of the Mythus, he appeals to renowned New Testament scholar and church historian Adolf von Harnack to support the distinction between the original gospel of Christ and its Pauline distortion, whereby Christian faith was made dependent on historical events like the Resurrection.

²Mythus, 599, 601, 603, 608, 624, 629. With understandable modesty Rosenberg never identifies this messianic figure with Hitler or himself, although there are some indications perhaps that his hopes later moved in this direction during the Third Reich. At any rate he came to hope for the coming Reformer and Reformation within 10 or 12 years and even said as much to Hitler (Diary, 19.8.1934; 19.1.1940—FT, 56, 118).

³SSR 2, 178-180. Later editions of the commentary on the Party Program

This ambiguous outlook pervaded Rosenberg's political writings during the 1920's. On the one hand, Nazism was allegedly a purely political, this-worldly movement with no concern for carrying out religious reformation. On the other, it was supposed to be a comprehensive worldview, the answer (provisional at least) to the religious crisis and spiritual need created by the demise of traditional Christianity. Nazism according to Rosenberg was conceived and couched in religious terms despite the nice distinction between the official Party line and his own personal religious confession in the Mythus.

The controversy engendered by the Mythus is one of the most interesting episodes in the history of Nazism's struggle with the Churches. From its publication in 1930 until 1937 when open debate was no longer permitted, the Mythus occasioned a lively discussion producing hundreds of sermons, articles, and books. Rosenberg's files are replete with evidence of a profound religious interest in the Mythus both pro and con, and his speeches during the Third Reich constantly reflect this interest.¹

The official organs of the Church of Rome vigorously opposed the 'heathen' Mythus from the beginning, and the years 1930 to 1937 witnessed scores of Roman Catholic publications against the Mythus. Pious Catholic Nazis saw Rosenberg the heretic as a political liability to the NSDAP, maintaining that Hitler's outlook precluded the Mythus. Abbot Schachleiter, for instance, implored Rosenberg to recant, hoping that Hitler would renounce the Mythus and Rosenberg, but to no avail.² On the other hand there were nominal

published during the Third Reich omit the reference to the NSDAP's preserving Germanic Christianity. However, it is still to be found in the 1930 ed. (Wesen, Grundsätze und Ziele der NSDAP, 44).

¹For evidence of this see the correspondence in BA: NS 8/13-16, 99-111, and 256-257 as well as the speeches in BA: NS 8/37-98. Chap. 2 alludes to some of this evidence, but much more could be cited. For partial bibliographies of publications relevant to the Mythus controversy, see Das Schwarze Korps, 1.5.1935 (BA: NS 15/145a); Boberach, Berichte, 82ff, 98-101; BA: NS 8/17, 5-8; WLB 7 (1953), 33f; and O. Diehn, Bibliographie zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes (Göttingen, 1957), 61f, 181f. For various accounts of the Mythus controversy, see the works mentioned in the Bibliographical Essay.

²For correspondence between Schachleiter and Rosenberg, see BA: NS 8/15, 172; 8/257, 148ff. Cf. PT, 71; LA 137.

Catholics openly sympathetic to Rosenberg, for example the renegade modernist church historian, Professor Hugo Koch, who published a book defending the Mythus in the name of the modern scientific study of the Bible.¹ There were also Catholics—some nominal, some claiming to be faithful—who were secretly sympathetic.²

In February 1934 the Vatican condemned the Mythus to the Index, for scorning all the dogmas of the Church and announcing a new religion, and thereafter continued to attack Rosenberg's speeches.³ Rome's official action occasioned a concerted Catholic campaign in Germany against the Mythus, which during 1934 and 1935 produced the official Studien zum Mythus des XX. Jahrhunderts. This work, written by several Catholic scholars and appearing in several separate parts, was printed and distributed in secret. Its main thrust was to point out Rosenberg's historical errors and to demonstrate the unscientific character (Unwissenschaftlichkeit) of his work.⁴

The official Protestant response to Rosenberg was, unfortunately, not so vigorously negative as that of Rome. There were those pietistic Protestant Nazis who, believing Hitler a gift of God, thought anti-Christian Rosenberg harmful to the Movement. Some called upon him to repent and tried to appeal to the Fuehrer, while others became politically inactive.⁵ Some Protestant Nazis were embarrassed by the Mythus but tried to give Rosenberg his due

¹H. Koch, Rosenberg und die Bibel—zum Streit um den "Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts" (Leipzig, 1935). Cf. NSMH 7:74 (May 1936), 417-425; 11:127 (Oct. 1940), 59f; LA, 138; BA: NS 8/108, 149.

²For evidence of this, see BA: NS 8/13, 77; 8/16, 75ff; 8/104, 162; 8/108, 156; 8/148, 50; Monat, 27.

³L'Osservatore Romano, 14.2.1934; 17./18.9.1934; 7.7.1935; 19.9.1936. (BA: NS 8/256, 164; 8/13, 43ff; 8/72, 100; 8/73, 52ff; 8/77, 34). For the official Latin decrees damning the Mythus (7.2.1934) and Dunkelmänner (17.7.1935) see W. Corsten (ed.), Kölner Aktenstücke zur Lage der Katholischen Kirche in Deutschland (Cologne, 1949), 21f, 67.

⁴Studien zum Mythus des XX. Jahrhunderts (Cologne, 1935), Parts 1-4. For the story of the Studien see W. Neuss, Kampf gegen den Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts (Cologne, 1947), 7ff.

⁵Cf. BA: NS 8/16, 1-3; 8/110, 20ff; 8/151, 159; NS 15/145a.

even while criticizing his book.¹ Still other tried to reconcile the Mythus with the Gospel.² There were in fact several Protestant clergymen who were sympathetic to Rosenberg, one of whom wrote the Nazi ideologist after having given a lecture on the Mythus to the local NS Lehrerbund: 'You have shaken much of my Protestant faith to the foundations'.³ Even Nazi Professor Emmanuel Hirsch, renowned church historian and enthusiastic follower of Hitler but certainly no disciple of Rosenberg, came to his defense by accusing the Catholic Studien of representing anything but objective historical science.⁴ The anti-Christian German Faith ('Deutscher Glaube') Movement led by J.W. Hauer embraced the Mythus with prophetic enthusiasm;⁵ whereas Nazis among the German Christians ('Deutsche Christen'), interestingly enough, were divided on its anti-Christian thrust.⁶

More orthodox Protestant pastors openly spoke and wrote against the Mythus as 'heathen heresy'.⁷ Of these the most significant was Walter Kunneth with his Antwort auf den Mythus (1935). Its chief concern was not to pass judgment

¹Cf. W. Grundmann, Gott und Nation—Ein evangelisches Wort zum Wollen des Nationalsozialismus und zu Rosenbergs Sinndeutung (Berlin, 1933, 2nd enl. ed.), 82ff, 95, 97. Cf. Grundmann, Religion und Rasse—Ein Beitrag zur Frage "nationaler Aufbruch" und "lebendiger Christusglaube" (Werdau i. Sa., 1933), 8f. This latter work was sponsored by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft nationalsozialistischer Pfarrer! For an example of Protestant clergymen quoting Mein Kampf against the Mythus, see BA: NS 8/256, 44.

²Cf. G. Schneider, Rosenberg und Jesus (Stuttgart, 1934?), 12ff.

³Hahn to Rosenberg, 30.4.1934 (BA: NS 8/14, 20). For other examples of Protestant clergymen sympathetic to Rosenberg see BA: NS 8/13, 184, 269ff; 8/15, 116f; 8/16, 126; 8/107, 102; 8/143, 93; 8/257, 89f; 15/169; PT, 76, 117.

⁴E. Hirsch, 'Wissenschaftliche Tarnung', Deutsches Volkstum 17 (1935), 295ff. Cf. the strange case of Frankfurt Professor Weinhandl, who in 1944 after many years of lecturing for Rosenberg's office declared that, if forced to choose between Protestant Christianity and National Socialism, he would choose the former (BA: NS 8/156, 126ff).

⁵Deutscher Glaube (ed. J.W. Hauer), 1935, 216-222. Cf. BA: NS 8/256, 112.

⁶For evidence of a negative viewpoint, see BA: NS 15/145; NS 8/257, 94f, 102; of a positive evaluation, BA: NS 8/257, 86, 145ff. For Rosenberg's opposition to the Deutsche Christen, especially their attempt to combine their outlook with Nazism, see Cecil, Myth, 112; BA: NS 8/108, 157.

⁷Cf. Kronstädter Zeitung, 1.5.1935 (BA: NS 8/16, 107).

on Rosenberg's politics or the Nazi Weltanschauung, but to show the necessity of deciding between the Nordic myth and the Biblical Christ by means of a thorough theological analysis of Rosenberg's religious thought.¹

There were of course Nazi officials unsympathetic for religious reasons, for instance Reich Minister for Church Affairs, Hanns Kerrl. But whatever they may have said in private, such opposition was never expressed in public. Nevertheless Nazi officials maintained the official distinction, upheld in part by Nazi courts, between Rosenberg's private viewpoint and public position, between the author of the Mythus and the ideologist of National Socialism, whenever politically convenient. For instance, acting Gauleiter Schmidt of Stuttgart in 1935:

Repeatedly Rosenberg and his book is quoted by our enemies. On countless occasions we have made clear that his philosophical and religious declarations are the private opinions of Volksgenosse Rosenberg, which are not binding on any Volksgenosse. However, what he has said about Volk and race, racial value (Rassewert), and the racial soul carries weight as the intellectual content (Gedankengut) of National Socialism. Attacks against race and blood on the part of the Confessions must be rejected most emphatically. The law of race was not dreamed up by the Fuehrer, but God himself has put it into the creation.²

At the same time Rosenberg's Mythus enjoyed the massive support of the Nazi press. For example, the same paper which contained the above quote later carried an article maintaining that the Mythus was: the intellectual treasure of millions, the supreme confession of the pulsating racial soul, the key to history, the expression of the religious (as opposed to ecclesiastical) experience of the age, the liberator from ecclesiastical obscurantism, the faith in the divine essence of man. Other Nazi papers extolled the Mythus as the work of the 'philosophical mind' and 'ideological conscience' of the Movement. It was the epoch-making standard work of Nazi ideology,

¹W. Künne, Antwort auf den Mythus (Berlin, 1935), xiv, 3ff, 210, passim. According to Künne (Conversation, 25.11.1975; Deposition, 24.2.1976) the work resulted from scores of requests from church circles all over Germany confronted with Mythus propaganda at every level especially among the youth (cf. Antwort, xiii, 52).

²NS Kurier (Stuttgart), 28.3.1935 (BA: NS 15/145a).

the basis of the 'cultic community' which Rosenberg wanted to found. It exploded the Jewish-Christian dogma of so-called 'absolute truth' (with its speculative, rationalistic view of God) in favor of 'organic truth'.¹

One paper, after recounting all Rosenberg had done for the Nazi Movement, wrote concerning the Mythus:

The book, though passionately debated, found tremendous circulation (ungeheure Verbreitung)....The opponents of the book became its best propagandists. Millions of the young and unsophisticated (unverbildet), millions of seekers, took up Rosenberg's ideas with openness and understanding, and propagated (indeed still propagate) them as forceful and fruitful truth. Moreover, the ideas of the Mythus today inseminate and determine German intellectual life. Thus the book of the Nordic-German racial soul became a liberating act which someday will be reckoned with the great feats of German intellectual history. This book, which according to its opponents is said to be written against faith, is in truth a book based on faith, fervent faith in eternal Germany. This book, falsely accused of being written against religion, is in truth a unique challenge and appeal to the religious resources (Kräfte) of the Volk, which alone are capable of renewing the German people....

If one recalls that the Fuehrer repeatedly has called education, the ideological indoctrination of the German people, the most important task of the Movement, one may measure the tremendous significance of Alfred Rosenberg's mandate and mission. The man most intimately entrusted with the thought and will of the Fuehrer..., Alfred Rosenberg, has been made guardian of the purity and genuineness of the Nazi idea, of the intellectual and ideological development of Germany—called by the man who today is Germany. Thus it is not possible to say Yes to the Fuehrer and No to Rosenberg.²

In brief, Nazi officialdom in general and the Nazi press in particular publicly supported the Mythus; while the police, on the whole, worked against its enemies behind the scenes. Indeed the Gestapo and SS were often its most enthusiastic supporters, in some ways more zealous than Rosenberg himself.³

¹VB, 22.11.1936; Der Angriff, 30.11.1936 (BA: NS 15/159). Cf. NS Kurier (Stuttgart), 10.1.1937 (BA: NS 15/159a), 'Der Sieg über die Dunkelmänner'. Cf. also the evidence adduced in Chap. 2.

²Ulmer Tageblatt, 17.10.1936 (BA: NS 8/77, 125).

³For evidence of police support, see Boberach, Berichte, 82ff; Müller, Dokumente, 249f; BA: NS 8/13, 233; 8/256, 60; NS 15/169. For police antipathy to the Bible, see H. Jochims, Bekenntnis: Gottes Wort bleibt Gottes Wort (Wuppertal-Elberfeld, 1965 2nd.ed.), 47: 'Dies verfluchte Buch ist an allem Schuld!' W. Kühneth reports (Deposition, 24.2.1976) that a Berlin Gestapo commissar in Dec. 1937 told him that the police would have proscribed the Bible long ago had the Fuehrer only given the word! For additional evidence and a brief discussion of the whole question of the Nazi regime's attitude to the Mythus, see F. Zipfel, Kirchenkampf in Deutschland 1933-1945 (Berlin, 1965), 10-13, 54-60, 328f. For further evidence of official support

From the publication of the Mythus to the Machtübernahme the Nazi ideologist responded to his ecclesiastical critics by stressing its private and religious character. The Mythus was not an official statement of the Nazi attitude to religion but a personal, religious, philosophical, aesthetic, and political confession demanding a serious critique. The Nazi Movement was not pushing any religious dogma but allowed each one to express his own religious persuasion even if offensive to traditional religion. He himself was opposed to leaving the Churches and founding any new religious organizations since a new religious awakening, certainly before the arrival of a Reformer, was an individual affair. Nevertheless, overcoming Jewish materialism was the prerequisite of a 'genuinely religious rebirth'. Contemporary 'völkisch religious nostalgia' (Sehnsucht) was aiming at the formation of a new spiritual community. Church leaders simply did not comprehend this; and the fact they admitted a strong interest in the Mythus among students, was proof of its contemporary relevance.¹

According to Rosenberg in 1931 and 1932, no religious controversy was to endanger the unity of the Nazi political movement; metaphysical issues were left to the conscience of each individual as long as 'Germanic moral sensitivity' remained inviolate. The Churches should honor the organically-based separation of religion and politics, Church and State, and stick to the care of souls (Seelsorge) instead of mixing in politics. Nazi political thought welcomed genuine religious sentiment but not the inclination to broaden the religious sphere to include everything social and political. The Nazi State would be willing to sign treaties with the Churches in order to guarantee complete religious freedom and the furtherance of religious life on the one hand, and to exclude their encroaching on political life on the other. The church-state issue was not viewed dogmatically by the

for the Mythus, see that adduced in Chap. 2; also by Bishop Galen, BA: NS 8/257, 79. Finally, see Klemperer, Lingua Tertii Imperii, 18.

¹Rosenberg to Sonntagsblatt (Duisburg), 30.4.1931 (BA: NS 8/16, 69-71). Cf. Mythus (Zur 3. Auflage, May 1931), 5ff, 7, 13. NSMH 2:12 (Mar. 1931), 128f; 3:27 (June 1932), 282f.

Nazis and would be solved according to the exigencies of the future.¹

The Nazi Revolution of 1933 and 1934 shook the Protestant Church in Germany to its foundations. According to Rosenberg the NSDAP as a political party could not get involved directly in religious controversy but could and would not prohibit 'more conscientious' (tiefer forschend) Nazis from participating in the struggle for a new Church.² The hope was that the national upheaval eventually would transform the Protestant Church into the Volkskirche of the Mythus. But this hope of a new German Reformation was allegedly dashed by Reich Bishop Müller's November 1933 declaration that Germanic Christianity was 'heresy' (Irrlehre); and Rosenberg quietly left the Lutheran Church, accusing her of imitating the Church of Rome.³

Criticism from Churches was met publicly by Rosenberg with the assertion that Adolf Hitler had saved Christianity from Communism. The Churches ought to leave politics to him and stick to spiritual counsel (Seelsorge). The Nazi Movement was an autonomous organism (ein Eigengewächs) and could not be tied to any Church. Every Church had the right to express her objections, but the other side likewise had the right to say what it believed. The NSDAP left each individual to decide the religious question for himself but demanded total commitment to the Nazi State.⁴

In August 1934 Rosenberg tried to come to grips with 'the religious

¹Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus, 50-52, 59ff, 47. Cf. NSMH 2:13 (Apr. 1931), 149ff.

²NSMH, June 1933 (B&E 1, 180). Cf. Rosenberg to Dr. Gruenhagen (BA: NS 8/99, 176). The correspondent, a medical doctor, had read the Mythus with enthusiasm and was an admirer of Rosenberg (BA: NS 8/99, 177f).

³Rosenberg to Kanzlei des Reichsbistums (Berlin), 15.11.1933 (BA: NS 8/256, 166). In Revolution in der bildenden Kunst? (Munich, 1934), probably written toward the end of 1933, Rosenberg still championed the ideal of overcoming all the various Protestant Churches by means of a Reichskirche (12).

⁴Cf. Deutscher Glaube (1934), 92, 429; BA: NS 8/37, 45; 8/72, 3.

problem' for the benefit of Nazi civil servants. Nazism saw great value in German Christianity but was not in a position to be the secular arm of any one confession. Fermenting ideas of doing away with traditional but outmoded church forms by completing Luther's Reformation had, beyond a shadow of a doubt, gained a foothold in the NSDAP. The Fuehrer's word about the religious views of the people being 'holy' to their political leaders, applied to this outlook as well. The Churches which had outwardly recognized political Nazism would also have to recognize ideological Nazism.¹

The year 1935 witnessed a stepped-up attack on the Church of Rome. In February Rosenberg wrote in his diary that it was high time to usher in the Mythus. The Fuehrer alone would have to decide whether the time was already ripe for the heavy artillery before the official public attacks (staatsamtliche Angriffe) to follow. That such would come, was clear from what Hitler had clearly envisaged since 1919. In March the Nazi ideologist, urged on by a certain Pfarrer Butzow to let loose his attack, was hesitant to do so—it was dangerous to strike too soon.²

Nevertheless Rosenberg's reply to the Studien of Catholic scholars, An die Dunkelmänner unserer Zeit, appeared in the spring of 1935 and within half a year sold some 650,000 copies. Like the Mythus, the brochure was not supposed to be the work of a Party official, but of a private author. The Churches certainly had the right to reject his views, but not to call into question his 'scientific seriousness'. No political and religious tolerance could go so far as to permit public attacks on the racial foundations of the Nazi State. The author affirmed that the Mythus would retain its validity even if its entire historical basis were refuted at every point! Nonetheless Rosenberg defended his work against allegations of historical error. The chief purpose of his Dunkelmänner was, allegedly, to secure the standpoint of 20th century man over against the outmoded Medieval

¹Rosenberg in Die Verwaltungs-Akademie: Ein Handbuch für den Beamten im nationalsozialistischen Staat (Berlin, 1934), 1ff, 4. The date of the article's original typescript is 30.8.1934 (BA: NS 8/38, 103ff).

²Diary, 24.2./15.3.1935 (PT, 72, 76).

Inquisition. It was indeed an honor to be on the infamous Index! Opposition to the Mythus came not from religious sensitivity but from the bitter realization that the 'inhuman power politics' of the Roman Church in Germany was a relic of the past. Rome ruled not through understanding, reason, and devotion to nature, but by whipping up the forces of human imagination and fear and by hypnotizing men from the cradle to the grave.¹

Behind the scenes the Nazi ideologist sent out a classified circular to be distributed by the chief offices of the Party Organization. It was a refutation of his ideological opponents and purported to represent the official Party position. The Party could not take any official position on the metaphysical dogmas of any Church. At the same time, criticism of racial science and sterilization as anti-Christian was inimical to nature's eternal laws and thus sinned against Germanic moral sensitivity.²

Rosenberg always considered himself tolerant in matters of religion, certainly no fanatic much less a vindictive anti-Christian. For this reason he took the time in the spring of 1935 to try to explain, from an official Nazi point of view, the religious situation in Germany to the Bishop of Gloucester, A.C. Headlam.³

That summer the Nazi ideologist found himself confronted with another bishop, the irrepressible Bishop of Münster, Graf von Galen. Fearing a spirited public attack on the Church in Catholic Münster, Galen tried to prohibit Rosenberg from speaking at a Gautag on the ground it would disturb the city's peace. Rosenberg spoke anyway to 100,000 cheering and jeering Nazis. Emphasizing that he was speaking in an official capacity, the Reichsleiter maintained that by crushing Bolshevism the NSDAP had done more

¹Rosenberg, An die Dunkelmänner unserer Zeit (Munich, 1935), 3, 90, 103, 6, 66f, 104, 40, 30, 45, 56. Cf. PT, 64; Monat, 29.

²Rundschreiben 3/35, 27.4.1935 (BA: NS 8/128, 15-20).

³Cf. Rosenberg-Headlam correspondence in BA: NS 8/256, 137-159; also PT, 57, 65.

for Christianity than all other parties combined. Nazism was magnanimous enough to wait until Catholics of good will saw the light. The very fact that the bishop was free to threaten such a high Nazi official, was conclusive proof of the religious tolerance of the Nazi State. But the Nazi worldview meant the end not only of Liberal ideology, but of the Middle Ages. On the basis of unity between ideology and politics, Nazism meant the protection of sound blood, and thus hindering the multiplication of habitual criminals, the hereditary ill, the insane, idiots. He who did not recognize these necessities as divine commandments, was with the 'Satanic opposition'.¹

During 1936 Rosenberg repeated the official Nazi line about religious tolerance and lack of interest in any new type of religion. In speeches to Party officials, however, he took a harder and more consistent line. His real outlook was put in his diary: Kerrl's Kirchenministerium, with its petty bourgeois anxiety over 'ideological consequences', was a necessary evil since the Party did not want to conduct the necessary struggle against the Churches in the near future. Nazi policy had to be simply the 'clever tactics of a transitional period'.²

Nonetheless the year 1937 brought heightened controversy with the Churches. In his speeches Rosenberg became ever more sarcastic in his dealing with the religious objections to Nazism. If there was any heaven, the brave for Germany would get there before praying traitors. The Churches refused to fight the truly godless. True, they rejected Marxism and atheism but did not fight it as they fought Nazism. Their bitter hatred for Nazism stemmed

¹Münster, 6.7.1935 (B&E 2, 349f, 354ff). For additional documentation on the Münster affair, see BA: NS 8/41, 207ff; 8/73, 120f; 8/74, 72ff; 8/152, 99ff; 8/257, 74ff.

²Diary, 25.4.1936 (Monat, 28).

from the feeling that the Nazis were more dangerous; in contrast to the Communists, Nazis represented a positive alternative to ecclesiastical Christianity.¹

Protestantische Rompilger, Rosenberg's answer to Künne and his Protestant critics, appeared in the autumn of 1937. The book basically had been written some two years before, but it had not been published in the hope that part of Protestant orthodoxy would find its way back to the Volks. But when Protestantism's sectarian leaders refused, the booklet appeared in the hope of awakening the sound instincts of the Protestant rank and file. The thesis, as the title indicates, was that the Protestant Church's criticism of the Mythus was in effect a return to Rome. It was not the Catholics or Protestants who revived religious feeling and saved religion in Germany, but the power of the Nazi faith by virtue of 'spiritual self-help' and 'self-redemption'. The attacks on the Mythus were really against the spiritual foundations of Nazi thought and German rebirth. The modern scribes and pharisees of the Confessing Church (Bekennende Kirche) had throttled life and thwarted church reform. Clear proof of all these charges was their participation in the pacifistic Ecumenical Movement. Protestants could either remain a small sect or participate in the great national and religious rebirth.²

Rosenberg's attitude toward the church struggle was further revealed to Hitler Youth leaders in closed session. Point 24 of the Party Program did not say that the NSDAP confessed the positive Christianity, but a positive Christianity and thus left entirely open what the Party meant by this phrase in the past or might mean by it in the future. What was positive in Christianity was the Germanic or German element with its feeling for morality.

¹Cf. BA: NS 8/78, 32f, 44, 67, 92; 8/79, 40; 8/80, 19, 48, etc.

²Rosenberg, Protestantische Rompilger (Munich, 1937), 5ff, 10f, 31, 39, 66ff, 78ff. Cf. PT, 72; Monat, 29.

Allegedly absolute Christian morality did not fall from heaven but was historically conditioned by Judaism. The Fuehrer would have to decide eventually how to apply Germanic moral sensitivity to the church struggle. The founder of Christianity should be left out of the debate since he could not be made responsible for what his so-called followers made out of him. The great historical struggle demanded both rigorous consistency and human understanding for the individual. One could not demand from the present generation that it throw everything overboard, only that it progressively comprehend the new future and not fight against it. Eventually Christian dissidents would have to be forced to serve the Nazi State.¹

To a closed circle of Nazi leaders, Rosenberg revealed his conception of his own role in the Kirchenkampf and Hitler's attitude toward it. Life had run away with the Churches. Having declined in faith and power, they were fighting a rear guard action. The ideological struggle had now entered its second stage in that the Party was challenging not only the Churches' political power in Germany but their right to educate German youth. After the political and educational stages would come the third and final stage when Nazi communal consciousness would take on final symbolical form. Although it was not advisable to rush a progressive ideological revolution proceeding in stages, it was necessary on occasion for someone to make a frontal attack in order to find out the real strength of the enemies' fronts. Within the NSDAP it was his own lot to have to make such frontal attacks. Rosenberg was fully aware that he was a political embarrassment to many Party leaders in Catholic regions.

But it is sometimes necessary as a general principle to give a Movement first of all a definite, even if purely private objective (Zielsetzung). And moreover it is also necessary that a man who does this risks, in a purely symbolical sense, his head. If this struggle turns out bad for him, he is then one of life's expendable instruments and must find another occupation. If, however, one somehow energetically sticks out this struggle,

¹Weimar, 28.5.1937 (BA: NS 8/45, 164ff, 167f, 172f, 176f, 180).

then he has rendered the Movement a little more consistent (geschlossener) and led it a few steps forward (tumultuous applause).

The Fuehrer has been great in these years as always. He has been assailed from all sides to drop me as an intolerable personage (laughter). He has said to the Catholics: What do you expect? Rosenberg is a Protestant and naturally cannot stand for Catholic dogma (amusement). Moreover, he has let life's struggle take its course and said to himself: Regardless what comes of it, at any rate a man is mentally occupied with this struggle and has to mature in one way or another. Whether one rejects or accepts him, in the end result, is to be decided then at some later date by history.

And if I have well understood your concerns from 1930 to 1934 or 1935, I have never asked for your support during those years of difficult struggle. Today we are over the first mountain, and now I ask you: support me in the consistency, in the audacity, but also in the caution with which this struggle is being conducted (lengthy tumultuous applause).¹

After a condescending attack on contemporary Protestantism, Rosenberg declared that there were three basic ways to carry on the struggle against the Churches: first, the old Liberal policy of separating Church and State, which however allowed the Churches to continue to exercise influence over the souls of men; second, the radical Bolshevist method, consistent with total atheism, of destroying the Churches by force. But, third, there was the Nazi tactic of refraining from iconoclasm, of inwardly overcoming the out-dated bearers of a once great tradition by creating a new ideological basis for communal spirit. Dedicating an old church in Torgau as a Nazi Feierstätte—after which several clergymen offered their churches for Nazi festivities(!)—was a good example of this policy. When old forms of faith died, religious veneration was always replaced by aesthetic veneration.²

Both Petrine Christianity in the form of Roman Catholicism, and Pauline Christianity in the form of classic Protestantism, were on the way out in Germany. That left only Johannine Christianity, represented by the Pietists who had become so influential in 19th century Germany, as a viable alternative. But a great competitor had arisen to take its place, the NS Volkswohlfahrt. The causes of the religious crises were far deeper than Nazi opposition to the Churches.

¹Sonthofen, 22.11.1937 (BA: NS 8/47, 102ff, 110). The response of the audience is recorded in the stenographic record of the speech. For a briefer report of the speech, see BA: NS 8/80, 134-139).

²Sonthofen, 22.11.1937 (BA: NS 8/47, 110ff, 114f).

It is not our fault if millions among the nations no longer can believe in the doctrines of yesteryear simply because those who teach them no longer believe in them themselves (agreement)....We are convinced that, if in this situation sincere men do not strive to create a new ideological foundation, the results of such church crises have to be the accumulation of atheistic hordes by the millions. And this is indeed the case everywhere where a new movement is unable to give shelter to these refugees....

We do not want a so-called substitute for today's religions. Here everyone has to pass through a dark period for a couple of decades when the supporting priest is not always on hand to answer every question which destiny happens to ask....There still remain, to be sure, many private provinces of life which the Movement has not yet been able to lay hold of. What should take the place of baptism or how the marriage ceremony should be carried out, how burial is to be developed in detail—these are things in which the Party has said nothing officially. And furthermore it should say nothing at all yet—this would not speed up the process....Here too one has to leave life a certain latitude for experimentation (Spielraum des Experiments).¹

THE NAZI RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION

Rosenberg preached the Nazi religious revolution in private and in public. His religious interest and approach could not help but surface in his political speeches and writings. For instance, he ended his speech at the 1929 Nuremberg Party Congress—in which he endeavored to set forth the essence of Nazism in terms of the Mythus—with references to the 'prophet' Lagarde waiting for his 'resurrection', to Nazis being 'secure' (geborgen) in 'unconditional faith' in the German future, to the necessity of enlisting all the 'awakened' in the brown army, and to life in the Party as 'eternal salvation'.²

In Das Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus (1932) Rosenberg maintained that Nazism was essentially no ordinary political party but a worldview. On the one hand, Weltanschauung and religion were not one and the same. Weltanschauung could exist without religion, but it could also include religion in the limited sense of one's conscience concerning things metaphysical. On the other hand, Nazism served a constructive principle, which already demonstrated a 'basic religious disposition' and a 'religious revival'. Religion in the truest sense was not a matter of outer ecclesi-

¹Sonthofen, 22.11.1937 (BA: NS 8/47, 115, 119, 121, 123, 17).

²Nuremberg, 21.8.1929 (B&E 1, 157f). Cf. NSM 1:1 (Apr. 1930), 28f. These sentiments were incorporated verbatim into the Mythus (561f).

astical dogmas but the inner readiness to act in the interest of the highest values. Nazism was thus 'practiced religion' (getätigte Religion) or 'lived religion, the metaphysic of action'.¹

The Nazi ideologist apparently thought it necessary to deny the religious character of Nazism in one sense for reasons of political expediency, and to assert it in another for the sake of its having a religious appeal. Rosenberg knew that Realpolitik necessitated toning down Nazism's religious character to some degree. On the other, he was convinced of its basically religious nature and appeal. This character would come to the fore in due time. A Protestant pastor who criticized Rosenberg for distinguishing between politics and religion, maintaining that all genuine politics is religion and vice versa, received the following reply:

A political Movement struggling for power has to limit itself to a few positive ideological principles, in order not to fall into discriminatory disputes at the outset. Therefore one must distinguish between personal philosophical confessions and that which seems bearable for the Movement as a whole.

Now in the last number of my Monatshefte I said as much as the organization can bear politically and left out all the conclusions resulting from your personal knowledge and mine. Just as an individual human being may reveal in his growth a few weak organs not bearing their full load, it may also be the case with a political organization, and especially with a Movement as deeply grounded in ideology as ours. Before it is full-grown, one may not expect more of it in terms of performance (Leistungsfähigkeit) than it is able to bear. And if you have followed the Movement, you will have to admit that through the years the contours of its character have been ever more firmly revealed (eine immer festere Umreissung ihres Wesens).²

As the Nazi ideologist told civil servants in 1934, Nazism was not anti-religious. On the contrary, its struggle and sacrifice were only possible by means of 'a strong religious impulse'. The whole Movement was inexplicable apart from a spiritual impetus which could only be characterized as a 'religious revolution' (religiöse Erhebung). The Party could not hinder intellectual and ideological struggle. Nazism was convinced that struggle (the father of all things in every area, including religion) would produce

¹Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus, 39ff, 41, 45, 60, 66ff, 69, 72f.

²Rosenberg to Raschke, 23.4.1931; Raschke to Rosenberg, 16.4.1931 (BA: NS 8/15, 115f).

the necessary life-style for apprehending the whole man for the Nazi worldview. But such a spiritual development could not be violently forced; it needed plenty of time. Before a great religious idea became reality many decades, even centuries, had to pass.¹

As 1934 wore on, Rosenberg was encouraged and enthused by the course of events. In May he wrote in a new preface that the Mythus had ploughed deep, ineffaceable furrows in the spiritual life of the German people. Much which appeared bizarre (absonderlich) had already become political reality. In August he wrote in his diary that the nation no longer wanted to hear double talk (Kauderwelsch) from psalms and prophets. The Nicene Creed was at the end of its tether.

The spirit of our time has taken its direction and will not change it.... The Reichsbischof at any rate has reached the end of his Hebrew. All the youth of the Movement swear by me. The SS (and the Bauernführung) openly educates its men in a Germanic, i.e., anti-Christian way. The schools of the PO [Parteiorganisation] clearly will also grow up on the Mythus. The Churches are drying up. Only, the Nazi life-style itself has as yet experienced no fixed character, but this is growing up organically out of the HJ. In ten years perhaps the time will become ripe for a Reformer who will possess the church buildings anew and give them the heroic features of our age....²

As early as the autumn of 1934 Rosenberg openly asserted the cultic character of Nazism in his political speeches. The worth of an ideology was not a matter of whether it was rational or not but whether it strengthened or weakened the life of a people. The criterion of the new racial idea of truth was not logical correctness, truth or falsehood, but rather fruitfulness or unfruitfulness. The Nazi ideology had proved itself fruitful to the German people and was leading them into a new form of life patterned after a religious order. This would develop eventually and naturally into a full-fledged 'cultic style of life' coupled with an 'inner cultic experience'. The Nuremberg Party Rallies were a clear example of milestones along the

¹Handbuch für Beamten im nationalsozialistischen Staat, 4f, 8.

²Diary, 19.8.1934 (PT, 56; cf. PT, 64). Cf. Mythus (Zum 150. Tausend, May 1934), 18.

cultic way.¹

Rosenberg stressed the religious character of the Nazi Movement throughout 1935. That it was not simply an ideological but also a 'cultic movement', was becoming increasingly evident in all divisions of the Party Organization, especially in the Hitler Youth, which was developing choice new cultic forms. This was necessary given the fact that outer forms are often more significant in binding men together than the inward ideas on which they are based. This was the means of binding (Bindemittel) the German people together, that 'hypnotic force' hovering over the Nazi Movement from the beginning. This 'outer show' was at least as strong as 'inner philosophical conviction'. Every great religious confession became strong through its symbolic forms. The goal of the Movement was not only to lay hold of the German people ideologically (weltanschauunglich) but 'to escort them from the cradle to the grave by means of cultic practices' (kultische Handlungen).²

Hitler's statement in Mein Kampf that the NSDAP was a political and not a religious movement could not contradict his repeated emphasis that Nazism was not simply a political movement but also a Weltanschauung.³ True, the Fuehrer was opposed to the phrase 'cultic customs', and it was to be avoided—as Rosenberg told a group of Schulungsleiter in late 1935—but it was necessary to find another expression for the reality. For the Roman Church was able to impress its will repeatedly upon the soul not only by means of religious mentality and faith but through ruling the imagination (Einbildungskraft). She ruled men from the cradle to the grave by means of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, marriage, and extreme unction. The Nazi

¹Cologne, 13.10.1934 (BA: NS 8/39, 134, 138; 8/72, 116).

²Oldenburg, 10.1.1935 (BA: NS 8/73, 1). Cf. BA: NS 8/74, 1, 77 for stress upon the religious character of Nazism, e.g., Rosenberg's repeated reference to Ernst Moritz Arndt: 'To be one people—that is the religion of our epoch'.

³Schwerin, 2.6.1935 (BA: NS 8/73, 54).

Movement, and especially its educational leadership, would have to consider what to put in the place of these practices and how to see to it that each person would live his whole life in a Nazi framework.¹

Speaking privately of his own religious development in November 1935, the Nazi ideologist maintained that his outlook on Christianity had hardened through the years. He had come to oppose not only Roman Catholic superstition but Christian ethics as such as unfruitful and inimical to life. In fact, much of the Mythus now appeared too mild and compromising. No responsible person abruptly threw everything overboard, only those having had some sort of rather frightful experience violently derailing their previous life course. 'I would be lying if I declared that my position on Rome and Christianity had cost me difficult spiritual struggles. The truth is rather that throwing off the old dogma has not cost me one single sleepless night'. This did not mean that he was not a person of metaphysical concern and religious experience. Religion was possible without ecstasy (Ekstatik) and superstition (Dämonie), and he rejected both out of religious sensitivity. His religion was not one of oriental superstition or subjection, his relationship to God not one of slave to master but of friend to friend. 'This rejection of mine, stated briskly and in painful form, had to have first the effect of challenge and conceit. But someone had to make himself the pioneering spokesman of a great era'.²

From 1936 to 1938 Rosenberg still hoped to win over many people in the Churches. But this was not to be construed as an attempt to mix Christianity and Nazism, Church and State, religious conviction and Party loyalty. The Nazi Movement was not to involve itself in any religious reform within the Churches, but to foster an autonomous spiritual development of its own.

¹Speech to Schulungsleiter, Sept.-Dec. 1935 (BA: NS 8/42, 140).

²Wie der Mythus entstand, Nov. 1935 (BA: NS 8/22, 58-61).

Moreover, Rosenberg vigorously opposed Protestant clergymen's taking an oath to the Fuehrer on the grounds that such would lead to a political Church. The task of pastors (Seelsorger) was to proclaim the Biblical message according to the traditional Confessions.¹

Nazism's spiritual and political autonomy meant that it was no 'substitute faith' after the pattern of the historic confessions ("Glaubensersatz" in Anlehnung an geschichtliche Bekenntnisse).² There was to be no propaganda campaign to get older people to leave the Churches. But the youth were a different matter. Still they could not expect a ready answer to every question from Nazism but each **one** would have to have the courage to live through a period of uncertainty and come to their own religious viewpoint.³ Party leaders were also a different matter. For instance, the Nazi ideologist rebuked Darré for forbidding Bauernführer to leave the Churches though many wanted to do so.⁴

Within the higher echelons of the NSDAP Rosenberg was generally viewed as the Party expert on religious and church affairs.⁵ Consequently during

¹Rosenberg to Hess, 5.5.1938/18.12.1937 (BA: NS 8/179, 87-89; 8/178, 13ff). Cf. W. Brachmann, Alfred Rosenberg und seine Gegner (Munich, 1938), 42.

²Halle, 5.11.1938 (B&E 4, 178f).

³Interview, May 1938 (BA: NS 8/50, 34-36).

⁴Rosenberg to Darré, 12.11.1938 (BA: NS 8/173, 119).

⁵Cf. Bormann to Bouhler, 8.12.1938 (BA: NS 8/180, 17). Here Bormann, writing for Hess, maintained that Rosenberg was responsible for the Party attitude on church issues (Reichskirchenminister Kerrl was to deal with church relations on behalf of the State but not to represent the ideological viewpoint of the NSDAP), and asked Bouhler (official Party censor) not to consult Kerrl at all but henceforth exclusively Rosenberg on all matters of the relationship between Nazi ideology and the Churches. Cf. Bormann to Rosenberg, 26.11.1938 (BA: NS 8/180, 30).

1938 and 1939 he often spoke at Party gatherings on the subject of Nazi ideology and religion. He admitted, for example, that anti-Nazi Protestantism was true Protestantism. 'The viewpoint of the Nazi Movement today is already outside the entire Biblical tradition'.¹ Rosenberg laid heavy stress on the religious character of Nazi ideology. Although having allegedly nothing to do with metaphysical dogmas, it was not in principle opposed to 'a really upright metaphysical religiosity'.² He violently opposed the outlook of Reichsminister for Church Affairs Kerrl to the effect that the Nazi Movement had to do with this world and the Church with the next. According to the Nazi ideologist there could be no separation of the spheres of Church and State in the pattern of any metaphysical separation of heaven and earth!³ Rosenberg viewed the fact that he was in constant demand as a speaker and the interest in his speeches as an indication that his battle for the soul of the Party was basically victorious. The great breakthrough was proceeding apace, and one would have to guard against the danger of a flash flood (Sturzflut).⁴

In the summer of 1939 the Nazi ideologist attempted to refine his views on the relationship between Weltanschauung and religion. The Nazi Movement and worldview claimed the whole man except for the area of metaphysical confession. Yet it was impossible to make an ultimate and decisive separation between ideology and religion. Nazism involved a new faith regarding the meaning of life. Although ideology was a matter of relativistic position (Haltung) and not universalistic dogma, it embraced the areas of religion, science, and ethics. 'Religion means: spiritual commitment (seelische Bindung) on the part of a man or a people to a divine reality

¹Krössinsee, 18.10.1938 (BA: NS 8/83, 82,87).

²Bad Tölz, 4.2.1939 (BA: NS 8/54, 99).

³Sonthofen, 26.3.1939 (BA: NS 8/55, 93).

⁴Diary, 6.2.1939 (PT, 79).

standing above this life. Religion is therefore one part of the total ideological outlook' (weltanschauliche Haltung).¹

Religion was the inner conviction that the individual was integrated into a comprehensive yet incomprehensible order or force beyond the material—whether called God, Providence, or Destiny—which directed all things in the universe. Since Nazism confessed (bekennen) such, it was thoroughly religious or gottgläubig but without confessional commitment. Such a confession (Bekenntnis) was an essential part of religion. A traditional confession (Konfession), on the other hand, meant the sum total of the dogmas of a particular Church. One could not identify religion in general with relative, temporally-conditioned confessional forms. Nazi opposition to church dogmas was not due to a lack of religious feeling but was rather ^{the} sign of 'a deep religious reawakening'. Apart from 'resurrection religion' (auferstehende Religion), the Nazi Movement was utterly unthinkable. One could not separate religion from the Nazi worldview since both stemmed from the same root: namely from a new feeling of spiritual community, from 'an intense German credulity and piety' (eine grosse deutsche Gläubigkeit und Frömmigkeit).²

Since religious revival was no longer possible through the Bible or Protestantism, he who strove for 'a unified religious outlook' for all Germans had first to overcome the existing Confessions. Christianity—once a revolution, then a power in Europe—was now only 'fossilized reaction' sitting 'on the indictment bench of European history'. But out of the chaos of confessional corruption and collapse had been born the possibility of a German religion. The Nazis were the conquerors of one age and the founders of another—indeed religious—epoch. The Nazi faith was 'the greatest religious revolution since Christianity entered the stage of world history'.³

¹Weltanschauung und Religion, Summer 1939 (BA: NS 8/57, 132, 126ff).

²Ibid., BA: NS 8/57, 137, 132ff. Cf. PT, 241f (PS-1749).

³Weltanschauliche Thesen, July 1939 (PT, 244, 242-246; PS-1749). For additional thoughts on the subject of Weltanschauung and religion in opposition to Kerl, see Rosenberg to Hess, 29.9.1939 (PT, 177-180; PS-128).

On the eve of the War Goering, who had read Rosenberg's paper on Weltanschauung and religion, involved him in a lengthy conversation on religion. Rosenberg maintained that those needing ecclesiastical consolation should not be refused it since 1,000 years of indoctrination (Zucht) could not be overcome overnight. Whereupon Goering asked if he really believed that Christianity was at the end of its tether and that eventually a new form of religion conditioned by the Nazis would arise. The answer: Jawohl!¹

The coming of war brought Rosenberg apprehension that the Churches would use it to their advantage. He believed that the ideological altercation would come to a head during the War. In place of the so-called spiritual leadership (Seelenführung) provided by the Churches, the NSDAP had to stand at the forefront in the care of souls and provide a positive alternative. To this end the Nazi ideologist introduced the Nazi Morgenfeier to take the place of the Sunday morning worship service without, however, duplicating it.²

During 1940 and 1941 Rosenberg was convinced that victory would bring a further intensification of the ideological struggle. The battle would be fought primarily in the field of education; the Nazi worldview should permeate every subject, including instruction in religion. 'Separation of Church and State as a goal is a liberalistic outlook. For us everything is an intermediate stage'.³ The 'new religious outlook' of the Nazis had to penetrate every level of education. The War in the West signified the outbreak of an ideological struggle against Rome in Germany which would be conducted to the bitter end. There would be no peace in the land until the Roman Church and its oriental doctrine was overcome in every German heart. The Nazi leadership needed spiritual strength for the last great conflict,

¹Diary, 22.8.1939 (PT, 91).

²BA: NS 8/59, 38f, 143, 150ff. Cf. Diary, 11.11.1939 (PT, 105f). On the matter of NS Feierstätte and Morgenfeier, see BA: NS 8/159, 176.

³Diary, 9.4.1940 (PT, 127, 126f).

that of overcoming the Christian Confessions. It was necessary to substitute for the vanishing Biblical tradition one better and still older: that of ancient Iran and India was nobler than the New Testament.¹

At the same time Rosenberg opposed antagonizing the Churches during the War with the crude attacks on traditional religion of some Gauleiter. Nor could the NSDAP overcome the Churches simply by integrating (gleichschalten) Christian practices into Nazism, but rather by means of 'organic deconfessionalization'.² By January 1942 the Nazi ideologist forbade further treatment of confessional issues in ideological indoctrination. This did not, however, apply to sessions in closed circles.³ The Churches were undermining the war effort by protesting against Nazi measures against Jews, Christians, and lunatics. Thus it was necessary to prepare for a crucial confrontation after the War. Since police methods alone would be insufficient, Rosenberg's office would hold courses on Nazism and confessional issues. In this connection it was necessary to combat occult trends and astrological practices within the NSDAP.⁴

The War naturally brought a certain abatement of public religious controversy but not of interest in religious questions. Officially any religious opinion, such as belief in immortality, not inimical to Germanic moral sensitivity or the German Reich was a matter of individual liberty of conscience.

But behind closed doors it was made clear that Christianity and Nazism were mutually exclusive in their conception of history, system of values (i.e., ethics), scientific worldview (Weltbild), and metaphysical faith. Racial particularism and Christian universalism were hostile to each other.

¹Diary, 7.5./10.5./11.9.1940; 7.11./14.12.1941 (PT, 135f, 139; Monat, 35-38). Cf. Leipzig, 21.4.1940 (BA: NS 8/87, 181f).

²Rosenberg to Bormann, 28.11.1941 (BA: NS 8/186, 25-30).

³Anordnung, 27.1.1942 (BA: NS 8/128, 102).

⁴Besprechungen... 1942 (9.1./19.2.1942), 25.9.1942 (BA: NS 8/66, 120f, 125f). For Rosenberg's conflict with occultism and astrology among Party members, see BA: NS 8/171, 7; 8/185, 49-72; 8/208, 25f.

Every attempt of liberal theology to understand Christian dogmas symbolically struck at the heart of the Christian missionary claim. Political Liberalism, Marxism, and Bolshevism were the secularized products of universalistic Christianity fighting Nazi Germany in the decisive war between chaos and race. In contrast to Christian metaphysical conceptions, Nazism stood for the devout German faith in divine destiny. After the decisive political and ideological struggle, a figure would arise to consummate the metaphysical aspect of Nazism someday! 'Nazism is therefore not a substitute religion for Christianity but a salvation of the soul (seelische Rettung) through ultimate self-evaluation in a collapsing Christian world and in the Democratic and Marxist Völkerchaos brought about by Christianity itself'.¹

According to Rosenberg in closed session, since it was difficult to break with the past, the NSDAP was at first disposed to defend established religious forms, albeit with a somewhat liberal interpretation. But on the whole the Churches not only refused to support the Party but bitterly opposed it; and the Nazis were forced to take increasingly harsher positions, not out of malice but in the simple realization that the Churches had to reject their central claim. Christianity, having tied itself to Judaism's 'philosophy of deceit', knew nothing of true religion. Those having left the Churches cried for a 'substitute'. But who needed a substitute for a sickroom? The NSDAP as such was not a party for religious reform and would never preach a 'religious dogmatism'. At the same time the Nazi Movement would establish new social forms and rites to take the place of the old religious forms in the Age of Adolf Hitler. 'Faith in a meaningful, though rationally incomprehensible world order is a religious outlook higher

¹Nationalsozialismus und Christentum, 12.9.1941 (BA: NS 8/65, 108f, 107ff). This paper, Rosenberg's answer to Bormann's infamous Rundschreiben, was presented at an indoctrination course for confessional questions—Berlin, 27.2.1942. Cf. BA: NS 8/65, 14f; 8/169, 110; 8/132, 42, for interest in the question of immortality during the War and Rosenberg's response to it.

than faith in magic and miracles'.¹

The autumn of 1942 produced a curious Rosenberg speech which attempted to expound Germanic religion in the face of war-time realities. The War confronted people anew with the age-old elementary questions concerning the meaning of existence. It could not be the Nazi mission to try to answer such questions with any conclusive doctrine; but Germans could divine that Destiny (Schicksal) was, on the whole, a meaningful force, even though one could not comprehend the character of Destiny itself. It was natural to evaluate Destiny, Providence, or whatever one called the order of things, from the vantage point of the individual; but this should be done from that of the Volk as a whole. Destiny was identified with organic nature, an ever-recurrent coming into being, growing, and passing away. Germanic religion meant thinking in accordance with nature, seeing this universal dying and being born as an everlasting process, and feeling one with the total cosmic and biological happening (Geschehen). Nazism was not out to exterminate religion but was itself a religious phenomenon of symbolic rather than dogmatic character. The Nazi ideologist called for that 'double idealism' which could bravely stare death and the devil in the face without hope of individual immortality.²

During 1943 and 1944 Rosenberg became ever more bitter in his negative attitude to Christianity. For instance, he openly declared that the whole of ecclesiastical Christianity was simply a heap of totally relative and subjective assertions. That this 'monstrous structure' could still be portrayed as a great creative unity and the ethnic existence of the people as a relative phenomenon, demonstrated the tenacity of 1,000 years of the theological way of thinking. The ethic of Nazism and the German Sozialstaat was unchristian. Christian opponents recognized this much more quickly than

¹Berlin, 27.2.1942 (BA: NS 8/65, 153ff, 141ff).

²Weimar, 4.11.1942 (BA: NS 8/66, 200-209). For Rosenberg's negative views on personal immortality, see: Mythus, 392-394; Revolution in der bildenden Kunst, 3-5; LA, 297f.

many Party comrades. Nazi welfare was not a matter of charity or mercy, crumbs from the master's table, but of the duty of the Volkgemeinschaft toward its own. 'To be sure we had been Christian in our youth. The sermons found positive response among us. We were thoroughly prepared to defend Christianity against its greasy Jewish detractors. Only later did we see how intimately Christian principles were bound to Judaism'.¹

In summary, Nazism for Rosenberg was a fundamentally religious phenomenon to replace Christianity, at least in Germany. Strictly speaking, however, Nazism was allegedly not a 'substitute religion' in that it was to provide a symbolic rather than a dogmatic substitute. Once he had hoped that a Germanic Christianity purified of its Jewish elements could provide 'a new religious foundation' for German life. But eventually Christianity in any form became only a legend—'a nice remembrance perhaps' but no 'basis for a coming religious form'.² This was to be provided by an autonomous Nazi ideology.

The whole of Rosenberg's life and political career was lived under the shadow of Christianity. His motivation, in his own mind, was good. As he claimed at Nuremberg, modern knowledge had destroyed traditional Christianity; he only wanted to save lost millions from atheism and materialistic Marxism by finding a new religion (Bindung).³

¹Berlin, 29.4.1943 (BA: NS 8/67, 148-150). Cf. BA: NS 8/131, 60f; 8/188, 59. For an example of Rosenberg's growing distaste for theologians, even anti-Semitic ones, see BA: NS 8/132, 63—where he stressed that he would rather strike the theme than commission a theologian, namely Prof. Rudolf Kittel, as a substitute speaker at the ill-fated international anti-Semitic congress slated for Krakau in the summer of 1944 (Besprechung, 9.6.1944).

²Nachwort, 1.2.1942 (BA: NS 8/65, 5f). This was to be a postscript to Rosenberg's Das Verbrechen der Freimaurerei (1921), in which he advocated a Germanic Christianity, to be reprinted in S&R 1. The Nachwort was not published. Cf. S&R 1, lxxiii, 618f for Baeumler's account of the development of Rosenberg's religious thought at this point.

³LA, 285, 297. Rosenberg often reflected on this as his life's motivation and mission. Not to mention the Mythus, see for example Protestantische Rompilger, 53; Vogelsang, 22.11.1937 (BA: NS 8/47, 119). It was the Churches, he said, which drove honest men to atheism, nihilism, and despair.

At Nuremberg Rosenberg could not get away from the issue of Christianity, which played a crucial role in his memoirs. His attorney Dr. Thoma was a convinced Christian, who tried to get him to renounce his ideology. Lutheran pastor Gerecke, US Army prison chaplain to the Protestant defendants, tried to reconvert Rosenberg to his childhood faith. But according to Gerecke the Nazi philosopher remained the obstinate sophisticate: It was nice if anyone could be so simple as to accept the Biblical Gospel of the Cross, but he could not and had no need of it. Even in death Rosenberg could not escape the evangelical Christianity of his youth. Pastor Gerecke asked him, standing on the gallows, to say the Lord's Prayer with him. Rosenberg smiled and said: 'No, thank you....What would my people think of me?'¹

The ideologist of Nazism was true to his religious following and to the Nazi religious revolution—to the bitter end.

¹For Gerecke's account, see 'I Walked to the Gallows With the Nazi Chiefs', Saturday Evening Post, 1.9.1951; Gerecke to Hutchinson, 20.8.1976 (this letter from the Pastor's son refers to what his father told his mother about Rosenberg at Nuremberg). Cf. Andrus, I Was the Nuremberg Jailer, 151, 160. LA, 273ff, passim.

7. NAZI IDEOLOGY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Foreign policy played a decisive role in the Nazi Movement from beginning to end and ultimately determined the ignominious destiny of the Third Reich. Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg had a special interest in world politics in general and German foreign policy in particular. Although he had no direct influence on the foreign affairs of the Third Reich, his ideology probably influenced Hitler's foreign policy at certain crucial points, indirectly if not directly. At any rate, Rosenberg's writings and speeches played a significant role in justifying Nazi foreign policy to the Nazi Party, the German people, and the foreign press.

The purpose of this chapter is to give an account of Rosenberg's views on German foreign policy, with special reference to the relationship between ideology and foreign affairs. The main point is that Rosenberg's ideology is not irrelevant to the actual development of Nazi foreign policy. Despite certain differences, his ideology basically corresponded to the foreign policy of the Third Reich. For the most part Nazi foreign policy was simply the application of his ideology. This ideology—whether understood in terms of the spiritual realm as the religion of race, or in terms of the practical realm as territorial power politics—provides insight into Hitler's foreign policy.

The Nazi ideologist's viewpoint is discussed more or less chronologically beginning with his conception of the world racial struggle, followed by his views on future Nazi foreign policy, then on foreign affairs from 1933-1939, and finally on the ideological world war.

~~THE~~ WORLD RACIAL STRUGGLE

Rosenberg's views on world affairs were rooted in his philosophical, historical, political, and religious ideology. Racial relativism, as he wrote in 1920, was a simple fact of life. Every ethnic group created its own God after its own image and desire. Right for one race was wrong for another, and it was impossible to reduce ethical conceptions to one common

denominator. World racial conflict was inevitable. 'The mulattoes and the blacks are arming for the great racial struggle to come'.¹

This outlook was reflected in the Nazi publicist's earliest articles in the Völkischer Beobachter. Gobineau's racial philosophy of history was to be preferred to Spengler's version of the decline of the West. The concept of 'Western culture' was simply a new kind of internationalism. European culture was overwhelmingly Germanic. The prerequisite for a coming European community of destiny (Schicksalsgemeinschaft) was, after all the international revolutions, the success someday of a 'racial (völkisch) revolution' to liberate each country from Jewish contamination. Nazis could not believe in the West as long as there was no free, völkisch Greater Germany (Gross-Deutschland). The early issues of the VB made clear the ultimate goal of the Nazi Movement: 'Greater Germany völkisch in custom, law, religion, and economy'. Or as Rosenberg put it on the eve of the 1923 Putsch: a 'holy völkisch Greater Germany!'²

The final goal was also clear from Rosenberg's 1922 commentary on the Party Program. The Nazi Movement would not only decide Germany's destiny but show other nations the way of the future. Points 1-3 demanded the consolidation of all Germans in a Greater Germany on the basis of the right of national self-determination, equality of rights for Germany, and additional land (primarily in the East) to support and resettle Germany's surplus population. The task of German foreign policy was to procure space for feeding and resettling a growing Germany.

National Socialism believes in addition that its principles and ideology—though with a style of struggle suited to various, peculiar ethnic conditions—will show the way for the inevitable power struggles in the other countries of Europe and America far beyond Germany's borders. A division of the spirits (Scheidung der Geister) must take place in them as well, and the racial (völkisch) struggle taken up against Capitalistic and Communistic internationalism everywhere the same. Nazism believes that,

¹S&R 2, 417, 412ff.

²VB, 9.11.1923/9.11.1921/11.8.1921 (S&R 2, 739, 567, 510-513). Cf. VB, 13.12.1922 (S&R 2, 657).

someday after the passing of the present age, there will be a new epoch when the Swastika as symbolic of Aryan renewal will be woven into all the various flags of the nations of the white race. It believes that one day there will be a National Socialist Workers Party in France, England, Russia, and Italy--though perhaps under a different name. Today the German struggle is once again a world struggle (Weltkampf)....¹

In connection with the 1923 Parteitag Rosenberg wrote that this world-wide dimension of the Nazi struggle made National Socialism far more dangerous for the world than any mere Putsch. Nazism was the herald of a new age for all of Europe, for the white race in general.²

In the early 1920's Russia was the chief battleground of the world struggle. Rosenberg's Russian background gave him a certain respect for Russian culture, as well as the reputation of being the NSDAP's expert on Russian affairs. In 1921 he taught the Party that the struggle in Russia pitted Jewish internationalism against everything great in the Russian national tradition. Thus anti-Semitism was tantamount to anti-Bolshevism. The Nazi publicist strongly opposed any notion of a German alliance with the USSR against the Western Democracies, given the fact that Jewish Bolshevism's days in Russia were numbered. He also ridiculed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty as legalizing the Bolshevik regime in German eyes instead of helping a strong national Russian government in its struggle with racial chaos.³

Rosenberg's early attitude toward German-Russian relations was summed up in his booklet Pest in Russland (1922). The fate of Germany was

¹S&R 2, 184f, 121ff, 128, 131-136, 165. The sentence about Nazi parties in other countries was expunged in later editions.

²VB, 27.1.1923 (B&E 1, 115).

³VB, 8.5./6.3.1921 (S&R 2, 463f, 439). Cf. S&R 2, 623, 567ff, 570, 573f, 494f; 1, 264ff, 272, 583ff, 599f. The future would depend on the outcome of the Russian Civil War. In 1921 Rosenberg believed that the fate of the Jews in Russia was sealed: the Russian people eventually would have their revenge, eliminating Jewry in Russia (S&R 2, 509, 573).

inextricably tied to that of Russia. But Germany's destiny would depend upon which Russia it fraternized with: the Bolsheviks or the great people upon which they had foisted their violent and unnatural dictatorship.¹

According to Rosenberg's analysis of the Bolshevik plague, the democratic West was strangely blind to the unchanging character of Communism. Its alleged economic successes were pure bluff. The notion that a real 'evolution' was taking place in Soviet Russia was one of the greatest of all the many Jewish lies designed to lead Europe astray. All the promises of the Communists were treacherous lies. Russian nationalism would eventually throw off the Jewish yoke. The Rapallo Treaty simply committed Germany to supporting the rotten Jewish edifice in the East. Bolshevism was a pestilence which could not evolve in essence, least of all revise its goal of world revolution. It would either destroy or be destroyed in the coming struggle between Asia led by international Jewry and Europe led by racial (völkisch) Germany, between chaos and form (Gestalt).²

World Jewry was the real enemy in the world struggle. The Jews had come to power in Russia by following the conspiratorial program of subversion and dictatorship outlined in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, as Rosenberg maintained in his 1923 commentary. The Jewish conspiracy was victorious in Russia, resulting in the calculated massacre of a great people and a regime a hundred times more cruel and corrupt than that of the Czars. There could be no German pact with Soviet Russia despite the natural ties between the two countries. Only ruthless anti-Semitism could prevent the Jewish conspiracy from enslaving Germany as well. Indeed all Europeans would have to face the final apocalyptic struggle (Endkampf) with Jewish Communism. The Jewish Question would be solved radically or not at all in the whole of Europe. The Jewish demon awaited the final plunge into

¹Rosenberg, Pest in Russland (1st ed.; Munich, 1922), Foreword.

²S&R 2, 210ff, 216f, 224f, 229, 232f, 235ff, 241f, 248.

the abyss, after which the Jew would have no more place (Raum) in Europe and America.¹

Rosenberg wrote of the necessity of solving the Jewish Question as early as 1918: the materialistic Jewish spirit had to be banned not only in theory but also in practice. The issue was a fateful one which could not be side-stepped. Fire and water could not be mixed, much less Jew and Aryan. Fichte's suggestion of sending the Jews back to the promised land was doubtless a good solution.² Whatever the solution, he wrote in 1919, it should be carried out without any passionate pogrom. Nevertheless it was necessary to grasp history in its deeper necessities. One ought to find an orderly solution to the problem and strip the Jews of their power and influence on a legal basis. But if this did not work, a popular 'revolt against alien dominion' was inevitable. After all, Christ had to drive the Jewish money-changers from the temple with a whip. If necessary, the German would have to do the same.³

In 1920 Rosenberg maintained that the persecutions of Jewish history, however cruel from a human standpoint, were none the less necessary. Ethical evaluations aside, these ever-recurrent persecutions had to be understood as 'necessities of nature'. Moreover, moralizing judgments accomplished little in difficult times of national stress. The Jews were poison, and one did not let poison lie around unattended, or grant it equality with medicine, but carefully preserved it under lock and key. In view of the frightful necessity involved, political (staatlich), as distinct from human tolerance would have to cease. There was a distinction between human rights and

¹S&R 2, 285ff, 305, 327, 313, 353, 382, 428.

²EA, May/June 1918 (S&R 1, 75, 78f).

³AGD, 23.10.1919 (B&E 1, 24f, 27).

civil rights as applied to the Jews. They had the right to live and to be treated humanely as did all other human beings. However, they should not be full-fledged citizens but live under special laws prohibiting them from full participation in political, civil, military, cultural, educational, and economic life. Zionism was to be supported with a view to shipping a number of Jews each year to Palestine, or elsewhere.¹

Rosenberg's Nazi anti-Semitism had not only a political but also a religious dimension. In 1920 he maintained that without the 'complete solution' of the Jewish Question in every land sick Europe could never recover. Anti-Semitism was the healing medicine without which Europe could not experience real recovery and organic development. The Jew was, to be sure, elect but the elect of Satan. Christianity and Judaism were enemies, and between them there could be no understanding or reconciliation, whatever one's human feelings. One had to help the individual Jew in need, but Judaism as such had to be ruthlessly repudiated. In order to insure Christendom's 'physical independence' from its unscrupulous mortal enemy, Jewry and the Jewish spirit had to be 'physically isolated'. It was a matter of defending and preserving a most holy legacy. 'Every Jew is an Antichrist, every true Christian is an anti-Semite'.²

Exactly where this fanatical anti-Semitism would lead, could not be predicted in advance. 'A liberal anti-Semite—such oddities exist—asked me whether I was in favor of the Jews being "completely eliminated" (völlig beseitigt). To this there is only one answer: we cannot know how the history of Germany will develop in detail'.³

By 1921 the Nazi publicist repudiated Zionism, at least Zionist activity inside Germany. He demanded: expulsion of Jews from all political parties,

¹S&R 1, 190, 213f, 195, 318-321; cf. 1, 144, 152.

²S&R 1, 610, 503, 562, 609f. ³VB, 28.7.1921 (S&R 2, 502).

revocation of the civil rights of all Jews and half-Jews, deportation of all Ostjuden, strictest surveillance of Jews in Germany, banning of Zionists and Zionist organizations, confiscation of their money, and deportation of their members to England or Palestine.¹ In Der staatsfeindliche Zionismus (1922) the Nazi prophet attacked political Zionism as a sinister revolutionary force and rejected the notion of a Jewish state in Palestine as a contradiction in terms, predicting that Jewry, though today triumphant, would experience tomorrow a catastrophe without parallel in Jewish history.²

Although Rosenberg had once opposed the idea of an anti-Semitic International, his slogan became during the 1920's: 'Anti-Semites of all lands, unite in the struggle for the total separation (restlose Aussonderung) of the Jews from all the countries of Europe and America!'³

After the failure of the 1923 Putsch Rosenberg founded in 1924 an international anti-Semitic journal, Der Weltkampf, to carry on the world-wide struggle against Jewish Weltpolitik. Here the Nazi ideologist identified himself with all the peoples of the white race during an age of great spiritual, political, and economic upheavals beginning in 1914. The essence of the current world struggle was the possibility of racial (völkisch) renewal to combat the ominous threat of Jewish world dominion through world revolution.

But out of chaos, distress, and disgrace the racial (völkisch) ideal has arisen to oppose the international idea. The victory of this ideal in every area signifies the real world revolution of the 20th century....It is not imperialism since a real respect for other genuine racial types follows from the conscious recognition of the worth of one's own personality and the uniqueness of one's own people (or race in the broader sense). The way in which the 19th century brought China the Opium War and pursued a policy of wasteful exploitation (Raubbau) and racial rape (Rassenschändung) in all parts of the world, is a crime which can be frightfully avenged someday. For he who has eyes to see knows that the yellow and the black race are arming for a coming world war....

If the ethnic (völkisch) principle succeeds in Europe, this will work itself out in world politics (weltpolitisch) as well. Germany for the

¹VB, 21.8.1921 (S&R 2, 497). ²S&R 2, 101, 107ff, passim.

³WK, July 1926 (B&E 3, 448); Oct. 1924, 23. On occasion he even spoke of their 'eradication' (Ausmerzung; WK, Sept. 1927, 391).

Germans, China for the Chinese (to stay with this example), that is the ethnic viewpoint on world politics....The forms taken by the ethnic idea are naturally very different. In many places it will not be able to assert itself clearly due to a lack of sufficiently strong racial material.... Should struggles and wars arise, they will lie on the natural plane of racial war—which, though always the case, could be veiled because the white race was untrue to itself, abandoning its treasures to an alien Asiatic race (i.e., the Jews), since the peoples of this race killed each other off. We are no utopians and preach no world peace and no eternal international brotherhood....This is today's world struggle (Weltkampf), tomorrow's world revolution, the war which will end we know not when but which has to be fought if Germany and the whole of Europe is not to rot away in the swamp as so many nations in ancient history.¹

Throughout the 1920's Rosenberg maintained that world history would always be witness to wars. Those naïve neo-utopians, who declared that peace would prevail were there no Jews, had a very simplistic outlook. Wars had occurred and would continue to occur, even if there were no Jews around to stir them up. Nations could, would, and should fight for their right to exist. History was not made at diplomatic conferences but decided by the passion of blood! War was not something to be desired but a brute fact of human life and nature which—like day and night, sunshine and rain, summer and winter, life and death—man simply had to accept as something simply given.²

The world struggles of the past concerned such polar opposites as: Christendom—heathendom, Protestantism—Catholicism, Republicanism—Monarchism. The present world struggle pitted the ethnic or racial (völkisch) ideal against the demonic power of internationalism. It was remarkable that both Ghandi and Garvey spouted ideas amazingly similar to the Nazi viewpoint. Race and racial sentiment was becoming a self-conscious reality among the world's blacks. Garvey dreamed of a black empire embracing the whole of Africa. His self-created God was black; the devil, white. Such an outlook indicated the great racial conflict to come and the obvious bankruptcy of all democratic ideas. The nations of the West thus had to

¹WK 1:1 (Jan. 1924), 1ff, 14-16. Cf. B&E 3, 277ff, 293-296.

²VB, 26.2./1.2.1927; WK 1:1 (June, 1924), 11 (B&E 2, 289); S&R 2, 328 (1923).

fight together against the rest of the world or go under in the bloody clouds of self-destructive wars.¹

The nations of Europe, whatever their legitimate national interests, had to stand together as a unit against the rest of the world. Pacifistic talk would not bring world peace but world war on a colossal scale. Pacifism without regard for race was the seed of the greatest wars, and stupid internationalism the greatest enemy of mutual understanding and distribution of function (Arbeitsteilung) among the races of the earth.² There had to be a natural grouping, according to race and ethnic character, of the countries of Europe and of the other continents. The struggle of earlier centuries consisted in religious wars; more recent centuries witnessed nationality quarrels. The conflict to come would be marked by racial struggle (Rassenkampf), for which one would have to prepare and not be weakened by outmoded political constitutions.³

The inevitable world struggle had both an inner spiritual and an outer political side. The first step toward preparing for it was the creation of a truly German State and society as an example for other racial states in Europe.⁴ According to Rosenberg, racial National Socialism from the very beginning was conscious of fighting a world struggle through to the end. Contemporary Germany was not only a people without land (Volk ohne Raum) but a land without a Volk (Raum ohne Volk)! Thus the primary task was to establish a Nazi racial and social State before the inevitable ventures in foreign policy.⁵

¹WK 1:5 (Oct. 1925), 17f, 22-24. Cf. Die internationale Hochfinanz, 67-70.

²WK 2:8 (15.4.1925), 365f, 368. ³VB, 10.7.1925 (B&E 3, 368).

⁴WK 2:16 (Nov. 1925), 727, 741. Cf. Der völkische Staatsgedanke, 30f, 33.

⁵WK 4:43 (July 1927), 299ff.

FUTURE NAZI FOREIGN POLICY

Rosenberg's Der Zukunftsweg der deutschen Aussenpolitik appeared in 1927. The book, containing material already published in the VB and the Weltkampf, is an excellent summary of his views of German foreign policy during the 1920's.

The great World War was over, but the great world struggle as such continued. One had to create a genuine Volk out of the heap of humanity that was Germany, and then win territory and soil for a German population of 100 million. The first task was the problem of domestic politics; the latter, the issue in foreign policy, the vital issue pure and simple (die Lebensfrage schlechthin). Neither one of these questions could be settled in and of itself. Ultimate victory in Germany could not be achieved without freedom in foreign affairs, and vice versa. The world struggle at home and abroad was a life and death struggle (Lebenskampf) which had to be won although the World War had been lost.¹

The Nazi ideologist based his discussion of German foreign policy on an analysis of the nature of imperialism. There were many different kinds of imperialism: ethnic (völkisch), purely military, economic, Marxist, and even pacifistic imperialism. Ethnic imperialism was simply a natural law of biological life, a matter of creative self-assertion, which no nation could afford to renounce. Examples were the German Drang nach Osten, the Anglo-Saxon colonization of North America, and the expansion of overpopulated Japan. This ethnic imperialism was determined and vindicated by race. When one ethnic imperialism conflicted with another, it was a tragic occurrence without benefit of objective right or wrong.

A purely military imperialism annexed territory not from any inner racial compulsion—that is, from the necessity of gaining living space (Lebensraum)—but more from the lust for plunder and adventure. For examples, France's

¹Zukunftsweg, Foreword, 9-11. For a summary of the book in English, see Friends of Europe Publications, No. 49 (London, 1937).

Drang nach Osten was not the result of a legitimate ethnic will to expansion but the expression of the empty imperialism of a mere military will to power, a trivial imperialism devoid of substance.

Economic imperialism, as exemplified by the German Hansa and the British Empire, simply used economic forces to secure political power. Its specific moral character was colored by the nations involved. Modern developments had rendered political, ethnic, and military imperialism subservient to the economic will to power (Machtwille), and those parties violently opposed to 'German imperialism' had no problem with the brutal financial imperialism of the Dawes Plan. This Capitalistic imperialism made use of the pacifistic movement to strengthen its power position, so that one could speak even of a pacifistic imperialism with the goal of repressing all ethnic and national interests. So-called pacifistic Marxism was not really for peace and against imperialism. The international class struggle was just as much imperialism as Britain's ruling the waves, as the imperialistic policies of consistent Marxism in Soviet Russia clearly demonstrated. 'The secret of every victory in fact always lies in the will to power, i.e., in the original and eternal (urewig) "imperialistic" drive, which no movement at all, not even the pacifists, can escape!'.¹

The Crusades and the Italian ventures of the Medieval German Empire **did** not represent an ethnic imperialism. The foolish foreign policy (Welt-politik) of the Second Reich was likewise an empty crusade, rather than the implementation of the 'eternal organic will bound to nature'. This organic approach was the renunciation of all romantic crusades in favor of the renewal of Germanic colonization in the East. Germany had to choose between these two traditions in German history: a crusading or an expansionist policy (Kreuzzugspolitik/Raumpolitik), world imperialism or the ethnic political will. German foreign policy had to be geared once again

¹Zukunftsweg, 16, 11ff.

to the 'German concept of power'. Many Liberal professors and Marxists in Germany would call this imperialism, but it was a struggle for existence pure and simple. Capitalist, Marxist, and Catholic (i.e., Vatican) imperialism represented 'world imperialism' or 'universalistic imperialism' (Universalimperialismus). Ethnic imperialism was not in essence universalistic. The German ethnic will (Volkswille), for example, would not overstep natural bounds; it would only conquer territory (Lebensraum) bordering on the German Motherland.

From this organic conception of German foreign policy arose two basic questions: One, which powers would oppose German expansion toward Poland? Two, whose national interests would not be affected, perhaps even advanced, by German annexations in the East? The answer to the first question could only be: France and Poland (Russia was a problem all its own). To the second: Italy, and then England. 'Thus the German task stemming from the primary problem (Urproblem) runs: isolation of France through alliance with powers whose own vital interests when implemented must conflict with those of France, if not today then surely tomorrow'.¹

Rosenberg's attitude to Franco-German relations was, like Hitler's, based upon the assumption of unalterable and eternal enmity between the two nations. France, the land of Jewish emancipation and negro equality, would always pursue a relentless drive for power without regard for race. The French, with blacks in their army and civil service, were out to africanize Europe. France was no longer a European state but an outpost of Africa, a mulatto state. Thus it was an unalterable presupposition of German foreign policy that there could never be an alliance with the French bearers of the racial plague.²

With regard to Italy, the significance of Fascism was that it was the

¹Zukunftsweg, 21,17ff, Cf. Rosenberg, Nationalsozialismus und Jung-deutscher Orden (Munich, 1927), 17,21,28f.

²Zukunftsweg, 24ff,36-39.

first popular movement in Europe to overcome Marxism, as well as demonstrate that democratic Liberalism was not the inevitable and irreversible destiny of Europe. Only history would show whether the Italian people had the racial resources for real renewal, or whether Mussolini's endeavors would end with his death. At any rate, Fascist Italy was engaged in a world struggle with Liberalism and Marxism; and the Fascist system could only endure in the long run by pursuing a conscious colonial policy in North Africa as well as on the Red Sea and Adriatic coasts.

Fascist Italy was a natural ally for a rejuvenated Nazi Germany. The coming annexation of Austria would not endanger Italian interests but rather secure Italy's northern border from the Bolshevist menace. Furthermore, Italy's chief interests lay south, southeast, and southwest, whereas Germany's lay east and northeast.

In the long run the antidemocratic idea of the nation-state can endure in isolation no more than Bolshevism. It will be either victorious in all of Europe or sink down again in the democratic muck....Today Freemasonry and high finance rule the whole international political system (Weltstaaten-system). That this cannot be overthrown overnight, is clear. It is only to be broken by means of a new racial, spiritual, political, and economic outlook coupled with a vigorous will to power (Machtwille). As Bolshevism forms its center in Moscow to produce on the spot in all countries parties serving its purpose, even so it would be, for example, obligatory for German National Socialism victorious in the future to try to break the stock-exchange dictatorship (Börsendiktatur) in all lands.¹

There were for Rosenberg two Englands. There was the old England with its unique historical development as exemplified by the provincial and particularistic character of Anglo-Saxon law. English parliamentarianism, based upon the aristocratic principle of the inequality of man and class, was very different from its French counterpart. Allegedly almost a racially pure state (!), Great Britain supposedly exemplified 'the wise principle of a racially-conditioned, aristocratic government'. But English conservatism was not capable of solving the social problem. Nevertheless English socialists were vastly different (himmelweit) from the Marxist

¹Zukunftsweg, 60,39ff,50,54-57.

parties in Germany.

Then there was a new England under Jewish influence as exemplified by the infamous Balfour Declaration. The Jews were using England as a tool for their international financial and political aspirations. They were out to control not only the world's money but its oil, realizing that in the 20th century whoever controlled the world's oil would control world politics. Indeed, traditional England was in a struggle for its very existence with the high finance of urban Jewry ('the pan-Jewish City'). But the conflict between pan-Jewish aspirations and British national interests was beginning to emerge, and the hope was that old England would throw off the Jewish yoke.

Traditional British foreign policy opposed Russian imperialism long before the Bolsheviks and would continue to do so. In any conflict with Russia England would need help, both from anti-Bolshevik elements in Russia and from other nations. In the life and death struggle with Soviet Russia England could not count on France since British and French interests would conflict, if not in Europe certainly in Asia and Africa. French egalitarianism would stir up racial revolution against the British Empire in Africa while the Communists did the same in Asia. England's battlecry of the right of national self-determination in the World War would continue to have a boomerang effect throughout the British Empire. The Empire eventually would disappear should Britain remain in splendid isolation.

Moreover, given the airplane England was no longer an island, could no longer play the role of a third party in European conflicts, and needed a lasting alliance with a continental power bloc (Machtsystem) to save its far-flung Empire. In the inevitable struggle with Communist expansionism and racial **revolution**, Germany would be Britain's faithful ally as long as it were given a totally free hand in Poland and the East. In such an alliance between a Nazi (völkisch) Germany and a nationalistic England freed from Jewish influence, Germany would renounce the crusading Weltpolitik of

the Wilhelmine era in return for unconditional English support against France and territorial gain in the East.¹

From 1925 on Rosenberg continued to maintain the inevitability of conflict with Bolshevism. The final struggle between the Swastika and the Soviet Star would not be spared Germany. A purely military approach to the impending conflict was a fundamental mistake. Contrary to Rosenberg's previous view, Bolshevism, maintaining itself by means of the most brutal terror and dictatorship, would not collapse of its own accord but would have to be brought down from without. The first step in this direction was to fight Marxism 'on an ethnic-socialistic basis' in each European country. Only after the masses had been inoculated by the Nazi worldview against utopian Marxist propaganda, should one undertake an armed attack against the USSR. But military intervention had to be accompanied by political propaganda concerning a new Russia to be established 'on a racial-socialistic foundation'. Given the Russian psyche, the Russian Church would have to play no small role in this process of renewal. Only thus would one achieve victory over international Jewish Bolshevism on Russian soil and consequently the successful overthrow of world Jewry as well.²

After the establishment of a Nazi racial State a pragmatic alliance with the USSR might be considered, though such a possibility would be rather unrealistic since the Communists would have little interest in co-operation with a Nazi dictatorship. 'A racially-minded Germany under a single-minded leadership would have the possibility of making alliances even with the devil himself, if only temporarily; and in this case alone would it be possible to consider at least a treaty with Soviet Russia.'³

¹Zukunftsweg, 61ff, 68ff, 76-80, 83-85.

²VB, 23.8.1925 (Antibolschewistische Sondernummer). Cf. VB, 9./10.8.1925 and 9.5.1925 plus 10./11.5. and 30.5.1925; WK 2:3 (1.2.1925), 127. Though unsigned, all these VB articles are obviously by Rosenberg.

³VB, 18./19.4.1925 (B&E 3, 415, 413). Despite Stalin's conflict with Jewish Bolsheviks Trotsky and Zinoviev, Rosenberg was not willing to entertain the notion of Communist anti-Semitism. Cf. WK, 4:47 (Nov. 1927), 500f; 5:58 (Oct. 1928), 458. NSMH 1:2 (May 1930), 94.

The Bolshevik Revolution meant from 1917-1927 the extermination (Ausrottung) of the creative Russian national character (Russentum) of the Nordic type. In view of this development, a restoration of Great Russia in the old sense was no longer thinkable, at least not in the foreseeable future. Here the NSDAP's expert on Russian affairs admittedly altered the line taken during the early 1920's. Any future co-operation between a nationalistic Great Russia and a nationalistic Germany of a longstanding character was now out of the question, especially given the attitude of the Russian émigrés in Paris refusing to countenance Germany's territorial ambitions (Raumpolitik) in the East.

Any alliance with a Communist Moscow was, of course, likewise out of the question. German policy would have to support the strong separatist movements of the ethnic minorities in the Ukraine and the Caucasus against Moscow. Once it was grasped that doing away with the Polish State was Germany's first requirement, a Berlin-Kiev alliance became a racial and political necessity for any future German policy. One had to remember that even without the Ukraine and the Caucasus Russia could be a colossus and play a significant role in international affairs. The precise attitude of the Nazi Reich to Moscow, whatever its future government, would depend upon England's behavior toward Germany.¹

The primary enemy of Germany and its allies was not traditional territorial states but supranational powers forming an international political system without territory. This alleged system was the rule of Jewish high finance, Wall Street, the City, international money, financial as opposed to productive capital—as testified by no less an authority than Henry Ford! The symbol of such was the hated gold standard, which Germany should reject in favor of a national currency standard to escape the economic catastrophes

¹Zukunftsweg, 85ff, 89f, 92ff, 97.

of the stock exchange artificially conjured up from time to time. Germany had to become independent of rootless international Capitalism by means of a solid territorial economy (Raumwirtschaft). Nationalization of all credit banks and redemption from the international gold standard—this was the battlecry of a Nazi foreign policy!¹

The enemy was rootless Liberalism and Zionism bent on assembling the colonial peoples against the white race—the might of a Jewish world-state without territory (raumlose Weltstaat).

In view of this fact felt everywhere, there often rises in well-meaning circles the cry: "Aryans of all lands, unite!" This cry, as nice as it sounds, is still only a pious wish; for alongside the struggle against the international world-state without territory there is also the undeniable opposition of national territorial politics (Raumpolitik) in all the world and especially in Europe. And though of course special forces must be concerned to strengthen the anti-Semitic freedom movement as the prerequisite for every organic achievement in every country (in the sure knowledge that absolute Jewish dominion in France and Poland would have to strengthen the fighting power of these tools of finance still more, even if these states perished as lands still determined by national interests), there can be for Germany as a state only the one principle: alliance with powers whose organic territorial politics (Raumpolitik) does not conflict with Germany's, i.e., with those who have no vital interest in the rule not only of high finance but also in that of France and the whole French system.

A logical conclusion from these ideas resulted in support for an international political system based on territory (eine raumpolitische Staatssystem) consisting of nations whose power lines (Kraftlinien) stand back to back and do not come into conflict even when totally operative.... In return for having its back securely covered in the West and a free hand in the East, Germany offers England the protection of India on the Russo-Polish border..., the destruction of a liberal Pan-Europe, the retardation of the anti-colonial movement, the suppression of Bolshevism in Central Europe. Germany offers Italy, in exchange for tying up France, pressure on the South Slavs; the Ukraine, in return for economic and political support in the question of border states, industry and security (mutual of course) against the Poles....

But then this international system (Staatensystem) is also capable of overthrowing the private gold standard of the Jewish world-state.... The struggle which we have to lead is thus at once both an extremely nationalistic struggle and a world struggle of the greatest magnitude; to be more exact, a nationalistic world rebellion (nationale Welterhebung) against the deception of all nations confronted by today's international political system (internationale Weltstaatsystem).²

Rosenberg's basic ideas on a Nazi foreign policy to come, reflecting in part those of Hitler's Mein Kampf and anticipating his Zweites Buch,

¹Zukunftsweg, 99ff, 103f, 118ff, 128ff, 131.

²Zukunftsweg, 141f, 131ff.

were repeated in connection with the 1927 Nuremberg Parteitag devoted primarily to foreign policy: Lebensraum, the eternal character (Wesen) of a genuine foreign policy, sacrificial alliances but only with those who did not stand in the way of the German drive for territory (Drang nach Raum).

Here also National Socialism under Adolf Hitler's leadership has preached clearly the most important goals: isolation of France, expansion (Raum) on the Continent, particularly in the East; alliance with Italy and with that England which is beginning to see that it fought on the wrong side and that it must fight even now for its existence against Bolshevism and its comrades of all colors.¹

Rosenberg's viewpoint in Der Zukunftsweg der deutschen Aussenpolitik found expression not only at the 1927 Parteitag, in the VB and the Weltkampf, but later in the NS-Monatshefte. When in 1932 a second edition appeared in the NS-Bibliothek series, the Nazi spokesman on foreign affairs maintained that nothing was to be retracted from it.²

9 The Mythus represented Rosenberg's general views on international affairs as a direct outgrowth of his racial philosophy with particular emphasis on the Lebensraum motif. The metaphysical struggle, ultimately a matter of irrepressible spiritual and ethical values, meant a struggle for Lebensraum. This was the specifically nationalistic battlecry of a new generation desiring to establish a new empire based on principles which could be used to justify its aims and actions on the pragmatic ground of their being fruitful for Germany. Politics ultimately led one back to metaphysics in that there was an organic tie between a Volk's spiritual creativity within and its political independence without. Thus the cry for space (Raum) was the prerequisite for realizing spiritual values and for forming a German character. Allegedly the ultimate goal was not simply providing Germany with breathing space but founding 'a new era of culture for the white race'.³

¹Rosenberg, Führer zum Reichsparteitag der NSDAP 1927 (Munich, 1927), 18-21. Here there is doubtless a play on the word 'colors' (Farben).

²NSMH 3:26 (May 1932), 193ff. Rosenberg took a similar position as late as 1944 (BA: NS 8/68, 79-83).

³Mythus, 533f, 637ff, 676f.

According to the Mythus, great racial awakenings were taking place the world over. In the Far East, for example, China was fighting for its myth, its race, its ideals just as the Nazis in Germany. A similar movement was taking place in India under Gandhi. Rosenberg was strangely sympathetic to both but maintained that India had lost her racial resources to the point where colonial rule was unquestionably a necessity, whereas the Far East should belong to the East Asians. Japan and China were a case different from that of India and Africa. Nationalistic and pan-Islamic stirrings in the reawakened, racially degenerate Islamic world were a threat to be kept in check, especially its fanatical Semitic influence upon Black Africa directed against the colonial powers of Christian Europe.

Of particular danger to the white races was the black awakening: 'The myth of the blood has come to life in another form under black skin'. Those who refused to take this phenomenon seriously were very short-sighted. This was an intellectual as well as a racial awakening, which in 50 years would constitute an awesome force and problem in America. 'The nigger problem stands at the forefront of all the vital issues facing the USA'. Given the black and yellow peril which Communism would certainly exploit, the USA would have to substitute a racial policy for its traditional egalitarian ideology both at home and abroad, or go under as a white country. As Rosenberg put it elsewhere, all attempts to do away with racial differences meant the 'self-castration' (Selbstentmannung) of the white race to the advantage of the Asiatics and Africans.¹

The Mythus proclaimed the necessity of a new international political system on a racial basis. Its goal was an organic redistribution of the earth's peoples according to race. Unless new states were formed on the basis of the racial myth or religion of the blood, world war and the decline of all national states was inevitable. The implementation of the

¹Freimaurerische Weltpolitik, 67. Mythus, 637ff, 653, 659ff, 666ff, 669.

new conception of racial states, as anticipated by Grant and Stoddard, was the way of the future. This meant: the emigration and resettlement of blacks and orientals, a free hand for Japan in the Far East, an all-black Central Africa, the emigration of the Jews to a region where they could not interfere with the future foreign policy of Europe. The vision of the future was not a League of Nations without regard for race but;

racially-determined systems of states living in symbiotic relationship to each other, not degenerating through endless mingling of forms into formless chaos, the necessary result of the Democratic and Marxist approach to world politics followed hitherto—state systems, however, which also secure, on the basis of this organic structure, the white race's political hegemony over the globe.¹

Throughout the 1920's Nazi ideologist Rosenberg had carried on a running polemic against the foreign policy of the Weimar Republic. After Nazi electoral gains in September 1930 he carried this polemic into the Reichstag itself as NSDAP parliamentary spokesman on foreign affairs. The burden of his Reichstag speeches was that as foreign policy was basically a matter of national character, only the Nazis could conduct a truly German foreign policy.²

In 1930 Rosenberg posed the question: Would Russia concede the German people its rights to land in Czechoslovakia and Poland? This was the practical political question on which German foreign policy depended. All else was literary trivia (Literatentum). In 1931 he envisaged the future as an era of great racial war, but Germany should beware of the madness of taking on the whole world. In 1932 he depicted the impending struggle between Bolshevism and Nazism in quasi-religious terms:

Bolshevism is the anti-church (Gegenkirche) of the Untermensch, the hatred of the chaotic unsubstantial against the cultural forms of the Nordic race; it means the slavish spirit of Asia and Africa, the unleashing of all the mongrels, bastards, and negroes of the world against the white race.... Bolshevism can only be overthrown by an equally elemental, equally exclusive,

¹Mythus, 675, 637ff, 653, 659ff, 666ff, 670-673.

²Cf. Berlin, 5.12.1930 (B&E 1, 274ff, 281ff).

absolutely antithetical movement; by a movement which convinces the workers inwardly of the madness of the subhuman "religious community" that is Bolshevism, which likewise comprehends all areas of life, which has thrown the liberalistic lumber overboard, which is permeated by the consciousness of power and the certainty of defending the highest values, and which must for this very reason put the half-breeds and blacks back in their place in order to prevent a catastrophe all over the globe.¹

Nazi foreign policy played a role in Das Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus (1932). Here Rosenberg maintained that the Nazi position on foreign affairs—of which the final struggle with Marxism was an essential part—had been consistent from the beginning. He rejected the notion that Germany should make common cause with all oppressed peoples as an extremely dangerous idea, and stressed the necessity of isolating France to enable Germany to expand eastward. The necessary means to this end were a matter for future consideration, and the foreign policy of the coming Nazi State would depend on future situations and possibilities. Foreign and domestic policy formed an organic whole. Without rebirth of character and purification of the inner life, a unified and vigorous foreign policy was impossible; without a clever foreign policy concentrating on essentials, it would be very hard to realize the total rehabilitation (Gesamtgesundung) of the nation.²

In November 1932 the Nazi spokesman on foreign affairs delivered, before academics and politicians at an international congress in Rome, a programmatic speech on the crisis and rebirth of Europe. Rebirth was not possible on the basis of any universalistic philosophy or politics as exemplified by the Christian Middle Ages or the Age of Liberalism. The Europe to come would have to present an organic unity presupposing diversity. The nation as the diversified product of race, geography, and history would have to be the absolute, irrevocable starting-point of all future endeavors toward European rebirth. Italy, France, England, and Germany represented the four great cultural and political nationalisms of Europe. Russia under the

¹NSMH 3:23 (Feb. 1932), 88; cf. 2:16 (July 1931), 307; 2:13 (Apr. 1931), 190; 1:2 (May 1930), 50ff, 55f.

²Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus, 7, 19ff, 27ff, 31f, 35.

Communists had returned to Central Asia and was no longer really a part of Europe. The smaller nations of Europe, for all their cultural achievements, could not be put on a par with its great nations from a political point of view.

Consequently he who would strive seriously for organic European unity in diversity had to start with these four great nationalisms as given historical realities possessing the right of organic fulfilment. Destroying any of these cultural and political centers by any one power would lead to a chaos in which all the others would go under. Europe had to face on all sides the nationalistic revolutions of the 20th century understood in racial terms. Racial revolution was the order of the day not only in Asia and Africa but also in Russia and America. Caught between the Capitalistic menace to the West and the Communist threat to the East, not to mention colonial unrest in Asia and Africa, Europe had to stand as a mighty political unity in the face of them all. Europe should recognize the vital interests of the two great nation-states of the yellow race, but would have to act in concert to safeguard its hegemony over those areas of Asia and Africa necessary to its vital interests.

Finally Europe could only act in concert and preserve itself as it appreciated its fourfold cultural soul and the right of each of the four nations to grow and blossom as political organisms standing back to back instead of facing each other: Germany toward the East and Northeast, France toward the South, Italy toward the Southeast and East, Great Britain toward the Seas. Violation of the vital interests of any one of the four great powers, would have to be viewed as endangering one's own vital interests and answered accordingly. Only on this basis could there be European unity opposite other continents and races and fulfilment for Europe's smaller nations on their own soil.¹

¹Rome, Nov. 1932 (B&E 1, 296ff,301ff,310f). Cf. NSM 3:33 (Dec. 1932), 529ff.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS 1933-1939

With the Nazi accession to power Rosenberg as Party spokesman on foreign affairs hoped to become Hitler's Foreign Minister. But being Party ideologist as well put him at a distinct disadvantage, and he had to be content with directing the Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP as of April 1933. Founded as a Nazi counterpart to the Foreign Office, the APA was supposed to demonstrate that foreign policy was no longer the affair of a small caste but of the whole nation. It was to be immediately subordinate to the Fuehrer and support him in his necessary decisions. Given the 'structure' of the Nazi Movement, the hope was to gain Hitler's ear in that the method of Nazi foreign policy, quite clear to Rosenberg but misunderstood by others, was that the Fuehrer would listen to this or that person or Party office but always be free in all his decisions.¹

It is quite clear, however, from Rosenberg's diary and memoirs as well as Goering's testimony at Nuremberg, that the APA and its director were not consulted by Hitler and, with the exception of the Norwegian venture, exercised no direct influence on his foreign policy.² Nevertheless Rosenberg enjoyed throughout the Third Reich the reputation of a Nazi spokesman on foreign affairs and constantly expressed himself on the subject. It must be remembered in this connection that he was often in the difficult position of being forced to react to developments and to adapt his viewpoint to policies and events over which he had no control.

At the outset of the Nazi regime Rosenberg characteristically declared that the Nazi Revolution presented no threat to the vital and necessary interests of other nations, but that some day it would have to be recognized

¹Memorandum to Hitler, 18.12.1933 (PT, 156; PS-048). Cf. VB, 5.4.1933 (B&E 1, 312-313).

²Cf. PHKV (16.3.1946) 9, 422; 25, 26-34 (PS-004). Diary, 22./25.8.1939; 24.9.1939; 11.4.1940 (PT, 89-94, 128); LA, 314. For an account of pre-war Nazi foreign policy and the APA, see H.-A. Jacobsen, Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik 1933-1938 (Berlin, 1968), 45ff, 449ff, 477ff, 765ff.

as the 'salvation of all Europe'.¹ Even in his peace propaganda the ideological element was unmistakable.

The ideological factor was emphasized at the 1933 Nuremberg Parteitag in Rosenberg's speech on the racial presuppositions (Bedingtheit) of Nazi foreign policy. The Nazis allegedly integrated all their politics—domestic, cultural and foreign—into their 'philosophical and historical outlook' (philosophisch-geschichtliches Bild). Racial character (Volkstum) was an autonomous value to which all political considerations were to be unconditionally (unbedingt) subjected. Foreign affairs had to be conducted organically relative to the racial limitations (Bedingtheiten) of all the various human organisms, cultures, and countries. This racial point of view did not mean preaching racial hatred (Rassenhass) but was supposedly the presupposition of a genuine respect for other races (Rassenachtung) and a recognition of the values and cultural achievements of other nations. It meant strengthening all races against racial chaos and urban trash. In the perspective of world history the white race had to congeal into a community of destiny in order to withstand the coming racial revolt against Europe similar to that of Asiatic slaves against ancient Rome. The task of foreign policy was thus 'the dividing of cultural souls (Kulturseelen—obviously based on the Rassenseele) and the political entities (Staaten) developing from them according to the limitations afforded by nature'.²

These ideas were often repeated from 1933-1939, especially at official APA receptions for Party leaders, foreign diplomats, and the foreign press.³ In 1934 Rosenberg continued to repeat Hitler's peace propaganda, but in his

¹VB, 21.3.1933 (B&E 1, 172). Cf. Rosenberg's Reichstag speech on the new Germany, and the Versailles Treaty—Berlin, 28.6.1933 (B&E 1, 344ff); also his election speech on the occasion of Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations—Berlin, 30.10.1933 (B&E 1, 355ff).

²Nuremberg, Sept. 1933 (B&E 1, 347, 333ff, 337, 339, 346f).

³Cf. Berlin, 17.1.1935; 14.11.1935 (B&E 2, 246ff, 379ff).

own way, suggesting a sort of rejuvenated Locarno pact on the basis of his 1932 speech in Rome. Germany's cultural and economic dynamic would extend organically to the Baltic area and the Danube valley, that of France and Italy in other directions, while Britain protected the white race throughout the world. The nations of Europe would either stand thus back to back or go the way of Athens, Sparta, and Rome.¹ As Rosenberg wrote to William Randolph Hearst, Germany wanted to avoid anything which might engender bitterness, alienation, and hatred among the nations.²

At the same time the Nazi ideologist could address the nation's military leaders at the War Ministry in 1935 to the effect that a living nation always finds itself in battle as long as it lives. The distinction between soldier and civilian was being erased in Nazi Germany. The individual felt himself part of a uniformed community. The German nation was in the process of finding its own peculiar life-style. It was: 'the style of a marching column irrespective of where and to what purpose this marching column may be deployed'.³

Throughout the Third Reich the Nazi publicist constantly commented on developments in international affairs in articles and speeches reported in the Nazi press. For example, he maintained that the real issue of the Ethiopian war of 1935 was Europe versus Africa, pointing out the inconsistency of some liberal pacifists willing to fight Mussolini but not Bolshevism. Given conditions in Africa and Asia, Europe could not afford internal conflict.⁴

¹Krisis und Neubau Europas, 12ff, 17, 21f.

²Rosenberg to Hearst, 14.9.1934 (BA: NS 8/39, 109ff). Cf. speeches in BA: NS 8/39, 14, 58ff; B&E 2, 165-167, 179.

³Berlin, 7.3.1935 (B&E 2, 320f). To the general public Rosenberg declared that this life-style had nothing to do with militarism but was merely the expression of an heroic conception of daily life (Lübeck, 26.6.1935-B&E 2, 344).

⁴Cf. manuscripts in BA: NS 8/40, 216ff; 8/42, 30ff.

By 1936, however, Rosenberg began to take a more belligerent line in defense of Hitler's foreign policy, which he always (except for his silence after the 1939 Nazi-Soviet pact) vigorously defended. The Fuehrer was the master political tactician, and his moves in foreign policy were not to be challenged. Germany had done everything in its power to give Europe an era of peace and social progress. But the nations of Europe under Jewish influence had convinced themselves of the 'German threat' and would not leave Germany in peace—as indicated by the Franco-Soviet pact.¹ The Spanish Civil War supposedly proved Rosenberg right on Bolshevism as necessitating a decisive struggle, not simply between so-called Fascism and Communism but between Europe and chaos. Liberal Democracy was no longer able to resist the inevitable development from Liberalism to Anarchism to Bolshevism.²

The rapidity of events in 1937 forced Rosenberg to stress the practical primacy of foreign policy. The first stage of the Nazi Revolution was the national phase (staatspolitische Etappe). Everything which happened in Germany from 1933-1937, all the Fuehrer's measures and initiatives, was subordinate to the one idea of national and military freedom (Wehrfreiheit/Rüstungsfreiheit). But the second stage, namely the realization of genuine social justice, was already in preparation. This was, however, difficult to implement in a world of hostile nations, but the removal of unemployment was an indication of what could be achieved. After the realization of a new political and social order would come the third stage, namely the education of Germany in the Nazi Weltanschauung. 'If we do not fight for national freedom, all talk of culture, social justice, and the Nazi world-

¹VB, 27.2./1.1.1936 (BA: NS 8/26, 28; 8/43, 1,7).

²Interview, Nov. 1936 (BA: NS 8/44, 219); VB, 25.10.1936 (BA: NS 8/77, 137). As would be expected, Rosenberg followed the 'Spanish tragedy' with 'mixed emotions' (Diary, 29.6.1936—Monat, 30).

view is in vain'.¹

At the beginning of 1938 the Nazi ideologist declared that the struggle for national freedom was essentially over. But with the annexation of Austria in March, he openly appealed to Germany's destiny.² There was throughout 1938 renewed emphasis on the ideological world struggle and the common destiny of Europe. The existence of the white man was ultimately dependent on European unity. It was necessary to look destiny in the face and not be deceived by the sentimental ideologies of the past.³ Although Medieval, Liberal, and Marxist universalism was rejected, the countries of Europe, by virtue of geography and history, faced afresh one common destiny. It was necessary to subordinate all differences to the call of this great destiny.⁴ The Munich pact was seen as the capitulation and collapse of the Age of Democracy.⁵

¹Berlin (Königgratz), 12.12.1937 (BA: NS 8/80, 162ff, 148ff). In this secret speech to SA, SS, and PO leaders Rosenberg justified Hitler's foreign policy by quoting Mein Kampf: "'For national freedom no social sacrifice is too great.'" This is a motto which now must be called to mind daily' (162).

²Dortmund, 28.3.1938 (BA: NS 8/81, 17); Berlin, 27.1.1938 (BA: NS 8/81, 66).

³Cf. Lübeck, 22.6.1938 (B&E 4, 136f, 129ff).

⁴Nationalblatt (Coblenz), 20.12.1938. This article summarizes a line taken in several Rosenberg speeches during 1938 (cf. BA: NS 8/82, 13ff).

⁵Sammelheft ausgewählter Vorträge und Reden, 174 (Speech to Generals, Jan. 1939). Rosenberg later claimed that he saw the Munich pact as a practical step toward fulfilment of his suggestion (1932/1934) of peaceful co-operation between Europe's four great powers, but I have found no contemporary evidence for such and this January 1939 statement seems to belie it. See LA, 312; BA: NS 8/87, 223f (Düsseldorf, 16.4.1940); 8/68, 18 (Bad Schachen, 13.10.1943); 8/70, 41 (Krakau, 7.12.1944). Here Rosenberg maintained that Mussolini's initiative in suggesting a four-power pact at Munich resulted from his own 1932 speech in Rome, citing the testimony of British diplomat Reynold (later Lord) Rott to the effect that the Duce was profoundly impressed by the speech (NS 8/70, 41). All these comments are in the context of justifying Hitler's war on the ground that Britain and France did not interpret Munich in terms of his Rome speech. Certainly Hitler did not, and it is doubtful whether Rosenberg did at that late date—though he could speak of the end to the seeming eternal struggle between the Teutons and Latins in the spring of 1939 (Neugeburt Europas als werdende Geschichte, 16).

After the annexation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Rosenberg declared in a secret speech to Party leaders that the events of the preceding year meant a partial completion of the Nazi Revolution. The first phase of the struggle for German equality was history. The second phase, securing Lebensraum in the East, was about to begin. Thereafter would come the last battle, namely implementing the Nazi Weltanschauung.¹ Ideology and social justice, according to Rosenberg's 1939 article for the Fuehrer's birthday, should not be forgotten however much national freedom and security stood in the forefront of the Movement at present.²

From 1934 to 1939 the Nazi ideologist used the annual conference of the Nordische Gesellschaft in Lübeck to propagate his vision of Nordic rebirth and a Nordic community of nations under German leadership. European unity was essential in the face of Bolshevism and the worldwide racial threat. The Scandinavian and Baltic nations formed along with Germany and Britain a biological and cultural unity which had a common destiny. The fate of Germany as the greatest state in Central Europe was the destiny of Europe as a whole. Europe's greatest danger was Communism, and the best defense against it was a strong Nazi Germany followed by other Nordic states. The obvious aim of these speeches, delivered before representatives of the Scandinavian and Baltic states, was to create sympathy for Germany and to establish ties with influential people in these countries.³

As early as 1933 Rosenberg publicly defended the treatment of Jews in the Third Reich as an historical, indeed fateful, necessity. What was taking place in Germany was not discrimination against a whole people or persecution of the Jews, but rather the restoration of justice and parity

¹Sonthofen, 26.3.1939 (BA: NS 8/55, 63f, 72ff, 101, 141).

²VB, 20.4.1939 (BA: NS 8/85, 3).

³Cf. B&E 2, 95-97; 344-347; 4, 136f, 337-339. W. Zimmermann (ed.), Nordische Verpflichtung (Lübeck, 1936), 18-20; Wege zum Norden (Lübeck, 1937), 19-21. PT, 114, Jacobsen, Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik 1933-1938, 483ff.

in comparison to inordinate Jewish influence in the Weimar Republic. The Jews still had more than their fair share of doctors and lawyers. As long as the Versailles Treaty discriminated against Germany, no foreign nation had the right to accuse the Nazis of discrimination against the Jews. Nazi anti-Semitism was linked to the Communist threat.¹

Although the Nazi ideologist defended the Nuremberg Laws, commented on the Berne Trial and the troubles in Palestine, and warned against the Jewish conspiracy of world revolution—he said very little about an ultimate solution to the Jewish problem from 1934 to 1937. But with the Evian Conference in the summer of 1938 he went on record as favoring the suggestion of resettling some six million Jews in Africa, for example Madagascar. The Jews were trying to forge an anti-Hitler coalition of France, the USSR, and Great Britain under the inspiration of non-Aryans Blum, Litvinov, and Hore-Belisha.²

Nevertheless Rosenberg was disturbed by Goebbels' week of broken glass in November 1938. Such pogroms were no real solution, only aggravated the problem, alienated Britain and other nations, and thus damaged Germany politically and economically.³ In early 1939 he reflected anew on the problem of resettling the Jews, suggesting openly that the Western Democracies with all their overseas possessions provide a homeland for the Jews in the form of a reservation. The criticism of the Churches notwithstanding, the Jewish problem would only be solved when the last Jew had left Europe and Germany. The Age of Race was replacing the Age of Confessions by virtue of the Nazi Revolution.⁴

¹ Berlin, 28.6.1933; Nuremberg, Sept. 1933 (B&E 1, 321f, 341-345). Cf. Die Entwicklung der deutschen Freiheitsbewegung (1933), 18ff, 25ff.

² VB, 17.7.1938 (B&E 4, 138-145). Rosenberg was referring to an article in The American Hebrew, 3.6.1938. Cf. G. Leibbrandt (ed.), Jüdische Welt-politik in Selbstzeugnissen (Munich, 1938), 62-68. See BA: NS 8/27, 21 for the Madagascar suggestion (Germania, 9.7.1938).

³ Diary, 6.2.1939; 22.5.1934 (PT, 81, 34f).

⁴ Detmold, 15.1.1939 (BA: NS 8/84, 209). Cf. BA: NS 8/54, 1ff, 12f; B&E 4, 200ff, 209.

In February 1939 the Nazi ideologist discussed the Jewish Question at length before foreign diplomats and correspondents. Resettlement in Palestine was out of the question as a far-sighted policy due to the opposition of the Arabs and the danger of militant Zionism. The goal of the so-called Zionist State would not be a homeland for all Jews in Palestine but a pan-Jewish power center in the Middle East. Therefore the Democracies would have to provide a large self-contained territory capable of supporting some 15 million Jews somewhere in the world. North America or Australia would present a racial danger to the white man just as Palestine. This left South America or Africa, for example Guiana or Madagascar. Here there would have to be a Jewish reservation policed by authorities responsible to the Democracies since an independent Jewish State would soon lead to the Jews mutually plundering and massacring each other. Solving the Jewish problem was not simply a necessity for Germany but for all peoples.¹

From 1933 to 1938 Rosenberg was the symbol of anti-Communism in the NSDAP. For instance, at the 1935 Nuremberg Parteitag he proclaimed his long-standing interpretation of Bolshevism as the scheme of an alien race. Ninety percent of the Bolshevik leaders were Jews, and the rest Asiatics² like Lenin. Moreover, even though Bolshevism was opposed theoretically to Jewish racist (jüdisch-völkisch) Zionism, world Jewry was conscious that the Jewish dictatorship in Russia was a means of strengthening Jewish influence in every other country. Despite changes in the Soviet leadership Jewry still ruled in Moscow by means of the ideology of the political underworld and the fanatical Red Army organized to protect it. World Communism could not be suppressed by police power alone or successfully opposed without taking the Jewish Question into account. Communism could only be overcome through a new ideology together with the relentless will to see it realized.

¹Berlin, 7.2.1939 (B&E 4, 217-224). Cf. Sammelheft, 180-181 (Jan. 1939); BA: NS 8/55, 87 (25.3.1939); 8/58, 35f (7.8.1939).

'He who believes himself able to master the Bolshevist danger by means of theoretical observations and political force alone, will certainly find it his undoing'.¹

The 1936 Parteitag witnessed another violently anti-Communist speech on the world struggle between Marxism and nationality (Volkstum). Communism was filled with hypocrisies. Claiming to know no racial issues or racial differences, it nevertheless armed the negroes for racial revolt against the white man. In principle Communism denied nationality as a basis for man's cultural and political life, but still assumed and appealed to ethnic (völkisch) instincts as a given psychological fact of life and history, yet treated ethnic minorities in the most brutal way possible. Communism claimed to be the mortal enemy of Capitalism but under Jewish leadership practiced the most brutal state Capitalism (Staatskapitalismus) in Russia. Communism aimed at the dictatorship of the proletariat but masqueraded as Democracy in Western Europe. Communism preached world peace but built up the greatest army in the world. Finally, Communism claimed to lead the class struggle in order to present the world with a classless society characterized by social welfare but produced only the hegemony of the Jewish bourgeoisie. The Nazi Revolution was the eternal enemy of Bolshevism and Jewry.²

The year 1937 was to witness a stepped-up propaganda campaign against Bolshevism. At the 1937 Party Congress Rosenberg declared that, since the Bolsheviks simply drew logical conclusions from Liberal ideology, Democracy was as helpless against Communism as the Holy Alliance facing the Democratic Revolution. Human extermination (Menschenausrottung) in the name of Socialism was the trademark of Bolshevism as demonstrated by forced labor and concentration camps presenting a sadistic cruelty unparalleled in world history. Yet representatives of the Churches could have more sympathy with the

¹Nuremberg, Sept. 1935 (B&E 2, 375, 364ff, 368, 370f, 373, 377).

²Rosenberg, Europa und sein Todfeind (Munich, 1938), 19ff, 30-34.

Communist than with the Nazi Antichrist, and even see in Bolshevism secularized Christian ideas!¹

In mid 1938 Rosenberg prepared a memorandum for Hitler on the Nazi attitude to Bolshevism. The original position of the NSDAP from 1919 on was clear: the anti-Semitic struggle was of necessity a struggle against Bolshevism. Then in 1925 there arose within the Party the pro-Russian position of Graf Reventlow, the Strassers, and Goebbels with their distinction between Jewish Marxism and Russian National Bolshevism or Leninism. But the Fuehrer had put an end to such at Bamberg in 1927. After Nazism was firmly established in Germany, the Party could then take up the open campaign against Russian Bolshevism in 1935 and 1936. Yet there were still those in the NSDAP who, though anti-Communist, were in favor of restoring the pre-revolutionary Russia of the Czars. They wanted a unified nationalistic Great Russia, either monarchical or dictatorial, to result from the anti-Communist struggle-- as opposed to Rosenberg's supposedly outmoded views. But Nazi Germany could not tolerate such and ought to support the anti-Muscovite nationalities in the USSR, which were becoming ever more anti-Soviet given the treatment of their leaders in the Moscow Trials.²

By 1939 Hitler was considering a temporary alliance with Stalin, and Rosenberg was getting uneasy about Ribbentrop's foreign policy. In May he shared with Goering his views on the importance of taking into account national psychology in foreign policy (völkerpsychologische Aussenpolitik). He admitted to Goering that his viewpoint on Russia did not preclude the possibility of transitional developments as means to the end. Nevertheless in August he resented Ribbentrop's trip to Moscow as a moral loss of face

¹Europa und sein Todfeind, 35ff, 39f, 43-49; cf. NSMH 8:84 (Mar. 1937), 242. The reference to church representatives were to statements of the Red Dean of Canterbury (Church of England), J. Bernhardt's Der Vatikan als Thron der Welt (Roman Catholic), and Das evangelische Deutschland, 11.8.1935 (Protestant).

²Memorandum to Hitler, 7.6.1938 (BA: NS 8/50, 176-187).

in view of Nazism's 20-year struggle against Communism. But given London's attempt to come to terms with Moscow, what could the Fuehrer do? Nevertheless, there were grave inner doubts. 'I have the feeling as if someday this Moscow pact will avenge itself on National Socialism'.¹

The cherished struggle for England had been lost. All attempts toward effecting an Anglo-German understanding—upon which the security of Europe and the white race depended—had come to nought. No partner could be found in London, only a Hebrew Minister of War (Hore-Belisha).²

Someday history perhaps will clear up the question, whether the situation which arose had to arise, i.e., whether there were no influential forces in England to be mobilized for co-operation with us....But if the view is correct that England wanted under no conditions whatever Germany's renewed rise to power, not even in the East, then today's consequences are certainly correct and must be followed without sentimentality....And again the question arises: did this situation have to come? Did the Polish question have to be solved now and in this manner? No one can give an answer today....

Thus I have been a spectator to immediate events and would not normally have been drawn into them since today other men make up the Fuehrer's entourage than during the Kampfzeit....So let me jot down something here in order that I can read it in the light of later times with agreement or amazement as my testimony in critical days of German history. A balanced, objectively-based judgment I am in no position to give....For the evaluation of this data the Fuehrer, next to him Goering, and—a joke of world history—a man of Ribbentrop's stature bear the responsibility with all the consequences resulting from the concept of a Fuehrerstaat....I am in no position to give a well-founded judgment on the present decision. I only have the feeling that England has been deliberately underestimated; in recent years one has not spoken to her as one addresses a world power.³

¹Diary, 25.8./22.8/21.5.1939 (PT, 92, 89f, 85-89).

²Diary, 19.7.1939 (PT, 88). Cf. PT, 27, 49, 164ff (PS-049).

³Diary 22.8/25.8/24.9.1939 (PT, 90f, 93f). The italics are in PT. According to Rosenberg, the last comment on England was spoken to Goering on 1.9.1939. By early October Rosenberg was convinced that England was out to destroy Hitlerism and that the current situation necessitated the defeat of Britain in order to free Europe once and for all from the dictatorship of this island people. On 1 November Hitler reassured him that everything had been done to win over an England dominated by a Jewish-led minority. As Rosenberg put it in the spring of 1940, England wanted to dominate not only the world but all of Europe as well (Diary, 5.10./1.11.1939; 30.4.1940—PT, 102f, 133).

Was Rosenberg really sincere in his expressed desire for a golden age of European peace and culture on the basis of a four-power pact or a three-power alliance excluding France? On the one hand, he does seem to have cherished, quite apart from the propaganda motive, the genuine, albeit naive hope that such could work out. On the other, he was realistic enough to realize that it might not and ready to go to war if it did not. Just how much could be achieved without armed conflict was unclear, and he was wary of a war disadvantageous to Germany and risking the overthrow of the Nazi Revolution. Like Hitler, he oscillated between the methods of war and peace, but unlike Hitler he was more patient and preferred the way of peace.

Yet Rosenberg had no scruples whatever about German aggression in Europe; the reservations about war in 1939 were not moral but tactical. Whatever the means, the goal was clear: European hegemony over the world and German hegemony—in fact if not in name—over Continental and especially Eastern Europe. Peace was preferable to war; but, in the light of racial ideology, war would doubtless be necessary to establish and maintain the Pax Germanica. On the one hand, the racial ideology could be twisted to assure other nations that Nazism could not be exported; on the other, to justify the necessity of racial conflict in establishing German supremacy. Thus Rosenberg could and did use it to propagandize for peace, but European and world peace to him was always conceived in terms of Nordic political supremacy over nations permitted a certain cultural autonomy. That his ideology was more suitable to war than to peace propaganda, is clear from its content, his application of it to foreign affairs, and his later justification of Hitler's war as a logical consequence of Nazi ideology.

THE IDEOLOGICAL WORLD WAR

Nazi ideologist Rosenberg had little to say in public from August 1939 until February 1940; owing partially to illness, but primarily to embarrass-

ment over the Nazi-Soviet pact. His chief concern during this period was trying to get Hitler to make him solely responsible for conducting the necessary psychological war (Seelenkrieg) or spiritual struggle (Seelenkampf). It was necessary to commission someone to explain the War as an historical necessity and to take over the spiritual guidance (Seelenführung) of the German people facing the problems of war and the propaganda of the Churches. In March Hitler eventually refused allegedly for tactical reasons. Still Rosenberg was free to speak in justification of the War and began to do so in speeches to the general public, the Hitler Youth, and officers on the Western Front. But despite this role and his contribution to the Norwegian venture, he regretted that he had no real say in Germany's foreign policy. 'But since Weltanschauung represents my lifework, foreign policy has to remain in other hands'.¹

The burden of Rosenberg's speeches was the historical necessity and significance of the War. In a radio speech to Germany's youth--whose spiritual welfare, according to the VB, was now Rosenberg's province--on their war-time duty, the Nazi ideologist stressed the idealistic character of the War in opposition to bourgeois materialism and complacency.² In Vienna he declared that those who desired a Greater Germany had to approve the War; it was simply the fulfilment of German history. Its aim was not to germanize the Poles but Polish territory. No one could choose the character of the age into which he was born, and the present time was not an era of a smug, bourgeois, materialistic peace. The current war was not like some, bloodthirsty and senseless, but idealistic, conducted for the sake of the meaning of life in general.³ At Danzig Rosenberg emphasized

¹PT, 128,93,105ff,121-131. Cf. BA: NS 8/58, 278f; 8/59, 1ff,30ff,38.

²VB, 12.3.1940 (BA: NS 8/87, 92). Cf. B&E 4, 350ff.

³Vienna, 13.3.1940 (B&E 4, 359ff,369ff).

that the War was not only a military but a spiritual struggle. Every great revolution of world history had to be put to the test in foreign policy. Therefore the War was not a matter of chance or the result of human weaknesses in Germany, but arose from the will to resist the last attempt at self-preservation on the part of a world in ideological ruin. The War was a matter of defending the Nazi Revolution, the age-old ideal of the Reich, the substance of Germany pure and simple.¹

In explaining the sense and goal of the War to German officers, the Nazi ideologist maintained that the spiritual, intellectual, and political atomization of Europe, beginning with the break-up of the Christian West, had ended with the Liberal debacle at Versailles. The War was simply the continuation of the Nazi fight against Versailles, of a rising 'authoritarian Nationalism' exemplified by Fascist Italy, Falangist Spain, and Nazi Germany against a Liberal Europe. The goal was a new political order for Europe, a new consolidation to overcome the old atomization, a sort of 'political symbiosis'. Small states would live peacefully alongside Greater Germany in a comradely, symbiotic relationship according to the biological model. After all, life's struggle was a matter of symbiosis among animal organisms as well as struggle for existence.²

The War, as Rosenberg declared with the German attack in the West, was basically an ideological struggle (Weltanschauungskampf). It was also simply a continuation of the political struggle. Preparation to throw off the Versailles yoke actually began the day Hitler seized power.³ The appeal was to Germany's great destiny with emphasis upon the War as the necessary sequel of the idealistic struggle beginning in 1914 and continued by the Nazis against Versailles. 'If we wanted to deny the necessity of the present

¹Danzig, 15.4.1940 (B&E 4, 379ff, 387f, 395ff).

²Düsseldorf, 16.4.1940 (BA: NS 8/87, 192ff, 197ff, 215, 224f, 229f). This speech to officers was repeated at Coblenz (17.4.1940) and Bad Kreuznach (18.4.1940)—PT, 129.

³VB, 19.10.1940 (BA: NS 8/27, 138); Diary, 10.5.1940 (PT, 139).

struggle, then we would have to deny the rise of the Nazi Movement pure and simple'.¹

The war against racially liberal France was for the substance of the white man's culture. June's stunning victory was celebrated—on 14 July 1940—as the end of the French Revolution. The fall of France meant the collapse of the French and Jewish ideology of the 18th and 19th centuries. Yet the Nazi Revolution was not anxious to give France a new Nazi, or any other authoritarian ideology. French internal affairs interested the Nazis only insofar as they affected German foreign policy.² Toward the end of 1940 the Nazi ideologist proclaimed, in the French Chamber of Deputies, the victory of blood over gold in the great world struggle. The German Revolution had superseded the French and liberated France from the Masonic-Jewish conspiracy. The world revolution of the 20th century had replaced that of the Age of Reason.³

Victory in France signified the end of the British gentleman and the British Empire. Churchill's dependence on the USA meant the eclipse of Britain as a world power. For her the War was already decided in principle. Even if Germany were defeated, England would not emerge victorious. Britain was not only militarily isolated but politically and spiritually broken.⁴ Evidence for this was Attlee's Oxford speech to the effect that the pre-war world had disappeared, that the War meant the building of a more just social order in Britain without unemployment and an idle aristocracy. England had begun the War in the name of Liberalism but was now promising Socialism

¹Draft of Brochure, 15.2.1940 (BA: NS 8/60, 99f).

²VB, 14.7./2.6.1940 (BA: NS 8/27, 170; B&E 4, 464ff, 469f). Cf. Breslau, 15.2.1941 (BA: NS 8/90, 29).

³Paris, 28.11.1940 (NSMH 12:130, Jan. 1941, 3ff, 12, 15).

⁴VB, 6.10./30.6.1940 (B&E 4, 500, 496ff, 484ff). Cf. BA: NS 8/62, 158.

in order to obtain the support of the dissatisfied and faithless masses. It was interesting that these new social revolutionaries had to make use of slogans long since the property of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany! Forced to borrow from Nazi ideology by the War, the once self-assured English had lost the War ideologically.¹

Rosenberg's courtship of the Scandinavian countries admittedly had failed. Thus the threat of Russian or German intervention was good for their 'petty bourgeois self-satisfaction'. The activity of the Nordische Gesellschaft was supposedly a kind of 'psychological preparation' for the Quisling conspiracy. Rosenberg's hope—as remarked to Hitler—was that the veneer of Democracy would soon be washed away and that the old Germanic character would appear once again.² Scandinavia and Germany formed a Nordic community of destiny. It was unrealistic for the small nations of Europe to claim equality with the great. Destiny had decreed that Nordic Europe was to be under the protection of the German Reich. It was necessary for all Germanic peoples to overcome a provincial outlook, to recognize the historic hour and together with Germany build the new Europe of the future.³

By early 1941 Rosenberg was speaking in terms of German hegemony over all of Europe, both political and ideological. Soon German would be the language of European diplomacy. Europe had now become the German Reich!⁴

Rosenberg's initial skepticism regarding the Nazi-Soviet pact was overcome by its success and considerations of Staatsraison. But political expediency was to play no role whatever in Nazi ideology and indoctrination. Nazism

¹VB, 30.1.1941 (BA: NS 8/28, 12). Cf. Berlin, 2.3.1941 (BA: NS 8/63, 136).

²Diary, 30.4.1940; 20.12./11.12.1939 (PT, 133f, 114, 112; cf. 125, 131f, 137).

³Berlin, 9.7.1940 (B&E 4, 423f, 428ff).

⁴Breslau, 15.2.1941 (BA: NS 8/90, 40-42).

remained the sworn enemy of Marxism and Bolshevism. Whether the content of the Communist Movement, in view of its lack of ideological success internationally, changed or not, would be subject to critical review on the basis of experience, but was not a matter for ideological indoctrination. Rosenberg was skeptical of such a change but seems to have been willing to consider the possibility in the light of the Nazi-Soviet pact.¹ This, however, was an exceptional case which in no way changed Nazi ideology in principle. Endorsing and supporting a change in Moscow was not a matter of principle but of political opportunity and expediency. As difficult as this turn-about was for many old Nazis, they had grasped in the meantime that 'the self-preservation of German territory was more important than this pretended ideological position'.²

Rosenberg was not involved in Hitler's momentous decision to be done with this pretense. But he was commissioned by Hitler in April 1941 to make plans for the civil administration of lands to be conquered in the East. Staggered by the vastness of the task, he set out to plan toward the political goal of relieving the German people from the monstrous pressure of the Russian colossus. The Fuehrer's bitter Staatsraison of 1939 was to be superseded by history and ideology, the real Staatsraison of 1941.³

The great emphasis of Rosenberg's planning was on the primacy of the political objective. Administration, economics, ideology—were all means to be adapted to the desired political ends.⁴ The overall political goal, as found in his instructions for German commissars in the East, could only be to liberate Germany from the political pressure of Russia for centuries to come. To this end vast Russia had to be split up, according to historical

¹Vertrauliche Mitteilungen an Gauschulungsleiter, 5.12.1939 (BA: NS 8/59, 140f). Cf. PT, 17,99f,102,120.

²Frankfurt/M, 25.3.1941 (BA: NS 8/63, 188f).

³Diary, 2.4./6.5./1.6.1941 (Frankfurter Rundschau, 22.6.1971).

⁴Memorandum, 2.4.1941 (TWC 26, 548; PS-1017).

and ethnic realities, into Reich commissariats, each with a different political objective: the Baltic area including Belorussia was to become a Germanized protectorate, the Ukraine an independent state in alliance with Germany, and the Caucasus a confederation with a German governor. Russia proper was to be left to determine its own future. Collectivization was to remain in force for a time to avoid economic chaos with the possibility of a new economic system in the future. With regard to education, the German Reich could further national cultures and the sciences. As for religion, edicts of tolerance for purely religious faiths were in order. The Nazi Revolution could face no greater task. The coming war would be political, economic, and ideological for the necessary overthrow of the last Jewish-Marxist adversary.¹

This plan was developed further in a secret speech to co-workers on the eve of invasion. The 'crusade' against Bolshevism was not simply to save the 'poor Russians' from Communism once and for all but to pursue German Weltpolitik and secure the German Reich. The aim was not only to solve the temporary problem of Bolshevism but the historical and perennial problems comprising the basic stuff (Ursubstanz) of European power politics. A strong nationalistic Russia would always be a threat to Germany. Hence it was necessary to establish three gigantic buffer states in the Baltic area and Belorussia, the Ukraine, and the Caucasus in order to protect the West from Russia and Russia from the West for the sake of a lasting peace. The Nazis were not the enemies of the Russian people, whose cultural capacities were known to all who knew them despite their weaknesses of character. The goal of Germany's Russian policy would be to reduce Muscovy to its traditional limits and to redirect Russian dynamic to the East. Alongside the political goal was the economic one of feeding the German people and securing the

¹Memorandum, 8.5.1941 (TMWC 26, 576-580; PS-1030).

German war economy. This would doubtless mean extensive resettlement and very difficult years ahead for Russia--a pitiless but necessary policy. Finally, tactics and propaganda were of utmost importance in order to realize the objective.¹

In public Rosenberg laid special emphasis on the ideological side of the struggle as a continuation of the Nazi Revolution entering its final and decisive stage. Speaking for the German Wochenschau, the Nazi ideologist stressed the liberation of the peoples mistreated by Bolshevism. The final struggle with Marxism--in the form of Jewish Bolshevism as the immediately tangible mortal enemy of the German nation and European culture--had begun.² The Wochenschau revealed a war with dull human beasts (stumpfe Tiermenschen), a struggle between humans and sub-humans, as he declared to applauding Nazis in Bremen. It was an ideological war between European culture and its insane destruction by a conspiracy of all the degenerate. In this war the Nazis were liquidating many black days in the history of Germany and Europe.³ Rosenberg did not add that this was not all that was being liquidated!

As Rosenberg proclaimed to troops headed for Russia, the enemy was organized sub-humanity (Untermenschentum). The one goal: to destroy Bolshevism and all the germs giving rise to the sickness. The issue: whether a superior race was to be exterminated or an inferior sub-humanity driven back into Asia from whence it came. Yet Bolshevism, as mongoloid blood led by Asiatic

¹Berlin, 20.6.1941 (TMWC 26, 610ff, 614f, 616, 621f, 624, 626f; PS-1058). It is a curious fact that Rosenberg only mentioned the Jews twice in this speech, both times in connection with German war propaganda in the East: the nationalities were to be liberated from the hegemony of Muscovy and the dominion of Jewry (616, 626).

²Wochenschau, 22.7.1941 (BA: NS 8/71, 2-4). Cf. Ostdeutscher Beobachter, 24.6.1941 (BA: NS 8/28, 38); VB, 29.6.1941 (BA: NS 8/28, 30); DAF Schulungsamt, Aug. 1941 (BA: NS 8/28, 57); Der Angriff, 19.11.1941 (BA: NS 8/8, 52); Stimme der Heimat, 27.9.1942 (BA: NS 8/28, 81).

³Bremen, 24.8.1941 (BA: NS 8/64, 50-53; 8/90, 166-169).

Jewry, constituted only a small segment of the East's history. The danger of Asiatic hordes—Goths, Huns, Slavs, Tatars—invading from the East, was an old geographical and biological problem which Europe under Nazi leadership had to solve once and for all. Fulfilling this mission was ultimately the consummation of the Nazi Revolution.¹

To instructors in ideology in all Party organizations the Nazi ideologist declared that the primitive conflicts of the earth's races were a mystery that no one would ever really fathom. Still man sought for their human meaning—this the Nazis called Providence. Russian history exhibited a basic continuity between the Russia of religious enthusiasm and that of atheistic fanaticism. The Russian people were simply clay in the hands of a tyrant. Marxist doctrine was merely a means to the end of tyrannical rule, and there was little difference between Ivan the Terrible and Lenin, Stalin, and the GPU. It was not necessary to say in public that the conquered East was in German hands to stay, that no new states would be formed. Political expediency (Zweckmässigkeit) undergirded by historical necessity was the order of the day. Under the breath of a great revolution the alloy of German character and Christianity was beginning to separate. After the campaign in the East the revision of Christianization would be introduced.²

The new Reichsminister told the German press that the War had shown that the Ukrainians as well as the Russians had been 'biologically beheaded' by Bolshevik brutality.³ By December 1941 Rosenberg was sure that the War proved the correctness of his ideology. The enemy had finally come out in the open. There was now an open alliance between stock-exchange Jews and Soviet Jews, between Capitalist Christians in London and New York and the new

¹Berlin(?), 6.8.1941 (BA: NS 8/64, 28f).

²Berlin(?), 27.10.1941 (BA: NS 8/64, 90f, 97f, 103-110). Cf. Hitler on the inexpediency of Rosenberg's saying officially that the conquered East would remain under Germany (Conversation with Hitler, 14.12.1941—TWC 27, 270; PS-1517).

³Berlin, 18.11.1941 (BA: NS 8/71, 16, 22).

Communist Christians in Moscow. 'In all churches, synagogues, and atheist clubs they are now praying for each other, and the blessing of the Wall Street prophets of New York rests upon the newest soldiers of Christ in the pious Soviet Union'.¹

The devil answered prayer, and Rosenberg's Eastern dream became a nightmare from 1942 to 1944. In general, though his goal of destroying Bolshevism and Russia as a great power was vigorously pursued, his original plan for achieving it was neglected—with disastrous results. Wavering in the middle, and caught between the pragmatic moderates in the Army and Foreign Office and the dogmatic fanatics like Hitler and Himmler, he had little control over events and the Ostministerium became a figurehead fiasco. From 1942 on he plead for a more humane approach, simply on grounds of political expediency, but to no avail. In the end he was more concerned with his own power position and petty prerogatives than with principle, even his own Nazi principles.²

In reaction to the stereotyped criticism from all sides that he was too doctrinaire, unrealistic, and impractical, Rosenberg oscillated between the pragmatic and dogmatic aspects of his two-faced Nazi ideology. This ideology could be used to justify an expedient as well as a dogmatic approach. For instance, he warned against the dangers inherent in the attempt of some idealistic Nazis to reconstruct the East on the basis of Nazi ideological and cultural principles (e.g., national and cultural self-determination).

The Nazis who go to the East do not have the task of realizing Nazi ideology (Weltanschauung) but of implementing German foreign policy. These are two things that need not always go together. In the East we have to consider what means are necessary in order to secure the might of the German Reich for all time with the least possible sacrifice. This is

¹Undelivered Speech, 18.12.1941 (BA: R 6/37, 35). Rosenberg was referring to Stalin's reopening of the churches.

²Cf. A. Dallin, German Rule in Russia 1941-1945 (London, 1957), 29ff, 56ff, 130ff, 461ff, 667f, passim.

a consideration of expediency (Zweckmässigkeitsüberlegung)....

We must distinguish between that which we voice as German policy in closed circles, that which we as those responsible for ideological indoctrination (Schulungsbeauftragte) desire to convey to the Party, and that which we may voice publicly, that which is still acceptable politically. We have declared since the beginning of the War that we are fighting for the annihilation of Bolshevism but not against the Russian people. This terminology is necessary because it serves the purposes of German foreign policy. For we have posed as the representative of Europe in the battle against Bolshevism. This is indeed an essential and necessary battlecry for ourselves and for all the nations of Europe. There is no need to talk about the fact that there are in addition other very concrete nationalistic political (national-politisch) goals....

Therefore it is expedient (zweckmässig) indeed that wherever you school men on the East you distinguish between these two things. What you can say in confidential circles on the Eastern problem with its historical scope, is one thing. What you must or may say when commanding comrades, is quite another.¹

At the same time, the Nazi ideologist dogmatically refused to revise his racial ideology of the East in the light of current events. For example, it was the mixture of Finnish with Slavic blood which doubtless gave the Russian soldier his tenacity.² In the light of the German experience in the East, it was supposedly necessary by 1944 to re-evaluate and supplement basic Nazi principles in order not to get bogged down in any superficial analysis. But despite this lip service to flexibility, the Nazi assessment of the Bolshevist danger with its Jewish leadership was in all essentials 'totally correct'. Bolshevism, though doubtless an awesome phenomenon of our time, was still basically a perverted messianism, a high-compressed fanaticism, a 'Satanic ideology'.³

For Rosenberg Nazism had always been the mortal enemy not only of Marxism as a political movement and ideology, but also of the Jewish instigators of its world revolution.⁴ The War was blamed on the Jews as the real enemy, and there was to be no place for them in the New Order. It is

¹Berlin (Wannsee), 3.8.1942 (BA: NS 8/66, 19-21).

²Bad Schachen, 14.10.1943 (BA: R 6/6, 127, 130ff), plus other speeches in 1943 and 1944.

³Würzburg, 11.5.1944 (VB, 11.5.1944--WL Collection). The word 'Satanic' was added to the typescript by Rosenberg's own hand (BA: NS 8/69, 109). Cf. VB, 24.9.1944 (WL Collection).

⁴VB, 19.1.1936 (BA: NS 8/26, 19).

apparent that Rosenberg knew, to some degree at least, the way Himmler treated the Jews in Poland.¹ In the autumn of 1940 he wrote an article (not published at Hitler's request) repeating the Madagascar reservation solution. The Jewish problem had to be solved for the sake of Europe's rebirth, but he was still thinking in terms of compulsory emigration (Aussiedlung) in the wake of the 'tremendous ideological and political revolution' sweeping Europe.²

This was still the case in early 1941, though expressions became ever more ominous. In January Rosenberg spoke of the 'brutal racial struggle' in the East which, given the profound biological principles involved, did not present a very pretty picture. The Jewish Question, as fantastic as the Nazi outlook seemed, would find a 'very real solution'. The restraint (Hemmung) of the Church was no longer a problem.³ For Nazis the Jewish issue was not a matter of fun or an opportunity for agitation, but of the deep conviction that this problem would have to be completely solved in an era of historical magnitude. But the mission to cleanse Europe of the Jews still meant the 'final and responsible solution' of forced evacuation.⁴ Solving the Jewish problem in Germany brought on the War with a British Democracy permeated with the Old Testament spirit of Judaism and Calvinism. 'Perhaps we could have renounced solving the Jewish problem simply to spare ourselves the conflict with the Anglo-Saxon countries (Angelsachsentum). But solving the Jewish problem was for us a matter of honor, a question of our existence or non-existence'.⁵

¹Cf. Diary, 8.5.1940 (PT, 127).

²Unpublished Article, 29.10.1940 (BA: NS 8/62, 180ff, 187). Cf. Billig, Rosenberg, 196.

³Münster, 16.1.1941 (BA: NS 26/124, 13-15).

⁴Breslau, 15.2.1941 (BA: NS 8/90, 36, 35-38).

⁵Hamburg, 22.2.1941 (BA: NS 8/90, 58).

At the end of March 1941 Rosenberg was still thinking in terms of forced emigration and resettlement in his radio speech at the opening of his Institut zur Erforschung des Judenproblems in Frankfurt. Europe would be purged of the Jewish parasite in the solution of a problem not simply racial, cultural, economic, and political but ultimately historical and ideological (historisch-weltanschaulich). The War signified a world revolution of a purgative and biological nature for the sake of the white race.¹ It was not until 2 April 1941 that the Fuehrer revealed, in connection with the invasion of the Soviet Union, his solution of the Jewish problem—which Rosenberg would not put on paper or ever forget.²

From this conversation with Hitler and documents in Rosenberg's files, it is certain that he knew what was being done to the Jews in Russia. That he was not the only one who knew, is clear from a confidential speech at the Ostministerium to representatives of the German press in November 1941.

At the same time this East is called to solve a problem facing the peoples of Europe: the Jewish Question. There are still some six million Jews living in the East, and this problem can only be solved by a biological eradication (biologische Ausmerzung) of the whole of European Jewry. The Jewish Question is only solved for Germany when the last Jew has left German territory, and for Europe when there is no longer a Jew on the European continent as far as the Urals. This is the mission which destiny has given us. You can imagine that for carrying out these measures only those men are qualified who grasp the issue as an historic mission, men who do not act from personal hatred but from a very matter-of-fact political and historical insight.

One was not to discuss these things in public. The new Reichsminister would discuss them at somewhat greater length in a future speech. For the moment the annihilation (Vernichtung) of Bolshevism was the main issue. That there was the additional historical mission in view, was not to be discussed.

¹Frankfurt/M, 28.3.1941 (Weltkampf, Apr.-Sept., 1941, 64ff, 70-72).

²Diary, 2.4.1941 (Frankfurter Rundschau, 21.6.1971). In view of future events it is clear that this veiled reference refers to extermination. Cf. R.M.W. Kempner, Eichmann und Komplizen (Zurich, 1961), 97.

It would emerge in the political development as a matter of course.¹

Rosenberg's programmatic speech characterized the War in the East as the greatest racial struggle in world history. As for the Jews, the Nuremberg Laws, emigration, and deportation were not the end of the matter. Nazism did nothing halfway and would also carry through its program in the Jewish Question without compromise. The ~~six~~ million Jews in the ghettos of the East were the fountainhead of Jewish strength all over the world. One could draw only one conclusion from their anti-German policy, namely the annihilation (Vernichtung) of those sources from which world Jewry drew its strength. The Jewish conspiracy in London, New York, and Moscow bore the guilt for this necessary security measure. The German people had no cause to be concerned with the well-being of Jewish parasites. But this speech, planned for 18 December in the Berlin Sportpalast, was never delivered. Hitler thought better of it given the military situation. Moreover, Rosenberg had second thoughts about speaking in public on the 'extermination of Jewry'.²

Originally Hitler's final solution was not Rosenberg's. Sometime in 1941 he reportedly condemned wild excesses against the Jews, telling his subordinates that the worst he would do to Eastern Jewry was to confine them to ghettos as under the Czars, a policy which would be accepted by large segments of the population. Upon the remonstrance of his underlings, he allegedly took up the matter with the Fuehrer, but without success.³ Whether he ever really broached the issue with Hitler, is doubtful. At any rate, by the beginning of 1942 he was justifying events in his own mind by

¹Berlin, 18.11.1941 (BA: NS 8/71, 10ff, 18, 21f; cf. R 6/37, 15ff). Meanwhile questions could be directed at Ostministerium officials! Cf. Kempner, Eichmann und Komplizen, 87. For additional revealing documents see: Poliakov/Wulf, Das Dritte Reich und die Juden, 190f (PS-3636, PS-3666); Das Dritte Reich und seine Diener, 133. TWC 38, 371-375 (R-135).

²Conversation with Hitler, 14.12.1941 (TWC 27, 270; PS-1517). Undelivered Speech, 18.12.1941 (BA: R 6/37, 45-49).

³Brütigam, So hat es sich zugetragen, 411-412. Cf. LA, 314.

appealing to Soviet terror. The alternative to German victory would be 'immediate physical extermination, destruction of all cultures, and the establishment of a regime of mass murder'.¹

Two of Rosenberg's subordinates attended the Wannsee Conference in early 1942, and at least one of them expressed doubts to him.² But although there was further protest about the treatment of other peoples in the East, Rosenberg said nothing more on behalf of the Jews. According to a confidential speech in the autumn of 1942, the Jewish Question was in the process of being solved by means of extermination in biological terms. The great purge had begun and would not cease until there were no more Jews in Europe. Solving the age-old Jewish problem was a matter of carrying through an ideological struggle against a mortal enemy.³

By 1943 the final solution was mentioned both in private Party circles and also at public meetings. For instance, at the hygiene museum in Dresden Rosenberg justified the necessity—in times of war as opposed to bourgeois peace—of ruthlessly exterminating (rücksichtslos ausrotten) everything which contradicted German instinct pure and simple. Once Jewish filth had flooded Europe in the name of the humanitarian ideal. Now it was necessary to remove totally (restlos entfernen) this filthy flood from Europe as a humanitarian measure. 'When we exterminate the whole of Jewry (das ganze Judentum...ausrotten) with its retail junk, this is the best humanitarianism imaginable in Europe'.⁴

As the Nazi ideologist said to a mass meeting of Alte Kämpfer in Munich, Liberal humanitarianism had polluted Germany economically, politically, and morally.

¹Interview, 9.1.1942 (BA: NS 8/71, 33).

²Kempner, Eichmann und Komplizen, 156f. Kempner's conclusion is based on his interrogation of G. Leibbrandt in 1947.

³Speech, Autumn 1942 (TMWC 39, 416f, 412, 421).

⁴Dresden, 27.2.1943 (BA: NS 8/67, 71-72).

And we want no more of this slick humanitarianism. We also want humaneness but a biologically clean humanity, i.e., we want to purge Germany of all this trash (lively applause). Despite all the humanitarian considerations (Menschlichkeiten) admitted in our camp, we do not want this greasy finger in German cultural and economic life. And therefore it is always necessary to begin with the symbol of this filth, i.e., the Jewish race and all those who have been the friends of this race. When today we purge Germany of 1.5 million Jews, this is the greatest humanitarian deed happening in Germany for millennia (lively agreement).¹

Rosenberg's war speeches in 1943 readily appealed to Germany's destiny, Prussian morality, Nazi ideology, conservative revolution, national honor, social justice, as well as to Soviet genocide and disrespect for human life.² For instance, at a mass meeting in Trier he declared that there always had been, and always would be, bloody conflicts and wars between peoples and races. No one was so naïve to think that all the conflicts of world history were produced by conspiracies, Jewish or otherwise. But there was no other explanation for the current conflict with its apparently unnatural alliance between Capitalism and Communism than that Jewish bankers and Bolshevik dictators were of one and the same race. This was not political hysteria on the part of a few funny Nazis, but an exceptionally astute assessment of the biological situation in Europe, America, and Africa. The 20th century at long last had arrived at a sober biological interpretation of the Jews. Their goal allegedly was 'the biological extermination' of everything opposed to Jewish parasitic instincts. Bolshevism was seeking literally the 'biological extermination' of the German nation. The Jewish bloodbath in the Katyn Forest was proof that Communism was out for the racial extermination (Rassenausrottung) of other European peoples as well.

Today we have a very simple mission. We have the task of purifying Germany and Europe....**Today the task facing all European peoples is to liberate Europe anew from this Jewish leprosy after 2,000 years of Jewish parasitic activity. And as mentioned, the Jewish Question is not solved when one people casts them out and they only settle down somewhere else in Europe, but it is only solved when there is indeed no longer the slightest place in Europe for a Jewish flatfoot.**

¹Munich, 3.4.1943 (BA: NS 8/67, 100-101, 89ff; 8/95, 95).

²Cf. Luxembourg, 11.4.1943 (BA: NS 8/96, 98); VB, 18.4.1943 (BA: NS 8/96, 49).

We must maintain moreover that this is not brutality at all but rather just, pure, and biological humanitarianism. Washing the filth away once in a while, is a nice thing to do....But now we are clean again, and this is the greatest humanitarian deed possible for the peoples of Europe. One cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs. Nevertheless we must take the position, better for eight million Jews to disappear than eighty million Germans. Once one has looked this necessity in the eye, he knows that our bridges are burned behind us in foreign politics just as in domestic politics....¹

According to Rosenberg the Second World War was not only political between sovereigns and nations but ideological between worldviews.' Ultimately it was not only a question of ideologies but of life itself. The War was a total war not only militarily and economically but biologically in that it embraced life in its totality. The extermination of Jewry now being carried out by the German Reich was a humane act as when one cleansed himself from leprosy. This final solution was not against religion since the German people were still religious and could not be sacriligious. If there were a heaven, he who sacrificed all for his nation would appear as judge and not as defendant; and he who betrayed his own people could expect no entrance therein. The German people proud of itself, its history, and its values, could trust its destiny anew and would not be diverted by sermons or intimidated by ecclesiastical powers.²

As the Nazi ideologist declared in a secret speech to the SS, the Jewish Question could not be solved by being isolated but had to be viewed 'metaphysically' and solved biologically. The Nazi Movement had to adopt an ever more anti-Jewish and thus ever more revolutionary outlook. Moreover, given Germany's territorial policy (Raumpolitik) the Jewish problem could not be solved regionally but only comprehensively. The specific form of this biological solution was known to the SS audience. One could not lead the way in a momentous historical situation with paltry measures. After all,

¹Trier, 8.5.1943 (BA: NS 8/67, 204f, 196-203).

²Rowno, 5.6.1943 (BA: NS 8/71, 112, 117f). Cf. mass meeting at Strasbourg, 5.9.1943 (BA: NS 8/68, 1ff, 3, 10f).

did not Churchill himself speak of the necessity of exterminating Prussian militarism and Nazi tyranny?¹

Mussolini had fallen and Rosenberg went on to discuss the difference between Fascism and Nazism in terms of Nazi racial ideology. Fascism shared Nazism's fight against Marxism, Democracy, and Freemasonry but not its attitude toward the Jews. The Fascist Revolution was political and social but not really ideological. Moreover, it was an unfinished revolution, even in the political sphere, in that Mussolini chose the conservative route of making peace with monarchy and church rather than the secular way of Mazzini's republican and anti-clerical movement. But, given the situation in Italy, he doubtless had no choice. Nevertheless Hitler's Italian alliance was necessary on the grounds of practical political expediency.²

By late 1943 Rosenberg was suggesting to Hitler an intensified anti-Jewish propaganda campaign and an international anti-Semitic congress.³ This congress, scheduled for July 1944 in Krakau, was finally cancelled by Hitler due to the War. It was to close with a demand that Europe be Jew-free (judenfrei).⁴ This resolution simply repeated that Jewry was an alien parasitic element in the development of mankind and called for the renewal of European culture and the world's pacification through the total eradication (Ausmerzung) of Jewish parasitism on the part of all nations.⁵

This was Rosenberg's way of winning the world racial struggle and ideological world war—his final solution for the world's problems.

¹Bad Schachen, 13.10.1943 (BA: NS 8/68, 19f, 22-24, 30).

²Bad Schachen, 13.10.1943 (BA: NS 8/68, 25-28).

³Vortrag beim Führer, 17.11.1943 (CDJC: CXLIII-380, 3). Cf. VB, 6.2.1944 (BA: NS 8/69, 72ff, 76), where Rosenberg likened the British White Paper on Palestine to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

⁴Rosenberg to Quisling, 2.6.1944 (CDJC: CCLI-28).

⁵Resolution (Entwurf), 14.6.1944 (BA: NS 8/130, 20f). For a summary of documents dealing with the planned anti-Semitic Congress, see Billig, Rosenberg, 209-211.

8. ROSENBERG, HITLER, AND NAZI IDEOLOGY

Adolf Hitler was for Alfred Rosenberg and all true Nazis the incarnation of Nazism. The history and destiny of the Nazi Movement was tied to the Fuehrer. Rosenberg's ideology only had historical significance because of his association with Hitler, possible influence on the Fuehrer, and public reputation as Hitler's ideologist. It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss the relationship between Rosenberg and Hitler with special reference to Hitler's attitude to Rosenberg and his ideology.

In the early years of the Nazi Party Rosenberg, more than anyone, popularized the Hitler myth. Simply by influencing what people in the Party and in general thought of Hitler, Rosenberg played a significant role in the development of the Movement, not to mention his contributions to Nazi ideology in general and the possibility of his influencing what Hitler thought. That Rosenberg played a significant role in Hitler's career, is suggested by the Fuehrer's high regard for his ideologist, derogatory remarks about the Mythus notwithstanding. The main point of this chapter is that, whatever others might think, Hitler considered Rosenberg and his ideology essential to the Nazi Movement—both for the practical purpose of making political capital out of völkisch anti-clericalism and religiosity, and because ultimately he himself was in basic agreement with the thrust of Rosenberg's thought.

After an account of Rosenberg's Hitler myth, there follows a discussion of Hitler's viewpoint on his ideologist, on the Mythus, and on the relationship between ideology (Weltanschauung) and politics.

NATIONAL SOCIALISM INCARNATE

According to Rosenberg's own testimony, he first heard Hitler speak at a gathering of some 50 people in a small Gasthaus in the early autumn of 1919. It was allegedly Hitler's debut as a public speaker. The theme was that a fanatical will was needed to put an end to Jewish hegemony in every area. Hitler spoke of Luther's struggle for Germany's freedom and his own

war experience. Just as Luther's word once electrified men dissatisfied with old forms, so today millions sensed that it was necessary to rethink everything. One only needed the courage to do so.¹

Hitler spoke from the heart, and Rosenberg agreed. Here was a man of sure instinct who knew what **he** wanted, and it was decided to make the acquaintance of this tribune of the people. 'This first experience I shall never forget in that here I heard a man speak who, I instinctively felt, with unwavering inner assurance gave articulation and form to that which demanded the courage of an entire generation for its realization'.² Soon afterward Rosenberg first met Hitler at the home of Dietrich Eckart. Hitler had read Eckart's periodical Auf gut deutsch and was acquainted with Rosenberg's articles. The subject of their very first conversation was significant: the danger of Bolshevism in Europe as an historical parallel to Christianity in the Roman Empire. As Christianity was victorious yesterday, Communism could be so today. 'Herr Rosenberg, you have studied a great deal of history. Do you not believe that the appearance of Christianity in Rome was a bolshevistic phenomenon similar to that which we are now experiencing in Europe'?³

Rosenberg was struck by Hitler's instinctive reasoning and uncanny (nachtwandlerisch) knowledge. This conversation led to others, and he was amazed at Hitler's solid view of the world and history and astonished at the harmony, both instinctive and intellectual, with his own outlook. This was allegedly a distinctive phenomenon of the Nazi Movement explicable only in terms of

¹LA, 92. BA: NS 8/20, 15f—an undated fragment (written after 1933 doubtless during the 1930's) of reminiscences on the beginnings of the NSDAP. The two accounts differ in minor details but agree in essentials.

²VB (Hitler-Nummer), 20.4.1936 (BA: NS 8/43, 134). BA: NS 8/20, 16; LA, 92.

³BA: NS 8/20, 16. LA, 91f.

an ultimately unchanging German character. Yet it was not the later demi-god who impressed him but Hitler the man—his down-to-earthness, his intelligence and faith, his scintillating personality and dogged determination, his humor and humanity. Rosenberg, though not swept off his feet all at once, met the man who determined his destiny.

I became acquainted with Adolf Hitler at Dietrich Eckart's. I would be lying if I tried to maintain that I was overwhelmed by him as a follower without conditions, as so many declared after he already had made a name for himself....This acquaintance determined then my personal destiny and integrated it into that of the whole German nation.¹

Hitler was hardly mentioned in Rosenberg's writings from 1919 to 1923, and not at all in his commentary on the Party Program. One is some 1,300 pages deep in his collected writings before being introduced to the Leader of the NSDAP, and then not by name. Here Nazi success was attributed to the inner sincerity of the Movement and persuasive power of its Fuehrer.² The first mention by name, a piece in the VB for Hitler's 34th birthday, set the tone for the future.

He who has had occasion to follow Adolf Hitler's activity knows how he became from month to month more mature, eminent, and inspiring. His fire infected his hearers and planted anew a mighty faith in their hearts after the collapse of prevailing ideas. Despairing multitudes found a new support for their lives, and men who were on the lookout for a Fuehrer for the German people looked ever more expectantly to the man in Munich. There took shape that mysterious interaction (Wechselwirkung) between Fuehrer and followers, which now has become so characteristic of the German Freedom Movement: that all new seeking and striving for national (völkisch) honor, for a new political idea, in the heart of many thousands, is being totally embodied in one personality.

This has been criticized and interpreted as the Movement's weakness. On the contrary: the Seven Years War would never have been won but for Frederick the Great watching over Prussia. The Reich of 1870/71 would not have come into being without the iron will of Bismarck. Likewise Germany's freedom will only be realized by a few men. And also the leading life-bringing stream will only come, ultimately, from one heart. In whose breast this beats we all know. Indeed we can say today that the name Hitler has taken on a mystical sound for us and others. By this name the German people will be separated into chaff and wheat someday. This is indeed already a symbol in all the world. It is hated and loved like everything great....³

¹ LA, 83,91,92-100; BA: NS 8/20, 13ff,16f,20ff; VB, 20.4.1936 (BA: NS 8/43, 134).

² S&R 2, 652 (VB, 9.12.1922).

³ VB, 20.4.1923 (S&R 2, 670f). Cf. LA, 100: 'In these years he had earned my respect and loyalty. I saw a man undauntedly wrestle for the soul of his people; experienced how he matured, what continually went on inside him....'

Such adulation was repeated ad nauseam for the next 22 years. Indeed, Rosenberg probably more than anyone else, with the exception of the Fuehrer himself, was responsible for promoting and popularizing the Hitler myth. For instance, he declared in view of the 1924 trial that Hitler always remained the same. He was the Fuehrer, the man who embodied the longing of the best people and gave it expression in both word and deed. He alone bore responsibility as a real man. His mission was not over but only beginning. To him as the awakener and leader of the German people belonged love, veneration, and 'unchanging loyalty'.¹ Hitler, the despised autodidact, represented a new political ideal and the new Weltanschauung of the future, which so-called patriots could not see for blind obedience to the upper classes.² But Easter Sunday would surely follow the dark Friday of 9 November 1923! 'Adolf Hitler stands now in court. Around his name the German people already have spun a myth'.³

Although Rosenberg reportedly was critical of Mein Kampf in private, he had only praise for it in the VB: Obviously every Nazi would want to immerse himself in the ideas of his Fuehrer. Rosenberg doubtless thought Hitler's book lacking in philosophical depth and theoretical orientation but superb in its emphasis on the völkisch worldview and its implementation in practical politics.⁴ At any rate, he stressed this aspect of the Fuehrer's work.⁵ Rosenberg depended on Hitler's political views in Mein

¹Grossdeutsche Zeitung, 18.2.1924 (B&E 1, 116f).

²Grossdeutsche Zeitung, 26.2.1924 (B&E 3, 272f).

³Augsburger Tageszeitung, 23./24.3.1924 (B&E 3, 275f). Cf. Die deutsche Freiheitsbewegung, 12f., where Rosenberg, in a booklet explaining and justifying the Nazi Revolution to Auslandsdeutsche, makes the point that Hitler grew to be an almost 'mythical figure' in 1924.

⁴Cf. Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 510 for Rosenberg's criticizing Mein Kampf in private. Ludecke is not explicit but gives the impression that Rosenberg's criticism was along this line. Certainly anyone familiar with Rosenberg would expect him to react to Mein Kampf in this way.

⁵VB, 10.12.1926 (B&E 3, 504ff, 507, 514).

Kampf. National Socialism as an ideology had spiritual forerunners in Lagarde and Chamberlain. But its practical realization in politics by means of a mass movement expressing itself as a political 'Party' was the work of its indisputable Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler.¹

Chamberlain's enthusiastic admiration for Hitler probably played a significant role in confirming Rosenberg's confidence in the Fuehrer. According to Chamberlain, Hitler, contrary to many, was no fanatic. He did not persuade (Überreden) but convince (Überzeugen). He was a forceful man but not violent (gewaltsam). He did not represent that destructive violence springing from and leading to chaos but that creative force (Gewalt) which brings cosmos out of chaos. Hitler's mission was to destroy the parliamentary system unsuited to Germans, and to create a new sort of unpolitical political system on the basis of German organizational talent and scientific aptitude.²

Chamberlain compared Hitler with Luther and Bismarck. Hitler was different from other politicians in that he had the courage of his convictions. He was not only a dreamer of impossible dreams but one in holy earnest in what he believed. For instance, he was no ordinary anti-Semitic phrasemonger but one who consistently thought through his ideas to the end and fearlessly drew the logical consequences: one could not be both for Jesus and those who nailed him to the Cross! No one but Hitler dared to draw the logical consequences of his thought and act accordingly. This applied to his anti-Marxism as well as his anti-Semitism. Unlike other politicians Hitler was the opposite of an opportunist. He meant what he said and said what he meant. He was 'a great simplifier' as a result of his sincerity and seriousness. His consistency convinced, and the simplest man could follow

¹WK 4:43 (July, 1927), 296ff.

²Chamberlain to Hitler, 7.10.1923 (Schott, op. cit., 12f).

him, for example the worker alienated from the nationalistic bourgeois intellectuals. Hitler was God's gift and blessing to the German people.¹

According to Chamberlain, Germany did not lack leaders but simply that one Holy-Ghost-appointed Fuehrer who would lead a second army to establish a new and better world order. To Rosenberg Hitler was the incarnation of Chamberlain's racial outlook, whereby racial destiny like the Socratic demon guided the racially-conscious man and led him to deeds which otherwise he would never dare to undertake. This sense of inner certainty gave the individual in harmony with his race solidarity with something supra-personal, which alone explained the greatness of his deeds. Race lifted this man out of himself and gave him extraordinary, almost supernatural powers. He knew himself to be instinctively one with others of like race; and, if especially gifted, grew to be their organic Fuehrer, a racial genius.²

Hitler played no explicit role in the Mythus. This was due to political reasons, and the fact that its basic ideas were thought out independent of the Fuehrer. Rosenberg's tirades against the Papacy and the Jesuits indicate that he did not think of Hitler as an infallible Pope or imperious General demanding servile obedience (Kadavergehorsam). Germanic loyalty was not the corpse-like loyalty (Leichnams-Treue) of Loyola but loyalty to a self-chosen lord. He only was loyal who remained true to his own freedom. Rosenberg's Hitler ideal, without mentioning him by name, was expressed as follows: 'We want to see in a German King to be sure a man like ourselves and yet at the same time a hero-myth incarnate'.³

¹Chamberlain, Adolf Hitler zu seinem Geburtstag, 20.4.1924 (Schott, op. cit., 15-18).

²Rosenberg, Chamberlain, 73, 15. Cf. Chamberlain, Grundlagen (1899), 272; Wille zum Sieg (1916). Rosenberg does not say explicitly that Chamberlain's admiration for Hitler was significant in confirming his confidence, but this is implied in this passage from his book on Chamberlain. In his memoirs he implies that Eckart's admiration played a role in Hitler's winning his confidence (LA, 100).

³Mythus, 559, 622f.

The Nazi idea needed a body to be realized in this world. Idea, action, and human leader were an inseparable unity in the practical world of time and space where man is subject as well as object, where human life is in flux, and where an idea has to vary in its expression. Hence for all practical purposes loyalty to the Fuehrer was loyalty to the idea, and loyalty to the idea was being true to oneself. The once-for-all recognition of the idea was the Nazi's expression of freedom. While theoretically one could separate idea and Fuehrer, and might have to do so in the future, practically they were inseparable, at least for the present.¹

The practical unity of Fuehrer and idea was part of the Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus (1932). That Chamberlain's racial worldview did not remain mere literature but had come to life for millions, was Hitler's historic achievement. The Fuehrer made clear that no political or social revolution could be maintained in the long run without territorial expansion (Lebensraum) and biological progression. Hitler's greatest achievement was to simplify and symbolize the idea of the 20th century in a practical way.²

For Rosenberg, like many others whatever their misgivings, Hitler had become the symbol of the realization of his dreams. Hitler and his NSDAP was the only hope for realizing the vision of the Mythus. The Nazi Movement was founded, directed, and embodied in one man. Hitler was the unchanging and unchangeable symbol of Nazism. Throughout the Kampfzeit Rosenberg stressed the continuity and consistency of the Fuehrer's domestic and foreign policy from the beginning. The answer to all problems was 'All power to Adolf Hitler!'³

¹VB, 3.5.1930 (B&E 1, 161-163). Cf. Schulungsbrief (Sept. 1938), 288.

²Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus, 8f, 12, 16, 59, 67.

³VB, 30.5.1932 (E. Deuerlein, ed., Der Aufstieg der NSDAP, Düsseldorf, 1968, 390). Cf. NSMH 3:25 (Apr. 1932), 161; 2:16 (July 1931), 303.

After the Nazi accession to power Rosenberg acclaimed Hitler the savior of Germany and the West from chaos and Communism. When in February 1934 one million Nazis took a personal oath to Hitler, it was Rosenberg who introduced the historic event with a radio address stressing the ever more personal inner solidarity between Fuehrer and following. The secret of Nazi victory and success was faith in Hitler, faithful surrender (gläubige Hingabe) to a man who had given millions meaning for all of life. The Nazi idea was not unsubstantial unreality (wesenloses Schein) but reality in action by virtue of Hitler. Fuehrer, idea, and form had become one single living unity no longer to be separated. The Nazi Movement pledged Hitler unswerving loyalty: his deed was Germany's deed, his guidance Germany's genius.¹

According to the Nazi ideologist true Nationalism and Socialism were first reconciled, really and practically, in the person of Hitler.² The so-called Second Revolution was rejected and the Blood Purge supported in the name of the man who directed Germany's destiny. Röhm's conspiracy had sinned against the Fuehrer to whom 'complete trust' (restloses Vertrauen) was due.³ After Hindenburg's death Hitler's will was literally law in Germany. He embodied in his person the people, government, and future of Germany. The German people had chosen him both Reich Chancellor and Head of State. They were now completely one with their Fuehrer. 'The unity of Germany has become an irrefutable fact. Germany is Hitler and Hitler is Germany!'⁴

¹Munich, 24.2.1934 (B&E 2, 58-62, 43). This speech is especially replete with religious terminology: e.g., verkünden, Blutzeugen, Hingabe, Verklärung, Glaube, Anfechtungen, Ewigkeit, Bürge, Gewissheit, Sendung, tausendjährige deutsche Zukunft.

²Lübeck, 31.5.1934 (B&E 2, 93-94).

³VB, 14./13.7.1934 (B&E 2, 120f, 118-119).

⁴VB, 20./18.8.1934 (B&E 2, 134, 132ff; BA: NS 8/38, 56f).

At the 1934 Parteitag Rosenberg proclaimed Hitler the spiritual heir of Goethe, Hölderlin, Lagarde, Wagner, Nietzsche, Chamberlain, and many others who allegedly saw the signs of degeneracy and longed for a rebirth of German character (Wesen). Yet they all would have been forgotten had not Hitler restored the unity of spiritual culture and political power obliged to protect it. From a vague longing was born a clear vision of the future. The books of German thinkers had not remained mere literature.¹

During the Third Reich it was customary for Rosenberg to recount Hitler's accomplishments every January and flatter him on his birthday each April. He was supposedly the savior of Europe, the interpreter of the age, the champion of the 20th century.² Unlike Luther and Ulrich von Hutten Hitler united in one person a new spiritual ideology with the political power to secure it. This gave Germany the chance of a millennium.³ The greeting 'Heil Hitler' was a confession and battlecry, the symbol of a new spiritual fellowship (Seelengemeinschaft), as the Nazi ideologist told the University of Halle-Wittenberg.⁴ Though admittedly always a dangerous undertaking to speak of a great man's place in history during his lifetime, Rosenberg was, according to a 1939 article in a Wehrmacht periodical, sure of Hitler's momentous historical and political mission.⁵

¹Nuremberg, 5.9.1934 (B&E 2, 142f).

²VB, 20.4.1937; 18.7.1935 (BA: NS 8/26, 78; 8/25, 124).

³Steckelburg bei Schlüchtern, 29.5.1938 (B&E 4, 126).

⁴Halle, 5.11.1938 (B&E 4, 179).

⁵Wehrmacht Fachschule, Mar. 1939 (B&E 4, 19ff, 23f).

Before leaders from all Party organizations Hitler was acclaimed in 1941 the greatest man that Europe had ever produced. In a 1942 funeral oration at the Fuehrer's request and in his presence, Rosenberg declared that deceased Gauleiter Carl Röver had seen in one man the incarnation (Verkörperung) of a great destiny, had given that man his word, and followed him loyally to the end.¹ With the turning in the fortunes of war Rosenberg stressed the unity between Hitler's will and that of the nation.² He emphasized faith in Hitler as the hallmark of Nazism beginning with the early struggles of the Movement.

The Nazi ideology (Weltanschauung), strengthened and steeled in these struggles, was not, however, a general doctrine but at the same time originally (ursprungsmässig) and forever bound up with one personality and so there arose not only a confessing community (Bekennnisgemeinschaft), but a straightforward militant Fuehrer following (Führer-Gefolgschaft) which constitutes the real mark of the Nazi Revolution. Action and idea, struggle and organization were always tied to the phenomenon of the Fuehrer....In still higher and yet essentially the same measure as in the days of struggle in domestic politics, the general historical will wants to be embodied in the personality of the Fuehrer.... By this means the Nazi Movement will still go down in world history indeed as a phenomenon incomprehensible by means of rational explanations alone.³

As a phenomenon of post-Kantian thought Rosenberg's ideology faced the difficulty of finding a so-called 'rational' unity between the noumenal realm of freedom and the phenomenal world of nature, between Idealism and Positivism. Supposedly unity was found in the organic biological phenomenon of man and human personality. The Fuehrer functioned as the incarnate symbol of this unity in Rosenberg's thought. On one occasion Hitler warned his ideologist of the danger of repeating a cardinal error of the Christian era. Nazi ideology (Weltanschauung) was not to dictate to scientific research but simply infer abstract laws from natural science.

¹Berlin, 22.5.1942; 27.10.1941 (BA: NS 8/65, 206f; 8/64, 110).

²VB, 30.1./20.4.1943 (BA: NS 8/28, 85,99).

³VB, 20.4.1944 (BA: NS 8/69, 94-96).

'The positivistic note of the Fuehrer was somewhat new to me. But since he has firm faith in Providence (Vorsehung), he is at home after all in both worlds'.¹ For Rosenberg Hitler stood, like the colossus at Rhodes, with his feet in two worlds and symbolized the longed-for unity between the human mind and the natural world.

HITLER AND HIS IDEOLOGIST

Hitler and Rosenberg were very different personalities and never close friends. The moody and self-taught Austrian did not relish the company of the reserved and pedantic Balt. Nevertheless they had a common interest in art and history. Moreover, Hitler was impressed with Rosenberg's intellectuality, general knowledge, and architectural training,² as well as by Eckart's high opinion of his abilities. Above all, he was appreciative of Rosenberg's incredible capacity for regular work, prolificacy as an author, and loyalty. He would be useful to the Movement. The Völkischer Beobachter, even before he officially replaced Eckart as editor, was basically Rosenberg's work. The crucial role of the VB in Hitler's political plans is attested throughout his career. The Nazi newspaper was in Hitler's mind his most effective propaganda weapon, and he gave top priority to its development.³ This fact alone attests Hitler's high opinion of Rosenberg and his importance in Hitler's vision of the nascent Nazi Movement.

The first historian of Nazism, Konrad Heiden, stressed Rosenberg's ideological influence on Hitler before the 1923 Putsch. Whereas Eckart supplied Hitler's style, Rosenberg furnished his doctrine. The young Balt was 'Hitler's mentor'.⁴ Heiden stressed Rosenberg's role in

¹Diary, 7.2.1940 (PT, 121).

²Cf. Bullock, Hitler, 80, where this is assumed and asserted. It is a natural assumption confirmed by Hitler's later comments on Rosenberg (see below).

³Denkschrift, 22.10.1922 (A. Tyrell, ed., Führer Befiehl, Düsseldorf, 1969, 51ff). Cf. Mein Kampf (Munich, 1942), 664ff; Hitler's Secret Conversations 1941-1944 (New York, 1961), 437. LA, 105f.

⁴K. Heiden, Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus (Berlin, 1932), 98, 121.

introducing Hitler to Chamberlain and above all to the apocalyptic anti-Semitism of the Russian émigrés as epitomized in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.¹ This line has been taken up by some contemporary historians, who maintain that Rosenberg, in providing the link between Russia's religious anti-Semitism and Germany's racial anti-Semitism, made a lasting contribution to Hitler's ideology and the consequent development of the Nazi Movement.²

Hitler's high regard for Rosenberg in the early 1920's is confirmed by the testimony of friendly Kurt Ludecke and critical Putzi Hanfstaengl. According to Ludecke Rosenberg became 'Hitler's closest co-thinker' and more than anyone else shaped the Nazi Weltanschauung. In 1922 Hitler expounded the Party Program using Rosenberg's commentary fresh from the press. He reportedly told Ludecke that same year: 'You haven't met Rosenberg yet?...You must get to know him better, get on good terms with him. He is the only man whom I always listen to. He is a thinker. His large conception of foreign policy will interest you'.³ Hanfstaengl lamented the fact that Hitler was 'deeply under the spell of Rosenberg, the

Cf. Heiden, A History of National Socialism (New York, 1935), 94; Adolf Hitler—Eine Biographie 1 (Zurich, 1936), 58.

¹Heiden, History of National Socialism, 37,41f; Der Fuehrer, 9ff,32,198; Adolf Hitler 1, 114.

²Notably Laqueur, Germany and Russia, 50ff,56f,68ff,79ff; Cohn, Myth, 49,152,198ff,214ff. Hitler's biographers generally assume and assert (without demonstrating) Rosenberg's ideological influence on Hitler in the early years of the NSDAP. Cf. Bullock, Hitler, 80,122; J. Fest, Hitler (New York, 1975), 133,136f,285. Maser is an exception, maintaining that all of Hitler's early associates (with the exception of Eckart, Feder, and Munich historian Alexander von Müller) were Hitler's pupils, never his teachers. W. Maser, Hitler (Munich, 1975), 191-193.

³Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 79,96,84,87. Though the testimony of Ludecke and Hanfstaengl may be suspect (after all, the former's book appeared in 1937 and the latter's only in 1957) at various points, it is unfortunately about all we have for the early years. Moreover, there is no good reason for doubting what they say about Hitler's attitude to Rosenberg since they agree with each other (despite diametrically opposed attitudes to Rosenberg) and with what Hitler said about Rosenberg in later years.

anti-semitic, anti-bolshevist, anti-religious, troublemaker' and seemed to have a very high opinion of his ability as a thinker and author.

'Rosenberg...wielded tremendous influence on Hitler and his associates when it came to propagating this anti-Bolshevik, anti-Russian line'.¹

Whatever the specifics of Rosenberg's alleged influence on Hitler, the fact that the Fuehrer made him Party Leader after the 1923 Putsch indicates his confidence in him. Shortly before Hitler's arrest at Hanfstaengl's he scribbled a penciled note to the astounded editor: 'Dear Rosenberg, you lead the Movement from now on'.² The suggestion that Hitler chose Rosenberg because of his inability as a leader, for fear of losing his grip on the NSDAP, is unlikely for the following reasons. First, there was no real threat to Hitler's leadership. Second, when arrested Hitler had no idea that he would be released in little over a year and needed a deputy in whom he had the utmost confidence. Third, there is every reason to believe that Rosenberg was chosen because Hitler was convinced of his practical loyalty and of the basic harmony of their ideological views. Fourth, there probably was no better choice. Scheubner-Richter was dead and Eckart dying; and the Fuehrer was not about to hand the leadership back to Drexler or turn the Party over to a military man like Röhm or Goering. Finally, Rosenberg had done a fair job with the VB and organized the first Party Congress in January 1923. He had given no previous indication of inability to lead. This incapacity became apparent only in 1924.³

No sooner was Hitler in prison than his followers ~~squabbled~~ among themselves, splitting into rival factions all claiming to represent the Fuehrer's views. Rosenberg was unable to reconcile the factions and hold Hitler's

¹Hanfstaengl, Unheard Witness (Philadelphia, 1957), 66, 43, 285.

²LA, 107. Cf. Heiden, Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus, 177; Hanfstaengl, The Missing Years (London, 1957), 104.

³Cf. Cecil, Myth, 42ff; LA, 107ff.

followers together. Esser, Streicher, Hanfstaengl, and Amann among others refused to follow his leadership though it was supported by Gregor Strasser.

Rosenberg refused merger with other rightist movements but believed that it was absolutely necessary to co-operate with them in provincial and national elections. According to the Nazi politician one needed to make political capital out of the genuine sympathy on the part of many lest the Movement fall to pieces. The fact that the NSDAP without its Fuehrer was falling apart, demonstrated the mutually-contradictory elements which Hitler's personality had welded together (though not well enough to be held together without him). Hitler might be in jail a long time; and as long as he was, it was necessary to change tactics. Any responsible politician realized that a Putsch in the foreseeable future was out of the question. This would only be possible when Hitler was free again, and even then there would have to be a long hard period of preparation. Anyone who did not see this was practising the 'politics of hysteria'. Rosenberg considered himself as consistent a Nazi as anyone; but if his course were not followed, his conscience would force him out of the Movement until Hitler was back. In the meantime the acting commander would have to be cautious while the real strategist was unavailable. When Hitler was free, he might want to sing another tune. 'Our ultimate goal remains unchangeably the same but the method of struggle had to be callously altered if we did not want to let ourselves be completely pulverized or even dissipated in the long run'.¹

As a non-Bavarian Rosenberg did not want to be a candidate himself; but Hitler would hear nothing of his request to withdraw, returning his letter with the words 'Under no circumstances'.² The Fuehrer, at first negative

¹ Die politische Lage in Bayern (Nov. 1923—Mai 1924), 1.5.1924 (BA: NSDAP/143, 1ff, 4, 6f, 9f). Cf. LA, 108ff; Rosenberg had spoken favorably of participation in democratic elections at least as early as 1921 (S&R 1, 398n, 508n).

² Rosenberg to Hitler, 10.4.1924 (TMWC 33, 67; PS-3761).

on participation in elections, left the decision ultimately to Rosenberg, but refused to back his leadership openly and privately encouraged his opponents. These were slandering Rosenberg, accusing him of treason to the 'Hitler spirit'. Put in this impossible situation Rosenberg wrote to Hitler, asking to be relieved of his responsibility and suggesting Strasser as his successor, whereupon Hitler declared that henceforth no one had the right to speak or act in his name.¹ Rosenberg then withdrew from active leadership and devoted himself to study and journalism especially his newly-founded Weltkampf. However, at the bidding of Strasser he did speak for National Socialism at an unsuccessful conference to restore völkisch unity in July 1924. Rosenberg's appeal was simple: Nazism was synonymous with Hitler who had given thousands a new faith and meaning in life (Lebensinhalt). All genuine Nazism was 'Hitlerian' (hitlerisch). Hitler was the independent and self-evident leader of all Nazis, and Nazism was the heart of the völkisch movement.²

As a result of Hitler's attitude Rosenberg was plagued by the 'blasphemous' feeling that the Fuehrer welcomed the feuding of his followers in order to be able to appear as their unifying savior. For this reason he (along with Ludendorff, Röhm, and the Strassers) stayed away from the 'theatrical celebration of reconciliation' when the NSDAP was refounded on 27 February 1925. Hitler wanted Rosenberg to return to the VB as editor, but he reportedly remarked to Ludecke: 'I won't take part in that comedy. I know the sort of brother-kissing Hitler intends to call for'. He had decided to take legal action against Esser and Hanfstaengl. Hitler allegedly told Ludecke: 'You'd better see to it that Rosenberg comes to his senses and stops playing the offended innocent'. The sensitive Balt finally agreed

¹Hitler to Haase, 16.6.1924 (W. Jochmann, ed., Nationalsozialismus und Revolution, Frankfurt/M, 1963, 78). LA, 110-111, 319.

²Weimar, 20.7.1924 (Jochmann, Nationalsozialismus, 103ff, 113, 115f).

to return to the VB despite the fact that he had to work with Esser and Amann. As he complained to Ludecke: 'But what can I do? I have to accept the measly salary even from such hands. I'm married; it's too late to discover a new career for myself outside the Party. Besides, the work is my life, I cannot give up the cause. I'm stuck here, no matter how badly Hitler lets things slide'.¹

When Rosenberg resumed his editorship of the VB at the beginning of April 1925, Hitler made a personal request that he drop legal charges against Party members for the sake of the Movement.

In endeavoring now to avert litigation, whose deeper origin lies in all the nervous tension of the period following November 1923, I believe I am thereby serving the best interest not only of the Movement but of all concerned. I know you, Herr Rosenberg, and see in you not only one of the most valuable contributors to our Movement, editor-in-chief of my former Völkischer Beobachter, who was chiefly responsible for the development of the paper so far as its content was concerned, but also one whose personal integrity and character is, I am absolutely convinced, beyond question. In the difficult period in which you, rather abruptly and unexpectedly, had to take over the leadership of the Movement, you sought to advance the cause as much as possible—it goes without saying that this is my conviction—whereby, as is the case with every human, you also may have made mistakes. But I do not, however, have to pass judgement on mistakes but solely on your intention and good will. This then I have to grant you in every way to the highest extent....I see in you one of my most valuable collaborators, whose future activity will be a great help in re-establishing a great newspaper for the Movement.²

From 1925 on Hitler laid special stress on the importance of the VB, acutely aware of the fact that he was forbidden to speak in most of the German provinces. According to the Fuehrer the strength of the Party lay in the strength of its press. Moreover, Hitler highly recommended Rosenberg's Weltkampf as indispensable for every Party member and local organization.³ But the Fuehrer seldom visited the editor's office and left the content of the paper almost entirely to Rosenberg. The Nazi journalist resented the fact that he had so little personal contact with Hitler who travelled throughout Germany while he was chained to the VB. Yet Rosenberg could take conso-

¹Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 288, 278f; LA, 319-320.

²Hitler to Rosenberg, 4.2.1925 (CDJC: LXII-1).

³VB, 28.5./25.3.1925.

lation in later years from the fact that Hitler eventually vindicated him by relegating his chief critics during the 1924 interregnum—Esser, Dinter, Hanfstaengl, Streicher (eventually even Amann was compelled to make peace with him)—to obscurity; also from the fact that he had decisively influenced Hitler's way in 1924. 'I know that he stayed away from me intentionally; he probably could not forgive me for the fact that I had determined the basic course after November 1923 against his will, even though he later agreed to participation in elections'.¹

The following 1926 tribute from Hitler, regarding Rosenberg's contribution to the VB, was grounds for immediate consolation.

What the business leadership made possible here was complemented by the editorial leadership. Here above all we must thank in this position our Party Comrade Rosenberg (Heil cheers and lively applause)—who, with indefatigable bee-like industry (mit emsiger Bienenfleiss) without compare, has placed his unheard-of knowledge in the service of our cause. There prevails in our paper from the business to the editorial leadership, a boundless idealism, which is alone responsible for its development.²

At the same time the Fuehrer was sometimes critical of the VB's content. In the early years he criticized, to use the language of Amann, the 'long-winded and grandiloquent theatre reviews'.³ Rosenberg admitted shortcomings in the VB but was very sensitive about such criticism and on at least one occasion threatened to resign as editor if Hitler no longer was satisfied with his work.⁴ But Hitler always reassured him of the contrary and persuaded him to stay on at his post. Still the Fuehrer, who read the VB very closely, would complain on occasion about the content of certain articles, while praising others.⁵ Once Hitler even went into one of his

¹LA, 190, 108-110, 140-142, 189. Before Hitler finally dismissed Esser, the latter was ground for 'open conflict' between Hitler and Rosenberg in the autumn of 1925 according to Hermann Fobke (Jochmann, Nationalsozialismus, 207).

²Hitler Speech, 22.5.1926 (BA: NS 8/213, 192; cited from A. Dresler, Aus der Geschichte des "Völkischen Beobachters", Munich, 1937, 112).

³Amann to Rosenberg, 16.2.1925 (BA: NSDAP/143).

⁴Rosenberg to Hitler, 29.12./1.3.1926 (BA: NSDAP/143).

⁵Cf. Hitler to Rosenberg, 24.8.1931 (TMMC 25, 99; PS-047).

proverbial tirades, something which Rosenberg experienced only twice in his 25 year association with Hitler.¹ The editor of the VB faced the very difficult task of reading Hitler's mind from day to day and complained to the Fuehrer of the difficulty of putting out a daily paper when one was unsure of exactly what was desired. 'Now then we have become so inwardly unsure of ourselves, even regarding our responsibility to you; furthermore, one cannot read every line, including the non-political part of a paper produced so early in the morning'.²

Despite Hitler's criticism he defended the editor of the VB when criticized by others in the Party. For example, in the early 1930's he defended his ideologist to Hanfstaengl, who maintained that the Fuehrer ultimately saw things in black and white following Rosenberg 'his most dangerous mentor'.³ This testimony is confirmed by Ludecke, who maintained that Hitler defended Rosenberg against his critics in 1932. For instance, Gregor Strasser reportedly said to Ludecke: 'The Beobachter is far from what it should be. And yet, Hitler still thinks the world of him. Not long ago he told me that only once in centuries is a man born with brains like Rosenberg'.⁴

At the end of 1933, whatever Hitler's criticisms of the VB, he thanked Rosenberg, along with other old Party comrades, for his contribution to the Nazi victory.

My dear Party Comrade Rosenberg! One of the first prerequisites for the victory of the National Socialist Movement was the intellectual demolition (geistige Zertrümmerung) of that world of thought which stood hostile to us. You, my dear Party Comrade Rosenberg, since the time of Dietrich Eckart have not only led the attack against this world of ideas without flinching, but through the political and ideological direction of the Party's central organ have contributed tremendously to securing the ideologically unified penetration (die weltanschaulich einheitliche Durchdringung) of our political struggle.⁵

¹LA, 228; Hanfstaengl, Unheard Witness, 137.

²Rosenberg to Hitler, 2.4.1932 (BA: NS 8/175, 190f).

³Hanfstaengl, Unheard Witness, 285f, 237. ⁴Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 410.

⁵Hitler to Rosenberg, 31.12.1933 (Domarus, Hitler, 338; VB, 1./2.1.1934).

In early 1934, as if as a reward for services rendered, Hitler appointed Rosenberg to oversee all Nazi ideological indoctrination.

During the Third Reich Hitler periodically would ask Rosenberg for advice, as well as commend his VB articles and speeches from time to time.¹ Nevertheless the Nazi ideologist found working for Hitler very frustrating, especially given the endless and maddening internecine competition in the NSDAP. In December 1933 he threatened to withdraw from all Nazi cultural activity because of that of his competitors. He was constantly sending Hitler material—suggestions, supplications, criticism, complaints—ad nauseam. For example, he complained about the competition between his APA and Ribbentrop's Party bureau for foreign affairs: 'If, my Fuehrer, you no longer wish my assistance, then one word would have sufficed, and I would have receded into the ranks of the brown front'.²

The Fuehrer, however, never spoke the word and did everything possible to placate Rosenberg: for instance, the National Prize for Art and Science in 1937; and a personal visit, with a bust of Dietrich Eckart as a gift, on his 45th birthday in 1938.³ But Hitler was wary of giving his ideologist too much prominence, especially in foreign affairs, too soon; hence he refused to elevate Rosenberg to ministerial status when he appointed Ribbentrop Foreign Minister a few days later. This called forth a vain protest in the name of the reputation and honor of one who had served the Fuehrer faithfully for 18 years.⁴

¹Cf. Diary, 14.5./11.6./2.8.1934; 30.4.1940 (PT, 28,41,53,131).

²Rosenberg to Hitler, 1.9.1935 (BA: NS 8/175, 144f). Cf. Bollmus, Amt Rosenberg, 53f; Rosenberg's communications to Hitler, Hess, and Bormann (BA: NS 8/175ff; e.g., NS 8/178, 35).

³VB, 13.12.1938 (BA: NS 8/7, 101); VB, 8.9.1937 (BA: NS 8/7, 128). It should be noted that Hitler chose birthday gifts with great care (P. Schramm, Hitler, Chicago, 1971, 23).

⁴Rosenberg to Hitler, 6.2.1938 (T.R. Emessen, ed., Aus Goerings Schreibtisch, Berlin, 1947, 68-70).

Rosenberg's bitter disappointment and reservations about Ribbentrop's foreign policy, the Nazi-Soviet pact, and the War naturally tended toward a certain coolness between Hitler and his ideologist. This Rosenberg tried to rectify by having himself appointed Hitler's deputy for conducting the spiritual and psychological aspect of the War. The Fuehrer initially expressed agreement and apparently wanted to keep him happy. For instance, Goering could report to Rosenberg that Hitler had told him that his ideologist was not only the Nazi theoretician (Programmatiker) but was showing himself to be a politician (Politiker) after all.¹ But in March 1940 the Fuehrer finally refused on the ground that Mussolini had plead with him thrice not to do anything against the Church. One could not forget that Italy's Duce was not in the same position as Germany's Fuehrer. Rosenberg's appointment right before the beginning of the great offensive would be like a bombshell. After the War he could do with the Church what he pleased. Rosenberg was content to wait.²

In April 1940 Hitler assured Rosenberg that the decision to attack Norway was based on his information through Quisling. A year later, when Hitler communicated his intention to attack the Soviet Union and exterminate the Jews, he left no doubt as to the connection in his mind between his ideologist and his most significant political and military decision. Hitler asked for information on the East, the Russian psyche, current Jewish influence in the USSR, and so forth. 'Rosenberg, now your great hour is come!'³ Rosenberg was now at the Fuehrer's table practically every day. Hitler said he needed him to govern the East since it represented an entire continent with which he himself was not familiar, and he

¹Diary, 5.10./1.11.1939 (PT, 102,105).

²Diary, 3.3.1940 (PT, 124). Hitler apparently was not using Mussolini as a pretext. Cf. Ciano's Diary 1939-1943 (London, 1947), 439 (24.2.1942), 483 (23.6.1942) for Mussolini's concern with Rosenberg's anti-Christianity. Hitler repeatedly reassured Rosenberg that he would take care of the Churches after the War. Cf. Diary, 19.1./11.9.1940 (PT, 118; Monat, 35).

³Diary, 2.4.1941 (Frankfurter Rundschau, 22.6.1971). Cf. Rosenberg, Die politische Vorbereitung der Norwegen-Aktion, 17.6.1940 (PHKV 25, 34; PS-004).

had no idea as to its future political organization. When Rosenberg remarked about the vastness of the task, Hitler replied with tears in his eyes: 'It is a great **positive** mission you are receiving. I have to assume the responsibility for this step. Stalin is only waiting for America's intervention....'¹

Rosenberg's last private conversation with the Fuehrer was probably in mid-December 1941.² Hitler was preoccupied with the War and had little time for Rosenberg's concerns in so far as they transcended the immediate military struggle. His own personal attitude to Rosenberg is revealed by a comment in his 1942 **table** talk. Rosenberg's intellectualism did not always serve the best interests of practical politics, and his condescending attitude was difficult for Hitler to appreciate.

Events have shown that journalism demands a style of its own. Real journalistic jargon came into being, I think, in the Völkischer Beobachter during our electoral campaign in 1932. Rosenberg feared a landslide. I am quite sure that at the time he despaired of humanity, and his contempt for mankind was only increased when he found that the more he lowered the intellectual level of the journal, the more sales increased! He ought really to have called the paper: "Münchner Beobachter—Baltic Edition!"

At the beginning, the Völkischer Beobachter sailed on so high an intellectual plane that I myself had difficulty in understanding it, and I certainly know no woman who could make head or tail of it! Rosenberg insisted on this extremely high level; at that time, where the leading article now appears, he gave us deeply philosophical treatises written by Professors and mostly on Central Asia and the Far East....

I often find it difficult to get on with our Baltic families; they seem to possess some negative sort of quality, and at the same time to assume an air of superiority, of being master of everything, that I have encountered nowhere else.³

Nevertheless the Nazi Fuehrer did take the time and trouble, amidst the agony of Stalingrad, to congratulate his ideologist on his 50th birthday.

¹Diary, 6.5./11.4./9.4.1941 (Frankfurter Rundschau, 22.6.1971; Monat, 36).

²LA, 202,314 are contradictory on this point: the first stating that the last private conversation was at the beginning of 1942; the latter, at the end of 1941. The two Nazi leaders spoke at length in private on 13 and 14 December 1941 (TMWC 27, 270).

³Hitler's Secret Conversations (21.8.1942), 603f.

The letter is, for Hitler, a remarkable tribute to Rosenberg's role in his own career.

I still remember the day when I met you at Dietrich Eckart's apartment. Since then you have become the foremost co-creator of the Party from an intellectual standpoint (zum ersten geistigen Mitgestalter der Partei). What you have contributed over the many years to the clarification and confirmation of the Movement will go down in history someday. No less significant are your achievements for the unified development and co-ordination of the Nazi press, which you yourself as chief editor of the Völkischer Beobachter decisively directed for many years. Your cultural and political works (kulturpolitische Arbeiten), which so often led us close together especially at the Nuremberg Congresses, likewise represent an immortal contribution to the Nazi mental framework (Geistesgut). The new mission assigned you will link your name forever to the creation of the Greater German Empire.

I especially want to thank you then, on this day, for the steadfast devotion and great loyalty that you have shown through all the years toward my person. I know that you are one of the foremost human phenomena which allowed me to find my destiny (eine der vornehmsten menschlichen Erscheinungen...die mich das Schicksal finden liess).¹

The year 1943 was to be decisive in the outcome of Hitler's destiny. As for Rosenberg, military reverses brought to a head his controversy with Hitler's commissar in the Ukraine, Erich Koch. The Fuehrer ordered the two to work together to the exclusion of all personal differences but in the end supported Koch as the exponent of practical necessity. His attitude toward Rosenberg is further revealed in a June 1943 conversation with his generals. Hitler expressed his old opposition, going back to 1921, to Rosenberg's idea of using Russian and non-Russian émigrés as a revolutionary instrument against the Communist regime. Military victory was the decisive factor in the East not political measures.

Rosenberg is one of the sharpest thinkers in all questions of ideology (Weltanschauungsfragen). But this occupation with ideological questions naturally has permitted him to have very little contact, I dare say, with the ordinary questions of the day (Tagesfragen). Issues of ideology and ordinary issues of the day are not so easily reduced to a common denominator.²

¹Hitler to Rosenberg, 11.1.1943 (CDJC: LXII-9). This tribute, so far as the author is aware, is unparalleled in Hitler. He could have said such to others, and maybe he did; but if so, the evidence seems to be lacking.

²Hitlers Lagebesprechungen (Stuttgart, 1962), 258, 257ff (8.6.1943). Cf. Hitler to Rosenberg, 1.6.1943 (CDJC: CXLIV-440).

The last conversation with Hitler took place on 16 and 17 November 1943. During the latter stages of the War Rosenberg tried repeatedly to see the Fuehrer, but in vain. Hitler reportedly told his secretaries that he would gladly invite Rosenberg to tea but feared just another technical conversation. In October 1944 Rosenberg offered his resignation as Reichsminister for the no-longer occupied East, but the vassal apparently received no reply from his lord.¹ As late as December 1944 Hitler received a typical letter pleading for the continuation of the publication Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich on the ground that millions were guided ideologically by the experience of art and in the name of 'the cultural aims of the Movement and the deeper meaning of this War'.² The Fuehrer obviously had other things on his mind.

Rosenberg last saw Hitler alive at the Reich Party Conference on 24 February 1945. As all hope faded in April, he wrote Hitler to criticize the administrative chaos (it gave a bad impression!) and to ask what he should do. A fitting telephone call from Hitler's adjutant Schaub informed Rosenberg that he could remain in Berlin.³

HITLER AND THE MYTHUS

What was Hitler's attitude to the Mythus? Rosenberg had tried to get Amann to publish the first version as early as 1925. But Amann refused, perhaps after consulting the Fuehrer, on the ground that the book was too 'voluminous' and would not be a paying proposition given the limited economic resources of Party comrades.⁴ In 1926 Hugo Bruckmann, Chamberlain's publisher, though enthusiastic about the work, also refused primarily on the ground that its publication would likely harm the Nazi Movement by

¹Cf. Cecil, Myth, 214; LA, 306; Rosenberg to Hitler, 12.10.1944 (TMWC 41, 190; Rosenberg-41).

²Rosenberg to Hitler, 13.12.1944 (BA: NS 8/176, 1-8).

³LA, 306-307. ⁴Amann to Rosenberg, 8.12.1925 (BA: NSDAP/143).

giving the impression of a connection between Rosenberg's expressed views and Hitler's unexpressed intentions.¹

According to Rosenberg's own account, he took the final version to Hitler at the end of 1929 and, after explaining its content, requested the Fuehrer to decide whether the Party could bear the book even if published as a private treatise. After five or six months he asked Hitler whether he had read it. 'Jawohl, it is a very brilliant book. The only question I have is, who today can read and understand such a work'. The Fuehrer even doubted whether many Party comrades were capable of reading it. Rosenberg replied that only time would tell and offered not to publish it at all, or under a pseudonym. Hitler was adamantly opposed to this: 'It is your intellectual property'.

Thus in October 1930 the Fuehrer received the first copy of the Mythus. When it was attacked by the Churches, the Center Party, and within the NSDAP, Rosenberg wrote to Hitler requesting to be released from his responsibilities if such were in the Party's interest. The Fuehrer replied on the same letterhead that he **would** not hear of it. Despite all the clamor within the Party to drop Rosenberg as a political liability, Hitler refused to disown him but allowed the spiritual struggle to run its course.

The Fuehrer has never disavowed me. But I myself have always stressed that our Gauleiter should explain, according to the introduction to the Mythus, that the statements on the philosophy of religion are private. I had the same right to my personal metaphysical understanding as **anyone** else who may make known his confessional commitment. This may not be obligatory for the NSDAP as a whole....The Fuehrer permitted the spiritual struggle free rein and explained to complainants: Rosenberg is a Protestant. I cannot forbid a Protestant to condemn Rome since Rome without a doubt condemns Protestants as well.²

Hitler **always** opposed, in the strongest possible way, introducing religious controversy into the political struggle—as evidenced by his

¹Bruckmann to Rosenberg, 10.10.1926 (BA: NSDAP/143). Interestingly, Bruckmann was planning to publish Hitler's Kriegserinnerungen in 1927 with the hope of reaching those outside the NSDAP by means of this 'unpolitical book'. He claimed that it would not be wise for him to publish both books. Bruckmann did, however, publish Rosenberg's book on Chamberlain in 1927. See Bruckmann to Rosenberg, 29.10.1926 (BA: NSDAP/143).

²Wie der Mythus entstand, Nov. 1935 (BA: NS 8/22, 71-73); LA, 136f. The

booting Artur Dinter out of the NSDAP in 1928. Moreover, he most certainly knew that the Mythus would be a political embarrassment at a critical moment in 1930. Surely he was not naïve enough to think that he and the NSDAP could disassociate themselves from a book written by the editor of the Party newspaper and published by a subsidiary of the Party publishing house. It would seem that he had everything to lose and nothing to gain by permitting the Mythus to go into print. Yet he did so. If Rosenberg is right, Hitler committed himself in June 1930. But the contract with the Eher Verlag was not signed until 15 September 1930, the day after the astonishing Nazi electoral success. Probably Hitler and Amann waited until after the election to go ahead with publication.¹

Still the mystery of Hitler's decision and real attitude toward the Mythus remains. Why did he allow the book to be published? What was his own personal opinion of it? Heiden presumed that he never really read the book.² But this is hard to believe given the matter's importance, the fact that Hitler was a voracious reader,³ and his general respect for Rosenberg as a thinker. Regarding the latter Otto Strasser recalled a conversation with Hitler in the spring of 1928, in which he complained about Rosenberg's heathenism. Hitler went into one of his tirades:

"Rosenberg's ideology is an inalienable and integral part (unveräußerlicher Bestandteil) of National Socialism," he cried and emphasized every single syllable.... "Christianity is for the moment one of the points of the Party Program as I have worked it out. But one must see further. Rosenberg is a forerunner, a prophet—his theories are the expression of the German soul. A real German cannot condemn them."⁴

above account is a composite of these two sources, which, though written some ten years apart, agree in all essentials.

¹Cf. Cecil, Myth, 100-101; CDJC: CXL 11-393.

²Heiden, Der Fuehrer, 288f.

³According to Dr. von Hasselbach, one of Hitler's war-time physicians, 'hardly a day passed when he did not work his way through the essential contents of a book' (Schramm, Hitler, 73). This was during the War when Hitler had much less time than in 1930!

⁴O. Strasser, Hitler und ich (Constance, 1948), 124-125. According to Hanfstaengl Hitler supposedly told him as early as 1925 that in 50 years Rosenberg's book might be recognized as 'one of the great masterpieces

The earliest available testimony concerning Hitler's opinion of the Mythus is also from Otto Strasser, whose records of conversations on 21 and 22 May 1930 stem from the period before Hitler consented to publish Rosenberg's book. Strasser objected to Hitler's following Rosenberg's racial conception of foreign policy and Socialism as inimical to his own version of National Socialism and the German Revolution. Hitler in turn accused Strasser of crass Marxism and pure Liberalism.

There are no revolutions whatever other than racial revolutions. There are no economic, no political, no social revolutions. But there is always only the struggle of the racially inferior substratum (Unterschicht) against the ruling superior race. And if this superior race has forgotten even its own law, then it loses the struggle. But all the revolutions of world history—and I have studied them in detail—are nothing else but racial struggles. If you once read Rosenberg's new book, you will understand these things. For this book is the most forceful work of its kind, even greater than Chamberlain's Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts. The simple fact that you still do not have this racial understanding, makes your foreign policy so wrong.¹

On the other hand, a few weeks after the Mythus appeared Hitler asked Gauleiter Albert Krebs for his opinion of it. Without waiting for a reply he allegedly declared with a condescending slap on his desk: 'Rubbish plagiarized and pasted together. Bad Chamberlain with a few trimmings'. Krebs was careful to point out though that this did not hinder Hitler from making Rosenberg party indoctrinator (Schulungsleiter) with the suggestion

of philosophy' (Unheard Witness, 128). Though not published till 1930, the Mythus was basically complete in manuscript form in 1925, though Rosenberg did add some passages in 1928-1929 (see Chap. 3).

¹O. Strasser, Ministersessel oder Revolution? (Berlin, 1930), 13, 11f, 30. (cf. N.H. Baynes, ed., The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, New York, 1969, Vol. 2, 988f). Cf. Hitler und ich, 138f. O. Strasser is not always the most reliable witness, but there is no good ground for doubting that Hitler really said these things about Rosenberg especially since Strasser had no reason to misrepresent Hitler on this point. Moreover, although Strasser's book on Hitler was only published in 1948, the May 1930 conversations apparently were recorded immediately afterwards, published the same year, and never repudiated by Hitler. Rosenberg had read Strasser's published report of Hitler's statement but, until Nov. 1935 at least, never asked him whether Strasser had told the truth (BA: NS 8/22, 74). With regard to the foreign policy issue, Hitler was repudiating, on racial grounds, Strasser's call for a German alliance with the USSR and the earth's oppressed colonial peoples.

that it perhaps even occasioned it in that Hitler as the master propagandist knew that the obscure and the absurd had the greatest effect on the broad masses.¹

Confronted with criticism from Roman Catholics Hitler always defended Rosenberg's right as an author, even though involved in politics, to attack the Church—as he wrote to an unnamed cardinal in May 1931.² In June 1931 he reportedly defended the validity of Rosenberg's attack on world Jewry and Freemasonry in response to the criticism that ideological struggles were more than simply Jewish conspiracies. Hitler also maintained that the NSDAP could cultivate good relations with the Vatican despite Rosenberg's 'scarecrow book'. 'It contains, you know, many truths but it is not opportune. The book is not designed for the masses but rather is to educate the intelligentsia ideologically'.³

When Ludecke allegedly asked Hitler in 1932 whether he had promised to appoint Rosenberg Foreign Minister, the Fuehrer was non-committal: 'I admire Rosenberg—his Mythus is really an epochal work. But he's the arch-enemy of Moscow, of Rome, of Jewry. It will be like a declaration of war'. Ludecke could sense a certain coolness on the part of Hitler toward Rosenberg and tried to get to the bottom of 'the puzzle of his attitude toward Rosenberg', but to no avail. The Fuehrer criticized Rosenberg's smallness toward Hanfstaengl and others while hastening to add: 'Of course, I appreciate Rosenberg very much'.⁴

¹Krebs, Erinnerungen, 179. Krebs's memoirs only appeared in 1959 (29 years after Strasser's contemporary account); he may have overdone Hitler's comments.

²W. Maser (ed.), Hitlers Briefe und Notizen (Düsseldorf, 1973), 11 (381).

³E. Calic (ed.), Ohne Maske: Hitler—Breitung Geheimgespräche 1931 (Frankfurt, 1968), 99, 72f, 90. Certain of Hitler's statements in Calic seem suspect (e.g., speaking in 1931 of von Papen's working toward a Concordat with the Vatican, 98, 214f); but there is no good reason for doubting the authenticity of his statements on Rosenberg.

⁴Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 511, 509, 462.

Not long after coming to power in 1933 the Fuehrer told Bishop Berning that he was most firmly convinced that Christianity was a necessary religious and moral foundation for both one's personal life and the State, and especially the German State. At the same time his historical studies had convinced him that modern Christianity (Christentum in den letzten Jahrhunderten) in and of itself no longer had the strength or the resolve to overcome powers hostile to itself and the State. Liberalism, Socialism, and Bolshevism could not be overcome by intellectual and academic weapons alone. The State had to support the Church in the struggle since godlessness and Bolshevism could only be overthrown by force. Hitler claimed he had great respect for the Catholic Church and appealed to her in support of his hostility to the Jews. Personally he was convinced of the great power and deep meaning of Christianity and consequently would not permit founding any new religion. For this very reason he had repudiated Ludendorff and now repudiated Rosenberg's Mythus. The book was written as the private publication of a Protestant and thus was not a Party book. It was the province of the Protestants to grapple with it. He would tolerate no confessional struggle or Kulturkampf, but be fair to both Confessions. However, as a Catholic he had great difficulty appreciating the Protestant Church and its structure and would keep his word to protect the rights and freedom of the Catholic Church.¹

Shortly after appointing Rosenberg overseer of all Nazi indoctrination in early 1934, Hitler had an interesting conversation with Cardinal Schulte. The Cardinal complained about the openly anti-Christian speeches of various Party leaders and especially about the influence of Rosenberg's Mythus. Hitler became very nervous: 'I do not like the book. Rosenberg knows it, I have told him myself. I will have nothing to do with heathen things like the Wotan cult, etc'. When Schulte referred to Rosenberg's appointment,

¹Conversation, 26.4.1933 (Müller, Katholische Kirche und Nationalsozialismus, 117-121).

maintaining that henceforth Hitler was identified with Rosenberg regardless of his wishes, the Fuehrer replied: 'Jawohl, I identify myself with Herr Rosenberg but not with the author of the Mythus'. When pressed to explain this 'impossible distinction' (Schulte) Hitler responded resolutely: 'Rosenberg is our Party dogmatician (Parteidogmatiker). The bishops have helped to give Rosenberg's book significance and circulation. Without them the book would not have attracted much attention'. Hitler—according to Schulte 'a sphinx, an uncanny man'—refused to discuss the matter further.¹

Although the Fuehrer never criticized the Mythus in public, he often did so in private. According to Catholic Franz von Papen, Hitler made Rosenberg and his Mythus so ridiculous that there seemed to be no danger from this quarter in the early days of the Nazi regime. The Fuehrer repeatedly expressed doubts about the expediency of Rosenberg's Kultur-politik. His Mythus was not worth the paper it was printed on. He would have never allowed Rosenberg to publicize it, and the book would have never sold so many copies, had not the Munich Cardinal publicly attacked it. The idea of supplanting the Catholic Church with a new German one was fantastic. But, according to von Papen, Rosenberg, Goebbels, and Bormann changed Hitler's mind in later years.²

At Nuremberg von Papen vehemently maintained—against Doenitz, Schirach, and others—that Rosenberg, as 'Minister of Ideological Education' had considerable influence on Nazi ideology. 'I know, as a matter of fact, that Rosenberg did influence Hitler to let him spread his pagan philosophy'. He allegedly convinced Hitler to let him publish the Mythus, but nobody ever read it until Cardinal Faulhaber denounced it, whereupon the Nazis made it a best seller as a symbol of their pagan anticlericalism.³

¹Conversation, 7.2.1934 (Corsten, Kölnner Aktenstücke, 10,347).

²F. v. Papen, Die Wahrheit eine Gasse (Munich, 1952), 401-402,294.

³Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (16.4.1946), 248. It is interesting in this

Von Neurath and Ribbentrop also testified upon interrogation at Nuremberg that Hitler spoke disparagingly of Rosenberg's Mythus.¹

The Fuehrer expressed similar sentiments not only to high officials of the Third Reich but also to those of the NSDAP. According to Himmler, Hitler told him in 1935 that he was opposed to founding a new religion and even intended to take action against Rosenberg's Mythus. He had no intention of undermining any existing authority. Church and State could only prosper by working together.²

On the other hand, the Fuehrer gave the exact opposite impression to Rosenberg. Hitler not only put him in charge of ideological indoctrination but assured him in private of his own anti-Christianity. In 1934, at the time of the Röhm crisis over the so-called Second Revolution, the Nazi ideologist could appeal to the following fact:

The Fuehrer over the years has always protected my consistent viewpoint as far as he could do so given his position. More than once he has emphasized with a laugh that he had always been a heathen; the time had now come when the Christian poisoning of life was coming to a close.³

connection that at Nuremberg both von Papen and von Neurath called Hitler a 'pathological liar' (ibid., 33,77).

¹Interrogations, 3.10./5.10.1945 (NCA B, 1490,1256). For further testimony see TWC 21, 466; BA: NS 8/60, 175; Schacht, Abrechnung mit Hitler (Hamburg, 1948), 41; M. Domarus, Hitler: Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945 (Munich, 1965), 892,223,348,1446. Domarus onesidedly interprets Hitler's criticism of the idea of a Nazi cult to the point where he maintains that Rosenberg played no significant role in the Third Reich and states that one heard little of him in public after 1933, very questionable assertions indeed.

²Ackermann, Himmler als Ideologie, 90 (PS-2204). Cf. the testimony of one-time Gestapo Chief Diels (Lucifer ante portas, 132): 'He ridiculed the theoreticians who had once inflamed him, the self-taught man, when he was eager to learn; Rosenberg's Mythus he called trash (Schmarren)'.

³Diary, 28.6.1934 (PT, 43).

According to Rosenberg, Hitler had made clear his ultimate intention of eventually turning the State against the Church as early as 1919! From 1935 on Rosenberg could appeal to anti-clerical statements in closed Party circles where Hitler seemed to be parroting his official ideologist. For example, in a 1936 speech, on the incapability of Christianity to come to grips with modern science or Bolshevism, was interpreted by Party comrades as a confirmation of Rosenberg. On another occasion, at one of his noon table talks, in 1937, the Fuehrer clearly identified himself with Rosenberg's point of view in the presence of critics like Goebbels and Kerrl.¹ On still another Hitler laughingly informed Rosenberg in 1936 that the Reichstag election would not have been so successful had one voted on the Mythus. Still he was interested to know that 470,000 copies had been sold to date. Word of his derogatory statements on the Mythus naturally got back to Rosenberg. But he did not take them seriously given reassurances like the following from the Fuehrer:

Do you believe that it is accidental when at the Party Congress I feature you twice in important speeches. It is hard for me to tell you this directly. But when someone asks me about you, I tell them that you are the profoundest mind of the Movement. You are the church father of National Socialism.²

Rosenberg interpreted Hitler's public statements conciliatory to Christianity and private remarks against the Mythus as an expression of his official reticence as Chief of State. The fact that the Fuehrer had let him carry on the struggle against the Churches was proof of his basic sympathy.³ Hitler apparently followed his running controversy with the

¹Diary, 18.1.1937; 22.11.1936; 24.2.1935 (Monat, 30-31; PT, 72).

²Diary, 25.4.1936 (Monat, 27-28). Rosenberg and Hitler spoke together at the 1927 Party Congress (Rosenberg, ed., Fuehrer zum Reichsparteitag 1927, 12) and regularly at the Nuremberg Party Congress Kulturtagungen from 1934-1938.

³Diary, Sept. 1937; 11.9.1940 (Monat, 32,35). Cf. BA: NS 8/22, 72 (Nov. 1935). For Rosenberg's explanation of why Hitler let him conduct the Kirchenkampf, see Chap. 6 (BA: NS 8/47, 110—Sonthofen, 22.11.1937).

Churches fairly closely. The Fuehrer was informed of the response to Rosenberg's speeches. For example, after a rousing 1935 speech in Heiligenstadt against the obscurantists (Dunkelmänner) of political Catholicism, ending with a typical statement from Ernst Moritz Arndt that the religion of our time is to be one German people, Hitler was informed by telegram from Gauleiter Saukel that the 30,000 who heard Rosenberg 'with zealous unanimity' (in einmütiger Geschlossenheit) greeted the Fuehrer with 'boundless trust, love, and affection'.¹ Sometimes Hitler would return the greeting, for instance a 1936 telegram expressing to Rosenberg best wishes for further success in the service of the spiritual renewal of the German people in Nazi terms.²

From 1936 on foreign policy issues were uppermost in Hitler's mind, and he had little time for the ideological struggle with the Churches. That could wait until after he had won his war. But the day of reckoning with Jewry and Christianity was always in the back of his mind. It seems as if in 1940-41 he felt he could fulfil his life's mission of destroying Jewish and Christian Bolshevism to gain Lebensraum in the East by attacking the Soviet Union. He could accomplish his foreign policy and religious goals, fulfil his life's ambition in both the political and spiritual realms, with one mighty blow.³

At any rate, Hitler's decision to attack the USSR was coupled with the most extreme anti-Semitic and anti-Christian sentiments. Rosenberg's hour had come! The decision encompassed exterminating the Jews, and his subsequent table talk featured eradicating the evils of Jewish Christianity.

¹VB, 19.8.1935 (BA: NS 8/74, 83). The VB report featured the quote from Arndt (BA: NS 8/74, 75-77, 83). Cf. Ulmer Tageblatt 19.10.1936 (BA: NS 8/77, 128).

²Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, 17.6.1936 (BA: NS 15/159).

³For further discussion of this suggestion, see Chap. 9.

In their conversation of 13 and 14 December 1941 Hitler and Rosenberg spoke of the extermination of the Jews. At the same time they discussed the problem of Christianity. According to the Fuehrer recalcitrant church leaders like Galen would be shot eventually. There was no Christian superstition (Schwindel) in the SS: they certainly knew what they had to do. Man would never fathom the meaning of life and the world. Science would not provide the solution but only widen man's insights to some small extent. Indeed if there were a God, then man was duty-bound to develop his God-given abilities. One could err in this but not lie and play the hypocrite. The end of Christian hypocrisy was at hand. Despite Kerri's honorable motives it was hopeless to try to reconcile Nazism and Christianity. Restoration of a purified primitive Christianity (Urchristentum) would be the worst possible thing since nothing was more dangerous than early Christianity.¹

Nevertheless the Fuehrer could criticize Rosenberg's work during the war years. The fullest recorded statement from Hitler on the Mythus is from his 1942 table talk.

I must insist that Rosenberg's "The Myth of the Twentieth Century" is not to be regarded as an expression of the official doctrine of the Party. The moment the book appeared, I deliberately refrained from recognising it as any such thing. In the first place, its title gives a completely false impression. There is, indeed, no question of confronting the conceptions of the nineteenth century with the so-called myth of the twentieth. A National Socialist should affirm that to the myth of the nineteenth century he opposes the faith and science of our times.

It is interesting to note that comparatively few of the older members of the Party are to be found among the readers of Rosenberg's book, and that the publishers had, in fact, great difficulty in disposing of the first edition. It was only when the book was mentioned in a Pastoral letter that the sales began to go up and the first ten thousand were sold. In short, the second edition was launched by Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich, who was maladroit enough to attack Rosenberg at a Synod of Bishops and to cite quotations from his book. The resultant placing of the book on

¹Diary, 14.12.1941 (Monat, 39). Cf. Memorandum, 14.12.1941 (TMWC 27, 270; PS-1517). Hitler took up the same themes in his evening table talk—Hitler's Secret Conversations (13.12/14.12.1941), 158-161. Cf. also Hitler's conversations with Rosenberg on 2 and 7 April 1941, where the Fuehrer revealed his intention to invade Russia and exterminate the Jews (Diary, 2.4.1941—Frankfurter Rundschau, 22.6.1971) and expounded anti-Christian views, as if he had taken them straight from the Mythus, at length (Diary, 9.4.1941—Monat, 36). Cf. also Chap. 9 for Hitler's views on Jewish Bolshevism and Christianity.

the index, as a work of heresy on the Party's part, merely gave additional fillip to its sale; and when the Church had finally published all its commentaries in refutation of Rosenberg's ideas, "The Myth of the Twentieth Century" sold its two hundred thousandth copy. It gives me considerable pleasure to realize that the book has been closely studied only by our opponents. Like most of the Gauleiters, I have myself merely glanced cursorily at it. It is in any case written in much too abstruse a style, in my opinion.¹

According to another entry the Fuehrer maintained that it was a mistake for Rosenberg to engage in controversy with the Church since nothing was to be gained by it. The unfaithful Catholics were already anti-clerical, and the faithful would give him no fair hearing. At the same time Hitler left no doubt as to the Nazi reckoning with Bishop von Galen (Rosenberg's most vociferous critic) and the Roman Church after the War. The Concordat would be terminated, the Church's anti-Nazi leaders would pay to the last farthing, and her financial support would be withdrawn.²

In these table conversations the Fuehrer condemned Christianity in the most vulgar terms. But even after 1942 he criticized the Nazi struggle against the Church as a crime against the future of the German people. The Church was absolutely necessary in the life of the State and it was impossible to replace her with any 'Party ideology' ("Partei-Ideologie"). In the long run the Church would adapt to Nazism's political goals as she had always adapted in the past. A new Party religion would only bring a relapse into Medieval mysticism, as indicated by the SS myth and Rosenberg's unreadable Mythus. The book was 'stuff nobody can understand' written by a 'narrow-minded Baltic German who thinks in horribly complicated terms'. Hitler was amazed that this 'relapse into Medieval notions' had attained such sales. He allowed Goebbels to mock the Nazi 'philosopher' ("Reichsphilosoph") and habitually chimed in: 'The Völkischer Beobachter is just as boring as its

¹Hitler's Secret Conversations (11.4.1942), 400.

²Hitler's Secret Conversations (4.7.1942), 519f.

editor, Rosenberg',¹

What is one to make of this seemingly contradictory testimony? What was Hitler's real attitude to Rosenberg, his ideology, and the Mythus? What did he really think of Rosenberg's anti-Christianity, controversy with the Churches, and Nazi religious revolution? What did Hitler mean by his remarkable tribute in 1943 that Rosenberg had helped him discover his destiny?

These are difficult questions. Provisionally the following answers may be suggested:

As far as Rosenberg the man is concerned, it is quite clear that the Baltic intellectual was in certain ways personally unattractive to Hitler. Nevertheless the Fuehrer highly valued his contribution to the Nazi Movement. This had to do, first of all, with Rosenberg's practical contributions to the Völkischer Beobachter and the Nazi press as well as in the area of Nazi cultural activity and foreign policy. Here one need only think of his voluminous writings and continuous speech-making. Whatever his criticisms, it is clear that Hitler thought Rosenberg a great asset to the Movement. Moreover, it was important to have a man of Rosenberg's loyalty as chief Party publicist and ideologist. Also it is possible that Hitler was especially appreciative of Rosenberg's crucial contribution to the Nazi cause in 1924. At any rate, sentimentality probably played a significant role in Hitler's mind: he always thought of Rosenberg in terms of Eckart and the beginnings of his political career.

Even more important to Hitler was Rosenberg's contribution to Nazi ideology. He had a very high regard for his ideologist as a thinker, for his intellect and knowledge. It is not likely, except in one important area,

¹ Speer, Erinnerungen, 139, 109-110. Cf. Domarus, Hitler, 892ff. In the early 1930's Hitler also expressed himself negatively on Rosenberg's Das Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus (1932) presumably because of its religious interpretation of National Socialism (see Rosenberg's correspondence with State Secretary Lammers, BA: NS 8/18, 10-12).

that Rosenberg exercised a formative influence on the development of Hitler's ideology. But even so, there can be no doubt that the Nazi Fuehrer was in fundamental agreement with the basic thrust of Rosenberg's ideology. Uppermost in Hitler's mind was Rosenberg's racial ideology of history: anti-Bolshevism as a racial phenomenon; anti-Christianity as a dying, universalistic, anti-racial religious force; and, above all, anti-Semitism as a racial conspiracy. This ideology of Rosenberg was an essential and integral part of Nazism as Hitler understood it. Moreover, the dreamer from Reval was in Hitler's mind the visionary prophet of a new way of life, the symbol of the new age of culture to come. This new Nazi epoch, to have begun in 1941, would replace the ideological hegemony and spiritual leadership of Jewry, Christianity, and Bolshevism. At the same time, the Fuehrer was convinced that Rosenberg's very ideological prowess hindered him in the area of the practical application of the Nazi vision. His theoretical and visionary mind rendered him incapable of coming to grips with political reality and practical issues.

This was the case in the religious realm, especially in dealing with the Churches. Hitler regarded the Mythus in general as a prophetic work, despite the fact that its philosophical approach was difficult to read and understand. The book was, however, ahead of its time and, to this extent, inopportune. The Nazi Fuehrer's repudiation of the Mythus to ecclesiastical authorities and conservative politicians like von Papen and von Neurath may be dismissed as pure propaganda. But even Hitler the unscrupulous propagandist had his limits. When pressed by Cardinal Schulte, he flatly and uncompromisingly owned Rosenberg as Party theoretician (Parteidogmatiker).

On the other hand, the Fuehrer's repudiation of the Mythus to Himmler and other high Party functionaries and cronies even after 1942, presents a genuine problem. Hitler's material criticism, to exclude his aversion to the book's form and style, was threefold. First, the Fuehrer's aversion

to the title proceeded from what was to Rosenberg his Positivism. Hitler's mind was more materialistically and scientifically oriented than Rosenberg's, and he was afraid of any ideology, Nazism included, impeding the progress of modern natural science, this despite his own religiosity and ideological 'faith'.

Second, Hitler's aversion to what he called 'Medieval mysticism' stemmed from the same fear as well as from his cynical skepticism regarding anything smacking of what Hitler, the rationalist in his own mind, thought was uncritical religious superstition, even Nazi superstition such as much of the cultic religiosity of Himmler and the SS. Hitler's comments to Himmler about not undermining the Church by founding a new religion, must be understood and appreciated in the light of this fear. Another factor is that while he had no doubt about the eventual eclipse of Christianity in Germany, Hitler's cynical mind was far more skeptical than Rosenberg's about the ability of Nazi religiosity to produce an adequate substitute in the very near future. Should his cynicism prove preliminarily prophetic, Hitler did not want to make a fool of himself by virtue of prophetic pretension. He had to cover himself, protect his political image, by going on record as having cast doubt on whether Nazism, in its present form at least, could provide a religious substitute for Christianity. A further factor is that Hitler regarded himself, and was regarded in the Party, as a theorist and ideologist in his own right. Hence he had to criticize Rosenberg in Party circles in order to assert his own ideological independence and dispel the wide-spread notion that he was under the spell of Rosenberg's ideology. In addition, it must be remembered that Hitler was not above feeding propaganda to even his closest associates.

Third, the Nazi Fuehrer criticized the tactical wisdom of upsetting the Churches in the Kirchenkampf. Hitler himself had no time for the Churches and believed in their eventual demise, certainly as distinctively Christian institutions. But he had far less respect for their integrity than Rosenberg and also believed that the Party could use them for a long,

perhaps even an indefinite time; and that, eventually, they might even become Nazi institutions, in fact if not in name. Moreover, he was far more skeptical about the practicality of using the power of the State against institutional Christianity than many of his faithful followers, including the police and at times even Rosenberg. It would seem, however, that he did not rule out the possibility of the massive use of force in the future, perhaps even in his own life-time, depending upon how quickly Christian consciousness was eclipsed by Nazi ideology and religiosity. Of course, he was not above using his power, particularly police power, in a limited way from time to time, as occasion demanded. The fear of force was a familiar weapon in Hitler's political arsenal, and he would use it to intimidate the Churches.

When Hitler told Himmler that he was opposed to founding a new religion and intended to move against the Mythus, he was lying with a view to instilling Fuehrer-fear in the SS. One word from the Fuehrer would have banished Rosenberg to the scrap heap of history, but that word never came. Despite ample reason and opportunity to drop Rosenberg, it seemed that Hitler had no intention of doing so. Why not? Sentimental reasons perhaps—Rosenberg was, it seems, a sentimental link to the memory of Eckart and the early days. But sentimentality did not hinder Hitler from having Röhm shot for reasons of political expediency, even though Röhm was a familiar friend and personally far more attractive to Hitler than Rosenberg. Another possible explanation has to do with ideology. Rosenberg's basic long-range ideology ultimately was Hitler's. Rosenberg was to him the unyielding symbol of the raison d'etre of the Nazi Movement, namely the destruction of Bolshevism and its Jewish-Christian roots. It was not likely that he would remove this symbol of his life's mission. Still Hitler was not above the apparent sacrifice of ideology for the sake of the politically expedient. Hence the ultimate explanation seems to lie in Hitler's calculated judgment respecting Rosenberg's role in, and value to his own immediate

political plans.

Whatever others might think, Hitler was convinced that Rosenberg and his Mythus were significant political assets. The Mythus was in his mind far more an asset than a liability. Hitler not only permitted but encouraged the struggle with the Churches. The Fuehrer's motive was correctly diagnosed by Rosenberg: to see just how far one could push in this direction. Moreover Hitler considered the support of the radical anti-clerical and anti-Christian element in the NSDAP far more reliable and significant in the long run than that of any other—especially that of Christian, unideological, half-baked Nazis. The positive religious fervor of the ideological diehards was most useful grist in the mill of his grandiose designs. Last but not least, the Fuehrer was not opposed, but positively in favor of the Nazi religious revolution, as long as it did not degenerate into a dogmatism and mysticism inimical to scientific progress and political realism.

These conclusions will become more apparent in examining Hitler's own ideology and ideological self-consciousness. First, it is necessary to consider his view of the relationship between Nazi ideology and politics; then, Hitler's Nazi ideology as a whole (Chapter 9).

NAZI IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS

The difficulty of doing justice to the vast testimony to Hitler's baffling mind, of separating the voice of propaganda and expediency from that of real conviction, is a very real one. As Admiral Raeder testified at Nuremberg, Hitler often contradicted himself, and one never knew what his ultimate aims and intentions were. As General Jodl put it, 'Nobody really knows what went on in his mind'.¹

Nevertheless, despite his cynical ambivalence and pragmatism, there is a striking correspondence between what Hitler said his real intentions were and what he actually did. This remarkable consistency between ideological

¹Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (5.6.1946), 337; PHKV 14, 44.

worldview and political practice militates against the once-fashionable interpretation of Hitler's Nazism as naked nihilistic opportunism without ideological principle or definite purpose beyond the attainment and exercise of power. Of course, Hitler the politician was an opportunist in a limited sense; but this opportunism was not ultimate or nihilistic, but for the sake of far-reaching goals (e.g., the destruction of Jewry and living space in the East). Ultimately, Hitler was not interested in power for power's sake but in implementing his Weltanschauung—in which, of course, political power was significant but not everything. Moreover, those who take the trouble to understand Hitler's ideology, will find not a hodge-podge of unrelated ideas, but an internal consistency corresponding to and explaining the obstinate consistency between his theory and his practice.¹

The fashionable tendency on the part of intellectuals to trivialize and underestimate Hitler and his thought once had disastrous results. As is the case with Rosenberg, this predisposition has contributed little to understanding National Socialism. Thus it is necessary to take Hitler's mind and Nazi ideology more seriously, as is the case with some historians, their own inner revulsion notwithstanding.²

Ideology or Weltanschauung—along with but distinct from Propaganda—played a key role in Mein Kampf. According to Hitler, Nazism represented not simply a new election slogan but 'a new worldview of fundamental significance'. One's view of the world was obviously prior to one's view of politics, ideology basic to political activity. Only after acquiring a basic worldview, and thereby a consistent view of politics, should one dare to take on political leadership. Political power without an under-

¹For substantiation, see E. Jäckel, Hitler's Weltanschauung (Tübingen, 1969), 12ff, 20ff, 29, 53, 57, 86f, 95, 106, 115ff, 140f, 159.

²Cf. in addition to Jäckel, H.R. Trevor-Roper, A. Bullock, E. Nolte, P.E. Schramm, W. Maser, and J. Fest. Heiden warned against underestimating Hitler's mind in the early 1930's (A History of National Socialism, 59f).

lying ideology had no constancy. 'Every power which does not spring from a firm intellectual foundation will be vacillating and unsure. It lacks that stability which can only rest in a fanatical Weltanschauung'.¹

Throughout his political career—both before and after attaining power, and especially at the Nuremberg Party Rallies from 1933 on—Hitler emphasized the primacy of ideology. With untiring monotony he stressed both the foundational and functional importance of ideology in his political aims. Ideology was vital in the long run not only because it underlay all politics but also because without it political goals were practically unattainable. The practical significance of ideology was particularly conspicuous in Hitler's communications on his military plans and the war effort. For instance, as late as mid-March 1945—in a directive for Nazi officers in the military (NSFO's)—he stressed the Nazi worldview and political outlook as his strongest weapon.²

At the same time a valid ideology, however important, was not sufficient in and of itself to win the political struggle. One had to take into account practical reality. From the beginning Hitler was afraid that the NSDAP would waste its energy in the ideological clouds and never get down to earth, to the real world of practical politics. As he put it to the assembled Party in early 1920 (after a philosophical and religious lecture by a certain Dr. Dingfelder): 'We are doubtless good theoreticians (Theoretiker) but we are not practical politicians' (Praktiker).³

¹ Mein Kampf, 188f, 21, 71, 136, 409ff. Cf. Jäckel, Hitlers Weltanschauung, 9ff.

² Anlage zum Rundschreiben 148/45, 13.3.1945 (VJHZG 9:1, 1961, 114f). Cf. Hitler's speech to his military commanders on 23.11.1939, in which he appealed to his Gedankenwelt as the basis of his decisions; to the Nazi ideology in general, to life in general as struggle (Kampf), to history as racial struggle (Rassenkampf), etc. 'Building up the armed services was only possible in connection with the ideological education of the German people by the Party' (TMWC 26, 327ff; PS-789).

³ Munich, 24.2.1920 (VJHZG 11:3, 1963, 295, 293f).

In Mein Kampf Hitler reflected on the relationship between ideology and politics. To begin with, there was a crucial distinction between the theoretician (Programmatiker) and the politician (Politiker). The task of the theoretician was not to determine to what degree a cause could be realized, but simply to clarify the ideal as such. That is, his concern is less with the means than with the end, more with the fundamental correctness of an idea than with the difficulty of implementing it in practice. As soon as he forsakes absolute truth for so-called 'expediency' ("Zweckmässigkeit") and 'reality', he ceases to be a polar star of seeking humanity.

The theoretician of a movement has to set its goal; the politician must strive for the goal's fulfilment. Accordingly, the thinking of the one will be determined by eternal truth; the action of the other, more by the practical reality of the moment. The greatness of the one lies in the absolute abstract correctness of his idea, that of the other in his correct attitude to the given facts and its advantageous application; whereby the goal of the theoretician must serve as his guiding star.¹

Whereas the significance of the politician lies in the success or realization (Zur-Wirklichkeit-Werden) of his plans, that of the theoretician is not to be measured by the fulfilment of his goals (since such can never be fully realized given human weakness), but by their correctness and the influence they have on the development of mankind.

Hitler extolled the theoretician and even belittled the so-called 'successful politician' of small stature. The theoretician he likened to Christ and the founders of religions. The politician merely practised the 'art of the possible', to employ Bismarck's modest definition of politics. The more such a 'politician' disregards great ideas, the easier, more numerous, and more obvious will be his successes. Such successes, however, only pertain to fleeting earthly reality (Vergänglichkeit) and sometimes do not even survive the death of their progenitors. The work of such politicians is in general meaningless for posterity since they do not concern themselves with great and profound problems or ideas of significance

¹Mein Kampf, 229-230.

to later generations. These small minds, satisfied with present success, could care less about posterity and historical greatness. On the other hand, the theoretician, seldom understood by the broad masses, has far-reaching plans and goals for the future whose realization can only benefit posterity. As such he is often 'otherworldly' ("weltfremd"). 'For if the art of the politician is really the art of the possible, the theoretician belongs to those of whom it is said that they only please the gods who demand and desire the impossible'.¹

Hitler obviously did not consider himself a small-minded politician limited to the art of what others thought possible. As he made clear, politics **could** only make sense as the art of the possible when the politician had clear and unchangeable goals. As far as Hitler's goals were concerned, politics was the art of the impossible. What to others ~~were~~ weaknesses and impossibilities in Nazi ideology, were to him strengths and opportunities. The Fuehrer was no ordinary political leader but one who wanted to make history. As such he had to decide on a certain course regardless of practical considerations and dangers, and despite the fact that success would never be complete. He could not sacrifice a success simply because it was only partial. As one who knew he would make history someday, the Fuehrer could not be the fearful critic of all the political possibilities in domestic and foreign affairs; but the Party had to follow its own ideologically-based program, (ihr eignes weltanschaulich begründetes Programm) and act accordingly. Given human inadequacy, even one's greatest success would be incomplete; and each success would be only the starting point for a new struggle.²

The great difference between the respective missions of the theoretician and the politician explained why they were almost never combined in one person. This was, however, not impossible.

¹Mein Kampf, 230-231. ²Zweites Buch, 74-77, 114, 137, 27 (VB, 18.7.1928).

Within long periods of human history it can happen once in a great while that the politician is wedded to the theoretician. The more intimate this union, the greater the resistance facing the work of the politician. He no longer works for measures plausible to every small-minded citizen (Spiessbürger) but for goals comprehended only by a few. Therefore his life is rent by love and hate. The protest of the present, which does not understand the man, wrestles with the recognition of posterity, for which he indeed labors.... Surely these great men are the marathon runners of history; the laurel wreath of the present touches only the brow of the dying hero.... But among them are to be reckoned the great strugglers (Kämpfer) of this world who, though not understood by the present, are nonetheless prepared to see the struggle for their idea and ideals through to the end.... To such belong indeed not only the truly great statesmen but all the great reformers as well. Beside Frederick the Great there stands a Martin Luther and a Richard Wagner.¹

There can be no doubt that Hitler, in his more exalted moments at least, aspired to be such a person. Beset by otherworldly delusions of grandeur, he fancied himself both a statesman and a reformer. Yet he had the pathological fear that he would not live to fulfill his mission as a politician, let alone as a theoretician, and was careful always to lay greater stress on the practical and political aspect of his mission.

This practical concern was the chief burden of Mein Kampf. There was a parallel between Germanic (völkisch) and religious concepts and ideals. The Germanic or völkisch philosophy, like religion, could be interpreted theoretically and applied practically with unlimited variety. Everyone tended to have his own interpretation and opinion. But since the broad masses did not consist of philosophers or saints, it was necessary to form from an unlimited metaphysical conception or general religious idea, a clearly delimited faith--in order to tap the effective force (Wirksamkeit) inherent in, and growing out of, 'inner religious longing' (Sehnsucht). This faith was certainly not to be an end in itself but only a means, albeit an indispensable means, to the ultimate end. This goal was, however, not only an ideal one but ultimately an eminently practical one. For the highest ideals always correspond to life's deepest necessities, just as

¹Mein Kampf, 231-232, 230.

the nobility of the sublimest beauty lies ultimately only in what is logically most expedient or functional (im logisch Zweckmässigsten). Religious faith lifts man above beast and thus makes a real contribution to securing mankind's existence. Taking away religious and moral principles without substituting something equivalent, would shatter the foundations of human existence. Not only does man live to serve higher ideals, but these are also the basis of his biological and cultural life. Apodictic faith is that necessary factor in the struggle for existence, which opens the way for the recognition of basic religious intuitions.

Hitler feared that Germanic religiosity and the general völkisch world-view would never be harnessed and crystalized into a concrete historical force in the form of a political party. The realization of ideological goals, and the practical measures derived from them, was not possible through emotion, desire, or longing alone; but only if the ideal urge (der ideale Drang) took on the form of a militant organization with the necessary means of power (Machtmittel). Every ideology, no matter how correct and beneficial for humanity, remained insignificant for the practical shaping of a people's life so long as its principles did not become the banner of a militant movement (Kampfbewegung). But in order for a general intellectual concept to serve as a basis for the necessary struggle, there had to be unified conviction.

From general concepts a political program must be formed, from a general worldview a certain political faith. This faith, since its goal should be practically attainable, will not only have to serve the idea as such; but also take account of, and use the means of struggle available for achieving the victory of this idea. The abstractly correct intellectual conception, which the theoretician must preach, must be coupled with the practical knowledge of the politician. Thus an eternal ideal serving as the guiding star of a human society, unfortunately must come to terms with human weaknesses in order to avoid shipwreck at the outset on the rocks of human inadequacy. He who seeks for truth must work together with him who understands the popular psychosis (Volkspsychose)—in order to draw out of the ideal realm of the eternally true that which is humanly possible for puny mortals, and to have it take on concrete form.¹

¹Mein Kampf, 418-419; 416ff.

This was the task which Hitler set for himself: to translate a general ideological concept allegedly of the highest veracity into a unified, definitely limited, tightly organized, believing and militant political community (politische Glaubens-und Kampfgemeinschaft). To this end it was necessary, in the long run, to formulate from the general worldview definite principles, corresponding to the dogmas of religious faith, for the political Party. Creating a Party organization as an instrument of power for the völkisch ideology was the necessary prerequisite for its ultimate victory.

Therefore I saw my own mission chiefly in extracting from the extensive and unformed substance of a general ideology (Weltanschauung), and more or less recasting in dogmatic forms, those key ideas which in their clear delimitation are suitable for massing together and unifying those men who are committed to them. In other words: The National Socialist German Workers Party takes over from the basic ideas (Grundgedankengang) of a general völkisch worldview the essential and fundamental features, and forms from them—with due consideration for practical reality, the times, and the available human material including its weaknesses—a political confession of faith (politisches Glaubensbekenntnis). This creed in turn, by virtue of the strict organizational mobilization of large masses which it makes possible, creates the precondition for the victorious struggle of this worldview as such.¹

There were thus for Hitler two different levels of thinking corresponding to two different realms of reality: on the one hand, the theoretical or programmatic; on the other, the practical or political. The theoretical realm ultimately had to do with the eternal and otherworldly, the ideal and the impossible; the practical realm, with the temporal and mundane, the mortal and the possible. The upper level concerned matters of Weltanschauung, ideology as such, philosophy, culture, and ultimately religion; the lower level, matters of brute political existence and realistic practical politics.

For Hitler there were two ways of looking at any given matter, things in general, and his own mission in particular. His mind operated on two basic levels and he constantly switched from the one to the other whenever possible combining the two. Likewise Hitler had, in a sense, two ideologies: his overall völkisch worldview corresponding to the theoretical realm, and the simplified political faith derived from it corresponding to the practical

¹Mein Kampf, 423-424, 419, 422.

realm. Moreover, there were also, in a very real sense, two Hitlers: on the one hand, Hitler the idealist, the believer, the programmatic ideologist; on the other, Hitler the realist, the cynic, the political opportunist. There is no other explanation for the baffling combination of simplistic dogmatism and sophisticated pragmatism to be found in Hitler. It is also the only way to explain his view of Rosenberg, in his mind the theoretician and ideologist par excellence.

How were these two thought realms related in Hitler's mind? First, there was a personal unity in that Hitler at times aspired to combine both the ideological and the political in one person. In this context he held to the primacy of the political over the programmatic for reasons of practical expediency, though even here his overall ideological worldview ultimately determined his political goals and methods. He was realistic enough to concentrate on the limited political goal of restoring Greater Germany and securing the power of the Third Reich. As Hitler told Rudolf Diels in the summer of 1935, this was his providential mission which he alone could fulfil. No other political leader was prepared to pursue this goal without sentimentality and with the necessary brutality. A good administration, morality and justice, culture and religion were nice but insignificant (nebensächlich) when compared to those things for the moment practically more important. Everything was to serve this political goal, all had to be subordinated to his political mission. Nevertheless, Hitler knew in his heart that there was something more significant than his political goal and that ultimately he could not be both politician and prophet.

You see, I know that there is still a much greater mission than the political, that is, reforming the way men live (Lebensweise). What this old woman [the woman venerated Hitler as a reformer] said this morning is still more important than anything that I can do in my life. But this mission another must fulfil.¹

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Diels, Lucifer ante portas, 84, 82f.

Second, there was a theoretical unity in that neither sphere was autonomous. The ideological realm as such determined the end, though not always the means, of the practical sphere. Yet ideology per se was dependent on politics for its realization in practice. On the other hand, the practical level was dependent on the ideological sphere for ultimate direction as well as proximate goals. Politics was meaningless without ideology. Theoretically ideology was obviously primary in that theory was logically prior to practice, the goal more important than the means. Moreover, Hitler's general worldview in fact dictated the specifically political aspect of his political ideology. This in turn dictated his political ends and, to a remarkable extent, even his political practice and methods. In fact Hitler's ideology was not mere theory but ultimately the guiding star and mainspring of his politics, even where his political actions seemed to contradict his ideological theory. So seriously did he take his worldview that he was even prepared to take a cynical view of this ideology in order to realize the goals which it dictated.

Third, there was a practical unity between the ideological and the political, the ideal and the real. Ideology served a practical purpose. Regardless of the question of truth, Hitler was absolutely convinced that ideas, ideals, ideology, religious faith were a practical necessity in the political struggle conceived in biological terms. Man was more than just another political animal, and his intellectual and religious instincts were necessary weapons in his struggle for existence. Moreover, man the intellectual and religious beast had to have a definite ideology or faith to live, fight, and die for. This was the justification for religion, which in some form or other was a practical political necessity. Therefore it was necessary for Hitler the politician to reduce his own general worldview to a specific dogma, to a political faith and creed. Thus he had two ideologies corresponding to his two missions: on the one hand, his ideo-

logical worldview which dictated his ultimate goal; on the other, his political dogma which was a necessary means in the struggle for its realization. This dogma or faith was not an end in itself but merely a means to the ultimate end of preserving the race, a mission assigned by the Creator of the universe. According to Hitler, there was ultimately only one doctrine for him and all true Nazis and this was it. All other doctrines even the best of them, became dangerous when they lost sight of this goal and became ends in themselves.

Every thought and every idea, every doctrine and all knowledge must serve this purpose. From this vantage point everything is to be tested and used or rejected according to its utility (Zweckmässigkeit). Thus no theory can stiffen into dead doctrine since it is indeed life (Leben) alone that all things must serve.¹

Finally, there was in Hitler's mind a philosophical unity between the ideological as such and the political, between Nazi ideology and politics. Ideology was practical not only because it was necessary in man's struggle for existence but because in Hitler's biological worldview there was an ultimate philosophical unity between the ideal and the practical. The ideal was ultimately the practical, and vice versa. Ideological idealism and expedient pragmatism went hand in hand. This leads to Hitler's philosophy and the specific content of his ideology.

9. HITLER'S IDEOLOGY AND ROSENBERG

It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of Hitler's ideology in forming the character and directing the course of the Nazi Movement—given his obvious primacy in the Party, views on the primacy of ideology, and the remarkable consistency between his ideology and political actions. Thus it is necessary to summarize Hitler's basic ideological outlook vis-à-vis Rosenberg's with a view to determining the relationship between them.

The main point of this chapter is that, certain differences notwithstanding, Hitler's ideological outlook basically corresponded to that of Rosenberg. The apparent explanation for this, however, is not Rosenberg's influence but similar sources, the common background of völkisch ideas, and the influence of the völkisch ideological atmosphere in Germany at the end of World War 1. Nevertheless, although Hitler's general ideological outlook did not come from Rosenberg, the Nazi ideologist did help to strengthen and synthesize Hitler's ideology. Rosenberg's ideology most certainly confirmed Hitler in his anti-Semitism, anti-Christianity, and anti-Bolshevism. Moreover, Rosenberg probably did influence Hitler's ideology at one crucial point.

To show this, an account of the philosophy underlying Hitler's Nazi Weltanschauung is followed by a discussion of his conception of the significance of history. Then there is a discussion of Hitler's views on domestic and foreign politics, and finally an account of his relationship to religion.

HITLER'S NAZI WELTANSCHAUUNG

The origin and development of Hitler's ideas is a notoriously difficult subject. The Fuehrer fancied himself a somewhat original thinker and, unlike Rosenberg, hardly ever gave credit to those who had influenced his thought. As a self-taught man he was reluctant, though widely read, to cite his

sources for fear of endangering the impression of originality. Unconcerned that much of what he said reflected the general intellectual outlook of the age, Hitler cared little about distinguishing his ideas from those of others. In his own mind the crux of the matter was that he was the first to apply certain ideas on a grand scale and with ruthless consistency. 'We have gathered our ideas from every shrub along life's way and no longer know their origin'.¹

Nevertheless it may be assumed Hitler's mind was formed and informed by many of the same intellectual impulses shaping Rosenberg's thought, above all by the Bayreuth tradition as epitomized by Chamberlain. There can be little doubt that Hitler's major intellectual impetus came from Wagner, from his music if not from his writings. Certainly Wagner was the only forerunner whom the Fuehrer readily, though rarely, acknowledged. He alone had really comprehended Wagner, the one who proclaimed 'the eternal tragedy of human destiny'.² According to a boyhood friend: 'When he listened to Wagner's music he was a changed man....Willingly he let himself be carried into that mythical world which was more real for him than the real world of today'.³ It was Chamberlain who, as Wagner's son-in-law and spiritual successor, popularized the Bayreuth mentality and tried to reconcile that mythical world with modern science. It is fairly certain that Hitler read Chamberlain, perhaps at Rosenberg's instigation.⁴ At any rate, Hitler's thought reflects Chamberlain's ideology, and the aged seer

¹Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler (New York, 1940), 41, 212f, 258. Cf. Mein Kampf, 15.

²Ibid., 215ff. See G.G. Windell, 'Hitler, National Socialism, and Richard Wagner', Journal of Central European Affairs 22 (1962/63), 479-497, for a comprehensive account of the Wagner-Hitler relationship. Windell maintains that it was Wagner's music and his successors (e.g., Chamberlain), not Wagner's writings (which Hitler only read to confirm his previous views), that influenced Hitler (491f, 494ff).

³A. Kubizek, Adolf Hitler--Mein Jugendfreund (Göttingen, 1953), 237f, 229ff.

⁴Rosenberg never claims to have introduced Hitler to Chamberlain's works, as Heiden surmises (Der Fuehrer, 198). For indications that Hitler read Chamberlain, see Mein Kampf, 296; O. Strasser, Ministersessel, 13. (Baynes,

of Bayreuth saw his own image in the young Nazi Fuehrer. Thus it is only natural that there is a certain similarity between the mind of Rosenberg and that of Hitler.

The question of development in Hitler's ideology, and of Rosenberg's possible contribution, is not easy to answer. Much of Rosenberg is found in Hitler. There are many striking parallels in their writings and speeches. But it is difficult to determine whether Hitler drew from his ideologist directly or from other sources, for instance common sources like Chamberlain; also, whether Rosenberg planted thoughts in Hitler's mind or merely amplified ideas already there.

Nevertheless, the following considerations seem to provide good reason for assuming a priori that Rosenberg influenced Hitler's mind, at least to some degree: First, some of the parallels are so striking that it is likely that Hitler, if not repeating Rosenberg's ideas as his own, at the very least was expressing common ideas, consciously or unconsciously, in Rosenberg's terms. Second, throughout his political career Hitler expressed a high regard for Rosenberg as a theoretical thinker—this despite criticism of his ideologist as a practical politician, disagreements on political policy, and disparaging remarks about the mysticism of the Mythus. Third, from 1919 on Hitler was constantly exposed to Rosenberg's ideas—in personal conversations, speeches, books, and articles. After all, the Völkischer Beobachter was for years primary and regular reading material for the Fuehrer.

This does not mean necessarily that Hitler received his ideology from Rosenberg. On the contrary, the following discussion suggests that there was very little alteration or development in Hitler's basic ideology beyond 1920. It would seem that all his fundamental ideas were there in seed form

Speeches 2, 988f); Maser, Hitler, 181, 199, 278f. The most thorough investigation of Hitler's reading material is found in Maser: Hitler, 176ff; Frühgeschichte der NSDAP, 83ff; Hitlers Mein Kampf (Munich, 1966), 71ff.

at the very beginning of his political career. Nonetheless they needed confirmation, elaboration, and amalgamation; and it is reasonable to assume that Rosenberg, especially in the early 1920's, contributed to this process, that he reinforced Hitler's basic ideas, amplified certain features, and above all, helped to synthesize the whole in Hitler's mind.¹

Throughout the history of the NSDAP Rosenberg was the symbol of Nazism as an ideological worldview transcending the political sphere. This emphasis was not peculiar to the official Party ideologist. For instance, Anton Drexler claimed that National Socialism was a new worldview in 1920.² Reportedly Hitler himself regularly used the term Weltanschauung as early as 1908.³ Like Rosenberg and other Nazi leaders Hitler was, formally at least, an intellectual. He had a general interest in cultural, scientific, philosophical, and religious questions and stressed from the beginning the vital importance of a basic worldview in political endeavor.

Although he had a somewhat philosophical mind, Hitler was less philosophically inclined than Rosenberg and rarely mentioned philosophers or schools of philosophy. However, toward the end of his life he did pay tribute to Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche as the greatest of German thinkers. How extensively he studied these philosophers is unclear, though he did claim to have carried Schopenhauer's works with him throughout the World War and to have learned a great deal from him. Wagner probably introduced Hitler to this philosophical tradition, and he doubtless saw it through the eyes of Chamberlain. Insofar as Hitler stood in any recognized philosophical tradition, this was it, at least in the sense that he accepted its basic presuppositions. He was influenced by it, whether

¹Cf. B.F. Smith, Adolf Hitler: His Family, Childhood, and Youth (Stanford, 1967), 153: 'His [Hitler's] ideological position, though sketched out in broad strokes, still lacked the clarity and cohesion that would be provided by direct contact with men like Dietrich Eckart and Alfred Rosenberg'. As previously noted, the assumption that Rosenberg had some such influence on the coagulation of Hitler's ideology, is common to the secondary literature.

²Speech at Munich, 26.10.1920 (VJHGZ 11:3, 1963, 325).

³~~Kubizek, Adolf Hitler—Mein Jugendfreund, 301.~~ Cf. Maser, Hitler, 176-291

directly or indirectly. For instance, Hitler commended Kant for having demolished the dogmatic philosophy and teachings of the Church. He spoke favorably of Kant's theory of knowledge as the basis of Schopenhauer's philosophy and unfavorably of 'Hegel's pragmatism', implying that he had imbibed the fundamental pessimism of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.¹

In line with this tradition Hitler, like Chamberlain and Rosenberg, held to a straightforward agnosticism regarding ultimate truth. Life had no meaning beyond the eternal struggle with death. 'Men know as little why they are alive as any other of the world's creatures'.²

If Hitler sometimes spoke of truth (even absolute and eternal) and error, right and wrong, he was merely accommodating himself, consciously or unconsciously, to human language and his own cultural background. Truth to him was always 'truth' in quotation marks, and 'knowledge' merely an instrument in life's struggle. The Fuehrer espoused an ultimate irrationalism in the sense that for him ultimate reality was unknown and unknowable. In this sense Hitler, like Rosenberg, proclaimed the end of the Age of Reason along with the Middle Ages, extolling instinct and will over against intellect and intelligence. All knowledge and science was relative to the era and race of particular human beings. 'There is no such thing as truth, either in the moral or in the scientific sense'.³

The mind of Adolf Hitler, no less than that of Alfred Rosenberg, was permeated by modern agnosticism, relativism, and irrationalism. For Hitler

for the most extensive discussion of Hitler the intellectual.

¹Hitler's Secret Conversations (16.5.1944), 662. That Hitler read extensively in Schopenhauer, is confirmed by other sources (Maser, Hitler, 187f). There is an underlying tragic pessimism in Hitler's philosophy of life, despite his claiming to be an optimist (Secret Conversations, 180). What influence Nietzsche may have had upon him, is very difficult to pinpoint (Maser, Hitler, 187f). There seems to be no evidence that Hitler read Kant, but then Kant's basic ideas could be found in Schopenhauer and Chamberlain, not to mention countless other sources.

²Zweites Buch, 46. Cf. comments to Rosenberg, 14.12.1941 (Monat, 37).

³Rauschnig, Gespräche mit Hitler, 210ff, 173, 176.

there was no truth or objectivity in any ultimate sense. At the end of his life, when all was lost, he claimed to be a realist opposed to all forms of idealistic universalism—Christianity, Liberalism, Communism—and ridiculed all those striving for human happiness in the abstract, by pursuing the phantom of universally applicable truth, as deceivers of mankind. It was of the very essence of Nazism that it was no universal truth and could not be exported.¹

Intellectually Hitler and Rosenberg were sons of the anti-clerical and anti-Christian Enlightenment, but in the form of 19th century irrationalistic historicism rather than 18th century rationalistic universalism. The mind of both was informed by the Kantian dualism of the ideal or noumenal realm of ideology and religion as over against the real or phenomenal sphere of nature and science. Likewise both strove for unity between the two: between mythology and reality, ideology and nature, religion and science. Whereas Rosenberg was more idealistically and ideologically oriented, Hitler was more scientifically and positivistically oriented—as Rosenberg himself confessed in 1940, and Hitler in 1942.² Hitler's primary calling had to do with the raw political reality of this world, Rosenberg's with the refined ideological mythology of another.

But Hitler's positivistic scientism and naturalism did not militate against a serious interest in ideology and religion. Religious faith was, in his mind, a practical necessity in life's political struggle. With Rosenberg, Hitler always spoke disparagingly of materialism, atheism, and nihilism as stupidities typically Jewish, Bolshevist, and Russian respectively.³

¹The Testament of Adolf Hitler (London, 1961), 82f (21.2.1945), 24: 'To him there was no real truth, no objectivity....To him, reality, especially political reality was not a fact but an artifact: it was made by the human mind, the human will' (H.R. Trevor-Roper).

²Cf. above quotations from Hitler's Secret Conversations (11.4.1942), 400; and Rosenberg's Diary, 7.2.1940 (PT, 121).

³Cf. Hitler's Secret Conversations, 34, 36, 83; Zweites Buch, 156; Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 56.

At the same time the Fuehrer's mind strove for unity between realism and idealism, nature and ideology, science and religion, in the form of a philosophical and religious monism after the manner of renowned Darwinian biologist and völkisch prophet Ernst Haeckel and his German Monist League.¹ This faith, like Rosenberg's, confessed an ultimate organic and metaphysical unity between natural law and the human mind. With Haeckel and Rosenberg Hitler took refuge in a biological conception of ultimate reality. But whereas Hitler put the emphasis on nature's biological laws as such, Rosenberg stressed the religious ideology allegedly based on natural law and criticized Haeckel for the dogmatic positivistic depreciation of Kant's idealistic religion, as well as for his impudent attempt to unravel the riddle of the universe.²

Hitler espoused a simplistic metaphysic: Nature is ultimate and nature's laws constitute that mysterious reality beyond which man cannot go. Nature was identified loosely, in Stoic fashion, with God, God's will, Providence, Destiny, that Power against which puny man is a helpless victim. It was foolish for modern man to rebel against Nature. Familiarity with the laws of nature which govern life would further true human progress, science would answer all the questions one day, and it would be shown that in nature there is no frontier between the organic and the inorganic. Here Hitler's faith was based on the primacy of the practical reason. Practical dogmatism went hand in hand with theoretical agnosticism. Ultimately, the mysteries of Nature were 'unknown' and 'unknowable'. 'As for the why of

¹Cf. Schramm, Hitler, 46, 88-91, 128: 'his ersatz religion of monism'. For Haeckel's scientific and religious thought, völkisch and anti-Semitic political views, and influence on Hitler and Nazism, see D. Gasman, The Scientific Origins of National Socialism: Social Darwinism in Ernst Haeckel and the German Monist League (London, 1971), xviii ff, 20 ff, 147 ff, 162 ff.

²Cf. B&E 2, 173 (Leipzig, Oct. 1934); B&E 4, 167 (Bayreuth, 27.10.1938). Haeckel's major popular work, often republished, was entitled Das Welträtzel. Gasman (ibid., 171 f) appeals to the S. Lang and E. v. Schenk edition of Rosenberg's memoirs (Portrait eines Menschheitsverbrechers, St. Gallen, 1947, 17) to demonstrate Haeckel's influence in the scientific Gymnasium Rosenberg attended in Reval, but does not complete the picture by mentioning his criticism of Haeckel.

these laws, we shall never know anything about it'.¹

Nature and natural law constituted an organic and biological, as opposed to a mechanistic or mechanical reality. Like Rosenberg Hitler even spoke as if the universe itself were one gigantic organism functioning in orderly fashion according to Nature's aristocratic principle.² Nature red in tooth and claw was conceived in Darwinian terms. This meant, first of all, the ultimacy of development in time. Nature, the universe itself, was eternally in the process of becoming. There was no final stage, no permanency, only eternal change. The past was eternal, and the future constituted only the open-ended possibility of further development. Man himself, like everything else, was in flux. Creation was not a finished fact, and a new kind of man was being produced by means of biological mutation. Accordingly some men were degenerating into subhumans and others becoming supermen—varieties of the god-man. Man was becoming God! Man was God in the making! The Nazi Movement was the expression of this transformation. Since nothing was fixed and everything constantly changing, even Nazism itself was essentially in flux: 'We are a movement—nothing expresses our nature (Wesen) better'.³

Nineteenth and early 20th century historicism—in the sense of the metaphysical ultimacy of historical development and consequent historical relativism—was, along with the religious attempt to overcome it, as basic to Hitler as it was to Rosenberg. According to Hitler, the disciple of

¹Hitler's Secret Conversations (11./12.7.1941; 14.10.1941), 36,83f, passim.

²Mein Kampf, 69. Interestingly, Rosenberg quotes this passage, WK 4:43 (July 1927), 297.

³Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 175-177, 230-233, 165. Rauschning probably overdid this aspect of Hitler's conversation in order to support his thesis of Nazism as Nietzschean nihilism and eternal revolution. But it is not unlike Hitler to have made such, or similar, remarks intending to say in substance what Rauschning has him say in Nietzschean terms.

Darwin and Haeckel, such historical development proceeded by means of struggle. As the Fuehrer—reproducing Clausewitz and in turn Heraclitus, the father of flux—once put it to 10,000 officer candidates, struggle (Kampf) and thus war is the father of all things.¹

If strife was the father of all things, man—not God—was for all practical purposes, in the sophistic spirit of Protagoras and Kant, their measure. For Hitler's biological view of reality and truth, like that of Chamberlain and Rosenberg, was based on the principle of practicality, functionality, or expediency (Zweckmässigkeit) in life's political struggle for the survival of the fittest. This meant an essentially practical view of the world and life as a matter of principle. Practicality, expediency in principle, was the very essence of life! One can see this outlook most readily in Hitler's biological view of art repeated each year at the Nuremberg Kulturtagungen organized by Rosenberg. For Hitler the beautiful was the natural, the healthy, the fit; and the ultimate standard of beauty was practicality on the basis of 'the eternally closed synthesis between practicality and beauty'. The rule of beauty is fitness and functionality. Artistic genius and scientific research result in the same view of reality. 'This reality then is equivalent to the maximum expediency'.²

In the worldview of the Fuehrer biological reality was aesthetic reality, and vice versa. The ideal was the real, the practical, the functional, the expedient. There was an underlying unity between the ideal and the real, between the aesthetic and the biological view of the world, between ideology and practicality—since reality itself, according to the dictates of the practical reason, was practicality. In Hitler, as in Chamberlain and Rosenberg, there was, whether consciously or unconsciously, a synthesis of

¹Berlin, 30.5.1942 (Domarus, Hitler, 1886). Cf. Maser, Hitler, 241n. Interestingly, the quotation from Heraclitus runs: 'War is the father of all and king of all; and some he [i.e., war] made gods and some men, some slaves and some free' (Fragment 44). Cf. Fragment 46: 'All things take place by strife'.

²Parteitag der Arbeit 1937, 59; Parteitag der Ehre 1936, 67; Parteitag der Freiheit 1935, 63, 67; Kongress zu Nürnberg 1934, 99f. Cf. Mein Kampf, 416.

Kantian philosophy and Darwinian biology. Darwin provided the functional metaphysic; Kant, the practical epistemology.

Hitler's ethic simply followed from his agnostic epistemology and naturalistic metaphysic. Good was acting in accordance with the laws of Nature; evil, the attempt to violate them. Hitler's practice followed from his theory. If there is no such thing as ultimate meaning to life or moral truth, then whatever is expedient in the struggle for survival is right. In this connection it seems as if Hitler justified Nazi immorality and brutality, even the extermination of human beings, on the ground of human ignorance respecting the meaning of life. As the Fuehrer told Rosenberg in December 1941: 'He had visited his SS Division, there was no Christian nonsense (Schwindel) there, they were calm (ruhig) and knew what they had to do. What meaning life and the world had, we would never fathom; all the microscopes would not bring us the solution, only broaden our perspective a little. But if there is a God, then we have the duty to develop our God-given capacities'.¹

Hitler preached his ethic loud and clear at the beginning of his political career. What is right? Might is right—for all practical purposes. Justice

¹Diary, 14.12.1941 (Monat, 37). In this same conversation Hitler intimated that he would do the same thing to Christian leaders that was being done to the Jews in Russia. Hitler's reference to a possible God may have been for the purpose of justifying his deeds, in the sense that he was simply following God-given nature as he had been given to understand it by means of his natural intelligence. Later that evening he declared that he did not intend to rack his brains over the why of nature and life. 'If there is a God, at the same time He gives man life He gives him intelligence. By regulating my life according to the understanding that is granted me, I may be mistaken, but I act in good faith....Man judges everything in relation to himself....: let the man who distinguishes himself in the service of the species be thought worthy of the highest honors'. By 'species' Hitler meant the Germanic race as opposed to other 'species' in the process of being exterminated at that very moment.

(Recht) is, practically, impossible without power (Macht). Justice has to do with a brute reality which simply cannot be challenged or changed by any moral tradition. To be sure, right in itself, in theory, is not always with the stronger. But in practice justice is always on the side of him who has the power to enforce it.¹ In the final analysis, right is only where might is; and justice without power, no justice at all. There simply is no higher justice above and beyond that which man makes for himself (e.g., that of the Entente and English imperialism). Behind right there has to be might. He who is without power is without justice. No court can dispense justice without the power to do so. Had Germany trusted might instead of right, she would be better off.²

With such arguments Hitler later justified his war to his military commanders. In that war which was life all that mattered, as a matter of practical fact, was not justice but victory by any means. The stronger had the right on his side. Therefore the harshest brutality was in order.³ That he took himself seriously, is evident from his 1945 remark to Speer implying that, the German people having proved the weaker in the struggle, right was no longer on their side.⁴

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORY

With Rosenberg Hitler was fascinated by history and thought in broad historical terms. He likewise claimed to have grasped the significance of

¹Munich, 10.12.1919 (VJHZG 11:3, 1963, 289).

²Munich, 20.9.1920 (VJHZG 11:3, 1963, 318f; 7:2, 1959, 215). It is conceivable that in these speeches of 1919 and 1920 Hitler was drawing on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion recently brought to his attention by Rosenberg. Cf. Appendix Two in Cohn, Myth, 307: 'by the law of nature, right lies in might' (First Protocol).

³Obersalzberg, 22.8.1939 (2nd speech: Domarus, Hitler, 1238; PS-798).

⁴Speer, Erinnerungen, 446 (19.3.1945).

history and to have based his understanding of politics in general, and his own political struggle and mission in particular, upon it. Without such historical understanding no one should aspire to be a political leader. History was the key to life's meaning. 'Whoever has no sense of history is like a person without hearing or without a face; he can live that way, but what kind of life is that?'¹

Hitler's philosophy of history, like Rosenberg's, was a replica of his general philosophical outlook. Despite the claim to know history's meaning, there could be no objective historical truth. Every historical event could be viewed in different ways, depending on the presuppositions of the people looking at it. Since objective history was impossible, German historical science should put forth that view of history which strengthened the German people.²

Thus, like Rosenberg, Hitler espoused a pragmatic view of history. To be sure, the task of history was seeking and finding those forces which as causes produce those effects which we call historical events. However, the past was to be understood in the light of the present (aus Gegenwart Vergangenes zu erleuchten) with a view to drawing consequences for the future. History should educate men for politics. To this end sound instinct, and knowing the chief trends and lines of development, was far more important than a maze of historical details. Historical 'truth' and 'knowledge' was practically only a means to the end of racial and ethnic survival.³

Agnostic relativism notwithstanding, Hitler dogmatically claimed to know

¹Cf. Schramm, Hitler, 76; Mein Kampf, 8, 13, 129, 467; Zweites Buch, 47. For Hitler's general interest in, and philosophy of history, see Jäckel, Hitlers Weltanschauung, 113ff; Schramm, Hitler, 76ff.

²Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 210f, 214 (the speaker is Himmler, but Rauschning maintains that Hitler represented the same viewpoint); Zweites Buch, 138.

³Mein Kampf, 467f, 12.

the significance of history after the manner of Rosenberg. Epistemological and metaphysical irrationalism had its dogmatic complement. Historical reality, like reality in general, was everlasting temporal flux. Since history never repeated itself, what was valid for one age was no longer so in another.¹ Yet somehow historical flux relentlessly flowed according to the dictates of Providence (Vorsehung), Destiny (Schicksal), Nature. History was simply a continuation of nature; historical reality flowed according to her own laws. Just as development in nature proceeded by means of struggle in geological history even before life, so the struggle for life (Lebenskampf) is the principle of development in biological and human history. Man's history develops by way of an eternal struggle of man against beast and man against man. If the ultimate purpose of this struggle is a mystery, its practical significance is certain: the survival of one's own species. The occasion for life's struggle is the limited living space (Lebensraum) on earth for billions of species. History is the life and death struggle of races and nations for living space. This struggle is the prerequisite of all human development and progress. History therefore is essentially 'the portrayal of the course of the life struggle of a people'.²

Social Darwinism was obviously the warp and woof of Hitler's understanding of history, no less than Rosenberg's. The natural law of all development demanded the victory of the stronger. Hitler claimed that his philosophy of history corresponded to Nature's inner will in that it stressed struggle and free competition for the sake of producing a better humanity by means of natural selection. The future would force problems on men which could only be solved by one supreme master race or people (Herrenvolk).³

¹Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 29, 175ff.

²Zweites Buch, 46-47, 55; cf. Jäckel, 119-123.

³Mein Kampf, 422, 571, 577, 384; Zweites Buch, 55.

As he once put it in an address to professors and students: 'Every being strives for expansion and every people strives for world rule'.¹

With Social Darwinism was coupled the racial interpretation of history. Biological race, not social class, was the most basic unit of historical struggle. Nations and peoples, understood biologically, were the primary organisms of historical development. That Hitler did not get his racial philosophy of history from Rosenberg, is clear from his 1919 notes for a 'monumental history' of mankind on the Biblical pattern entitled Die Germanische Revolution. This summary of mankind's historical development, idealistic not materialistic, was to explain 'the eternal course of history'. Men made history, and there were two types of men: creative workers and drones, the constructive and the destructive, the children of God and muddled ordinary men. Understanding history according to the natural law of race, demanded purging the Bible of some parts and critically examining the rest. A clear understanding of history on the basis of race, would further obedience to Nature's law, which dictated racial purity and the victory of the stronger. The Bible taught that all nations (except, of course the Jews) had fallen as the result of racial degeneration. Nations were not destroyed by wars but only by the original sin of blood poisoning (Blutvergiftung). Jewish Christianity and Bolshevism exemplified this explanation of historical decline. Ultimately there were only two races, the Aryan and the Jew, and human history was to be interpreted in terms of conflict between them.²

This outlook on history is found in Hitler's earliest speeches. The blond, blue-eyed Aryan, racially limited and spiritually free, was the political

¹Erlangen, 13.11.1930 (H. Preiss, ed., Adolf Hitler in Franken—Reden aus der Kampfzeit, Munich, 1939, 171).

²Briefe und Notizen, 293-297. If Maser's dating (autumn 1919) is right, Hitler penned those notes before he met Rosenberg in December 1919. This would confirm Rosenberg's testimony that Hitler discoursed on the Christianity-Bolshevism parallel at their very first meeting.

and cultural Prometheus of human history. Out of his 'great inner phantasy', the Aryan produced great unified cultures where politics and art went hand in hand in opposition to that madness which would isolate the one from the other. Only the healthy Aryan race could create great art and great government, of which the Jew was incapable.¹ According to Mein Kampf, the Aryan was the contemporary, if not the original bearer of culture; the Jew, his negative counterpart. With Rosenberg Hitler could proclaim: 'The racial issue provides not only the key to world history but also to human culture in general'.²

It is not necessary to discuss the details of Hitler's racial interpretation of the actual course of human history from the dim prehistoric past to the enlightened Nazi Age to come. With few exceptions its broad features are very similar to Rosenberg's Mythus. The glorification of the allegedly Aryan Graeco-Roman world, the depreciation of the Jewish tradition, the destruction of classical antiquity by Jewish Christianity, the Medieval and Liberal rebellion against Nature, the contemporary threat of Jewish Bolshevism—all these themes are found in Hitler. Although Hitler did not get his basic conception from Rosenberg, it is probable that the latter contributed to its elaboration. The Fuehrer only differed with Rosenberg on matters of detail: for example, the depreciation of the ancient Germanic tribes in comparison with classical civilization, or the glorification of Charlemagne as opposed to his Saxon opponents.³

It is, however, necessary to discuss the role of race and anti-Semitism

¹Munich, 13.8.1920 (VJHZG 16:4, 1968, 401-406). Cf. VJHZG 11:3 (1963), 299, 303.

²Mein Kampf, 372, 311ff, 317ff, 329ff.

³Cf. Maser, Hitler, 208ff, 212ff, 231, for the details of Hitler's interpretation and his aversion to the Germanenkult.

in Hitler's world of thought. Racial anti-Semitism was a central and constant conviction of Hitler from the very outset of his political career in 1919 until his political testament in 1945, in which he summoned the beaten and broken nation, above all else, 'to the scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to unmerciful resistance against the universal contamination of all peoples, international Jewry'.¹

Race was for Hitler as well as Rosenberg a metaphysical constant, the one unchanging invariable in history's relentless flux. Like Rosenberg Hitler accorded race or Volk a metaphysical status characterizing it as 'that real substance' of flesh and blood underlying and upholding the human spirit. Sometimes Hitler stressed that race was primarily a physical substance. Physical degeneration led to spiritual collapse, and only those ideals which served the end of carrying on life's struggle, rather than detaching a people from the reality of life, were sound and correct. The German people did not constitute a pure race, but was rather the product of racial degeneration in the form of denordification (Entnordung).²

At other times Hitler stressed race as an idea, conceding that there was no such thing as race in the strictly scientific sense. Nevertheless, as a practical politician he needed the concept of race in order to arrest that historical process of physical and intellectual degeneration which led to racial and spiritual chaos. The idea of race was thus a means to the end of liberation from the historical past and of enforcing 'a totally new antihistorical order' (antihistorische Ordnung), that of nature. The Nazi Revolution was 'the final step in overcoming historicism and recognizing purely biological values'.³ In other words, the racial ideal was an

¹Political Testament, 29.4.1945 (Briefe und Notizen, 375; Domarus, Hitler, 2,239). Cf. Cohn, Myth, 199-211 for a catalog of Hitler's most important anti-Semitic utterances from 1919-1945.

²Zweites Buch, 46f,53,61,86,124ff.

³Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 216-219: 'der endgültige Schritt zur Überwindung des Historismus und zur Anerkennung rein biologischer Werte.'

indispensable practical necessity in the struggle to redeem the German people from the historical process in general and their own unfortunate history in particular.

At the end of his life Hitler admitted, with particular reference to the Jews, that race was primarily an ideal, as opposed to a physical reality.

We use the term Jewish race as a matter of convenience, for in reality and from the genetic point of view there is no such thing as the Jewish race.... It is the spiritually homogeneous group...to which we give the title Jewish race. It is not, mark you, a religious entity, although the Hebrew religion serves them as a pretext to present themselves as such....The Jewish race is first and foremost an abstract race of the mind....It has its origins, admittedly, in the Hebrew religion, and that religion, too, has had a certain influence in moulding its general characteristics; for all that, however, it is in no sense of the word a purely religious entity, for it accepts on equal terms both the most determined atheists and the most sincere, practising believers. To all this must be added the bond that has been forged by centuries of persecution....A race of the mind is something more solid, more durable than just a race pure and simple. Transplant a German to the United States and you turn him into an American. But the Jew remains a Jew wherever he goes, a creature which no environment can assimilate. It is the characteristic mental make-up of his race which renders him impervious to the processes of assimilation. And there in a nutshell is proof of the superiority of the mind over the flesh!...¹

Thus race for Hitler, as for Rosenberg, was not primarily a physical reality but a metaphysical ideal, a moral value, a religious dogma projected by the practical reason in order to overcome meaningless historical flux. Race was the one unchanging reality, the end which everything else served as means. Race possessed religious and moral significance: 'If I can accept a divine commandment, it is this one: "Thou shalt preserve the species."' ² This explains why race was the one untouchable of Nazi ideology held with such fanatical tenacity.

Hitler alleged at the very outset of his career that his anti-Semitism was not emotional but rational, the 'anti-Semitism of reason' (Antisemitismus der Vernunft). Rational anti-Semitism meant two things: first, scientific anti-Semitism supposedly based on alleged empirical facts, for example, that the Jews constituted a race not a religion or that they were the driving

¹Testament of Adolf Hitler (13.2.1945), 55-56.

²Hitler's Secret Conversations (1./2.12.1941), 157.

force behind the Marxist Revolution. Second, rational anti-Semitism meant consistent anti-Semitism in practice as a logical consequence of scientific anti-Semitism. The anti-Semitism of reason had to lead to systematic and methodical opposition to the Jews and to the ultimate unshakeable goal of removing them altogether (Entfernung der Juden überhaupt). With Rosenberg Hitler stressed that rational anti-Semitism was not simply a political affair; anti-Jewish revolution meant not only a change in the form of government, but the moral and spiritual rebirth of the nation.¹

Rational anti-Semitism was the central theme of Hitler's early speeches and, more than anything else, generated the emotional enthusiasm of his hearers. As with Rosenberg anti-Semitism was for him the solution to every problem: intellectual and political, social and economic, cultural and religious. Although Hitler's anti-Semitism as such certainly did not derive from Rosenberg, the young Balt constituted one of the many sources from which he drew. This is evident from the various parallels between Hitler's speeches and Rosenberg's writings.² Rosenberg was for Hitler an intellectual whose writings supported his pet theories, as well as a prophet bent on the practical realization of his dreams. His corroboration of Hitler's anti-Semitism encouraged him toward its consistent application in political practice. If Rosenberg was not the source, he was certainly for Hitler the symbol of racial and rational anti-Semitism.

¹Hitler to Gemlich, 16.9.1919 (VJHZG 7:2, 1959, 203-204/Briefe und Notizen, 223-226). For the theme of rational anti-Semitism in Hitler's earliest speeches, see VJHZG 7:2 (1959), 212; 11:3 (1963), 301,305; 16:4 (1968), 415-419; Here Hitler maintains that 'scientific anti-Semitism' was worthless so long as it did not lead to 'anti-Semitism...as a logical reaction', i.e., political activity in the form of organizing the masses to carry out the practical dictates of scientific knowledge.

²Cf. VJHZG 7:2 (1963), 205ff; 11:3 (1963), 289ff,295; 14:2 (1966), 207f; 16:4 (1968), 395ff,400ff. In discussing the sources of Hitler's anti-Semitism, R.H. Phelps maintains that many of the themes of Hitler's early speeches can be found in Rosenberg's early anti-Semitic writings, e.g., his articles in Auf gut deutsch, Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten, Unmoral im Talmud, and his translation of Gourgenot des Mousseaux: Der Jude, das Judentum und die Verjudung der christlichen Völker (398).

That Hitler drew upon Rosenberg's early anti-Semitic writings, is abundantly clear from Eckart's records of their conversations. Many of Hitler's ideas, allusions, and references are in Rosenberg: for instance, stress on the moral necessity of anti-Semitism, appeal to the immorality of the Talmud, and anti-Semitic quotations from enlightened intellectuals like Bruno and Kant.¹

Furthermore, Hitler put forth in these conversations an anti-Semitic philosophy of history similar to Rosenberg's. History was an integral part of nature and followed nature's laws. But human history presented one long series of revolts against nature's aristocratic laws. On the analogy of astronomy there had to be some hidden, mysterious force which could explain this constant irregularity. This natural force was the Jew, who was behind all these revolutions. In the midst of constant change the Jews, who had no notion whatever of temporal flux (Zeitlichkeit), constituted a constant which never changed. Jewish duplicity and brutality, as evidenced by ritual and mass murders throughout their history, remained ever the same. All of history's social upheavals, from the Exodus to the Russian Revolution, were essentially the product of Jewish Bolshevism from Moses to Lenin and his Jewish accomplices Trotzky and Zinoviev—not to mention Kun, Harden, Lassalle, and Marx. Hence to see and trace the Jew everywhere was the historian's task.

Traditional Christianity stemming from Paul, the mass murderer become

¹D. Eckart, Der Bolschewismus von Moses bis Lenin (Munich, 1924), 13f, 24f, 31, 41, 44f, passim. For the authenticity of this source, see E. Nolte, Historische Zeitschrift 192 (1961), 584ff, 604-606; Maser, Hitler, 186n. Nolte, maintaining that it is unlikely that Rosenberg the 'lost liberal and scholar' ever had any 'serious influence' on Hitler, admits that he introduced Eckart and Hitler to Russian and French anti-Semitic sources (599fn). For parallels in Rosenberg see, in addition to his anti-Semitic books, his article 'Der Antisemitismus, ihre wirtschaftliche, politische, nationale, religiöse und sittliche Notwendigkeit', Deutschlands Erneuerung 6 (1922), 361-370.

saint, was likewise a bolshevist phenomenon. In line with the religious anti-Semitism of Eckart and Rosenberg, the Jews were identified with Satan and the demonic. According to Hitler the 'Jewish spirit' would remain even if Old Testament, Talmud, and synagogue had never existed. Behind everything evil stood the Jew bent not only on ruling but also on destroying the world. Under the delusion of elevating man and furthering human progress, he only tormented mankind with delusion, despair, and destruction. His was the 'tragedy of Lucifer'!¹

Anti-Semitism, for Hitler as well as Rosenberg, was not only a political and economic but also a religious and moral necessity. Rational or intellectual anti-Semitism involved a religious mission. This religious dimension, so evident in Rosenberg and Eckart, is clearly evident, though somewhat subdued, in Mein Kampf. According to Hitler's book, should the Jew, by means of his Marxist confession of faith, triumph over the world's peoples, his crown would mean the death of mankind by virtue of Nature's inexorable vengeance upon those who transgress her commandments. According to Hitler's confession: 'I believe that I am acting now in the interest of the Almighty Creator: in resisting the Jew I am fighting for the work of the Lord'. Should Germany free herself from Jewish tyranny, this would mean destroying, for the whole world, the greatest danger confronting the nations. The final overthrow of world Jewry was viewed with apocalyptic fervor. The Jew would go his fateful way—'until the day when another force steps forth to oppose him and in violent struggle casts the heaven-stormer

¹Ibid., 5ff, 9, 15, 26-30, 40, 46-50. Hitler presumed that Lenin must have been a Jew since Jewish revolutionaries claimed him as one of their own (26). At any rate, he certainly represented the 'Jewish spirit' (46).

back to Lucifer'.¹

Throughout his career Hitler assumed and maintained the reality of a Jewish conspiracy to rule the world as depicted in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. But whereas Rosenberg implicated both the Freemasons and the Jesuits in the plot, Hitler included the Masons but was silent about the Jesuits. Although Rosenberg probably introduced Hitler to the Protocols, it is not likely that the conspiracy idea as such came from the Baltic émigré. For as early as 1915, in his earliest extant political reference, Hitler hoped for the destruction not only of Germany's international enemies but also of 'our inner internationalism'.² Moreover, belief in the Jewish conspiracy was common ground in the NSDAP of 1920 as indicated by Drexler's references to the Protocols and Freemasonry. When Hitler called for an organized struggle against the 'mysterious forces' of Jewry and Freemasonry, he received tumultuous applause.³

Hitler discussed the authenticity of the Protocols in private conversations. For example, Ludecke mentioned that even Rosenberg had doubts about their genuineness; but the conversation was interrupted before Hitler could respond. According to Rauschning, Hitler did not really care whether the Protocols were historically genuine. If not, their 'inner truth' was all the more convincing. As soon as he had read the Protocols, he saw that

¹Mein Kampf, 751, 703, 69-70; cf. Cohn, Myth, 206-209. For Eckart's intellectual and religious anti-Semitism see, besides the conversations with Hitler, his anti-Semitic sermons in Auf gut deutsch published as Das ist der Jude! Laienpredigt über Juden- und Christentum (Munich, 1920). Cf. Rosenberg, Dietrich Eckart, 193ff.

²Hitler to Hepp, 5.2.1915 (Briefe und Notizen, 100). Cf. Mein Kampf, 337-345.

³VJHZG 16:4 (1968), 415 (13.8.1920); 11:3 (1963), 320f (22.9.1920); 16:3 (1968), 285n (17.2.1920). Cf. Briefe und Notizen, 175, 233, 235, 247 for references to the Jewish conspiracy in Hitler's 1920 speech notes. The theme was common in his speeches during the 1920's. Cf. E. Boepple, Adolf Hitlers Reden (Munich, 1933), 45-49 (13.4.1923); VB, 18.7.1928 (Zweites Buch, 29). According to W. Horn (VJHZG 16:3, 1968, 255n), early DAP leader Karl Harrer spoke of 'Pan-Jewish world dominion' since the French Revolution on 12.3.1919.

to beat the Jew in the decisive struggle for the fate of the world, he had to duplicate their own methods in his own way. Allegedly he did not take German Freemasonry seriously.¹ However, Hitler's actions seem to belie this remark in that the Third Reich brutally persecuted the Masons along with the Jews. During the War Hitler maintained that the spiritual struggle against Jews, Freemasons, and their doctrinal allies was an essential part of the war effort.² If Hitler did not really take the conspiracy notion seriously, why did he waste valuable time and effort fighting Jewry and Freemasonry during the War? If not, how does one explain the fact that in 1942 Rosenberg, allegedly at the Fuehrer's request, had the Protocols translated into English for prisoners of war?³ The only explanation is that in Hitler's mind the Jews and their accomplices were the real enemies.⁴

The Nazi Fuehrer, much like Rosenberg, viewed the Jews in moral and metaphysical terms as the very principle of evil. As Hitler remarked to Rauschning, the Jew could not be annihilated generally; if so, the Nazis would have to invent him—one needed a visible enemy. There could not be two chosen peoples. Behind the scenes of the historical struggle with the Jews raged a mythical war of the gods.

Two worlds stand opposed to each other: the divine man and the Satanic man (der Gottesmensch und der Satansmensch)! The Jew is the rival-man (Gegenmensch), the anti-man (Antimensch), the creature of another god. He must have come from another root of the human family. The Aryan and the Jew I set over against each other; and calling the one human, I must call the other something else. They are as far apart as man and beast. Not that I call the Jew a beast. He is much further from a beast than we Aryans. He is a being alien to nature and remote from it (naturfremdes

¹Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 224-226; Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 482.

²Führer-Erlass, 1.3.1942 (PS-847). Cf. 'Persecution of Freemasonry', WLB 15, 36-37. Hitler's Secret Conversations (6.1./3.2.1942), 193, 278-279.

³Besprechungen...1942, 9.1.1942 (BA: NS 8/66, 123).

⁴The secondary literature generally supports the view that Hitler really believed in a Jewish and Masonic conspiracy: e.g., Heiden, History of National Socialism, 66f; Schramm, Hitler, 45; Cohn, Myth, 200f.

und naturfernes Wesen).¹

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLITICS

Hitler's racial and religious philosophy of history was the basis of his political mission. If politics was history in the making (werdende Geschichte), and history itself the story of the struggle of men and nations to perpetuate themselves, then politics was obviously carrying on the life struggle of a people. But politics was not only a nation's struggle for existence as such, but the art (Kunst) of carrying on this struggle. Political success was maintaining the racial substance; political failure, its loss. But only a new reformation movement could deliver the German people from the abyss by setting self-conscious knowledge over against racial ignorance and by drawing all the consequences of this knowledge. The mission of the Nazi Movement, for Hitler as for Rosenberg, was to translate the scientific insights of the racial doctrine into 'practically applied politics'.²

Although he considered himself first and foremost a politician, Hitler's political thought as such amounted to little more than the application of his ideology and philosophy of history.³ Despite the fact that he spent his life in politics, he had little interest in political theory per se, beyond the brutal and clever application of his world and life view. The reason for this is very simple. Politics per se was not a theoretical but a practical affair. Having to do with means not ends, politics as such was not a matter of theory or ideology. Throughout the whole of his political

¹Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 227f, 220ff, 223.

²Zweites Buch, 127, 47. Cf. Denkschrift zum Vierjahresplan, Aug. 1936 (VJHZG 3:2, 1955, 206).

³For this reason the following discussion is rather abbreviated. For a somewhat fuller discussion of Hitler's political thought, together with its basis in his racial ideology, see A. Bullock, 'The Political Ideas of Adolf Hitler,' The Third Reich, 350-378.

career Hitler maintained that the State and politics was not an end in itself, but merely a means to the end of preserving man's racial existence. Everything political was a means to the end of preserving those basic physical and spiritual characteristics of race which allegedly provided the precondition for a higher culture and thus higher humanity.¹

It is not necessary to look beyond Hitler's earliest speeches to find his basic political outlook. This experienced little or no development and corresponded to that of Rosenberg. Political power was a practical necessity in the struggle for existence. Germany would not be redeemed by Liberal Democracy or Jewish dictatorship, but only by a 'dictatorship of genius' (Diktatur des Genies).² No particular form of government was legitimate in and of itself. Not name or form but the way power was exercised (Art und Ausübung der Macht) was the crucial thing. Hitler put it in very simple terms:

Politics is only a means to an end, namely to the end that one's own Volk prospers and progresses. It is not now a question of monarchy or republic, but for us there may be only one political form (Staatsform), whatever happens to be best for the people (applause). We need a dictator who is a genius if we want to come up in the world again.³

With regard to economic and social issues, Hitler, much like Rosenberg, from the beginning directed discontent in a spiritual and anti-Semitic direction. The Party supposedly opposed the rule of money and the slavery of interest (Zinsknechtschaft). This meant practically a campaign against the Jews. Hitler made clear as early as 1919 that the DAF was a 'reactionary party' in the sense that it opposed the Jewish Revolution of 1918.

¹Mein Kampf, 421, 431, 433f. Cf. Jäckel, Hitlers Weltanschauung, 86ff.

²Briefe und Notizen, 341, 271; VJHZG 11:3, 1960, 289, 318.

³Munich, 24.4.1920 (VJHZG 11:3, 1960, 299; cf. 319, 310, 304, 301).

Political revolutions could happen quickly but not economic revolutions. Nevertheless the Jews were aiming at an economic revolution. Thus it was necessary to overcome the devil inside Germany in terms of a 'second' revolution against the Jews. Enlightening the masses (Volksaufklärung in der breiten Masse) was the order of the day. One had to fight capitalistic exploitation in the form of international investment capital (Leikapital) and strive for social legislation, but not in any Spartacist sense. The interest slavery had to be broken but not by force. This was to be used only against those who hindered the Nazi Revolution.¹

Hitler's Socialism, like Rosenberg's, was not a matter of economic reality but ethnic religion. Socialism meant a 'moral conception of the Volk' in terms of racial anti-Semitism. In response to the charge that the NSDAP opposed financial but not industrial capital, Hitler declared that opposition to industrial Capitalism was practically impossible; one could only hope to prevent its misuse. Such opposition was only a ruse to divert the people from the real battle against international Jewish Capitalism. Social justice meant stripping the Jews of their economic power. Ultimately Socialism was a moral matter arising from the duty to work and to put the interest of the people as a whole before self-interest (Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz). Thus true Socialism, which could be found only among Aryan nations and races, was inseparable from Nationalism. Every Socialist had to be an anti-Semite in opposition to Jewish mammon and materialism. Socialism could only be realized hand in hand with Nationalism and anti-Semitism.²

With respect to social and economic questions Hitler, like Rosenberg, always held to the primacy of the political. Politics should provide the basis of society not economics. However, it was absolutely necessary for

¹ Munich, 10.12.1919; 27.4./11.6.1920 (VJHZG 11:3, 1960, 291,299-301,303f).

² Munich, 13.8.1920 (VJHZG 16:4, 1968, 408-410,415-417; 11:3, 1963, 309). Cf. Munich, 25.8./20.9./24.9./19.10.1920 (VJHZG 11:3, 1963, 310f,319,322f; 7:2, 1959, 218f).

the Party to create a new social order. The classless society of the Marxists was insane since social order always meant social status. But just as ridiculous was the Liberal notion of social status on the basis of money. The basic principle of the new Nazi society would not be class struggle but the order of nature based on the principle of natural selection operating within a constant struggle for power and producing constant social revolution.

According to Hitler the attempt to do away with private property and profit was mad, like trying to abolish sex by law, since the drive to acquire and possess was a natural instinct. The State simply had to limit private profit and initiative according to changing needs and circumstances. This was not a question of theoretical consideration but of the given practical situation. There could be no fixed Nazi social or economic position in this world of historical flux. The Nazi political revolution dipped deeper than merely changing the outer order of things. Nazism changed the inner outlook of men by integrating them into the Party as a political order or, better, ideological order. It furthered the felicity of communal fellowship, rather than personal happiness, much like that experienced by the first Christian communities. 'What is the point of possessing things and earning money? Why is it necessary for us to socialize banks and factories? We socialize men'.¹

Hitler's critique of political Catholicism, Conservatism, Liberalism, and Marxism was very similar to Rosenberg's. Revolutionary racial anti-Semitism meant anti-Catholicism, anti-Conservatism, anti-Liberalism, and above all anti-Marxism. Political Catholicism, Liberalism, and Conservatism, alien to nature and outdated, led inevitably and inexorably to Jewish Marx-

¹Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 181, 166-180, 176f, 164f, 43-46. These social and economic views expressed to Rauschning are similar to those expressed to O. Strasser (Ministersessel, 1930, 12ff, 19ff) in the same conversation in which Hitler vigorously defended Rosenberg's ideology.

ism. All were helpless against the Marxist menace, and Hitler made clear that there would be no room for any of them in a Nazi Germany. For instance, the NSDAP would do away with parliamentary institutions even if participating in them for the sake of power. Marxism, which Hitler always saw in terms of its consistent Bolshevik form, constituted the greatest practical danger in the concrete political struggle. The means for destroying Jewish Bolshevism were twofold: propaganda and terror in the hands of a ruthless political organization led by a genius. Only by outstripping the Bolsheviks in the use of their own methods, could one hope for victory in the struggle against this greatest of dangers to mankind. The primary practical goal of the NSDAP had to be 'the annihilation and extermination of the Marxist ideology'.¹

This concrete practical mission, to be accomplished by these simple means, constituted Hitler's life work. Absolute anti-Semitism meant, above all, annihilating Marxism and Bolshevism. He set forth this mission in Mein Kampf and countless speeches, and pursued it with relentless and ruthless consistency. As he put it at the end of his life, the destruction of Jewish Bolshevism, in the form of conquering living space in the East, was the ambition of his life, the very 'raison d'etre of National Socialism'.²

¹Denkschrift, 22.10.1922 (Tyrell, Führer Befehl, 48-50). Cf. Mein Kampf, 171, 379, passim. Hitler claimed that he was not only the 'conqueror' but the 'executor' (Volkstrecker) of Marxism in that he had learned much from the Marxists—their practical methods not their theoretical doctrines. He alone had dared to put into practice what bourgeois Socialists and Marxists had only timidly begun (Rauschnig, Gespräche mit Hitler, 174f, 225).

²Testament of Adolf Hitler (4.2.1945), 33-34. Cf. Mein Kampf, 69f, 171, 184f, 351f; speeches during the 1924 Munich trial in Der Hitler-Prozess vor dem Volksgericht in München (Munich, 1924), 17f (26.2.1924), 89 (27.3.1924); Hitler to Meissner, 21.11.1932 (Briefe und Notizen, 187).

Despite the fact that he was the Nazi symbol of the crusade against Jewish Bolshevism, Rosenberg had little influence on Hitler's political thought. It is, however, possible that Rosenberg's astute action in 1924 helped convince the Fuehrer to pursue the path of so-called legality. Moreover, Hitler's toying with the notion of the NSDAP as an 'hierarchical order of a secular priesthood' on the model of the Catholic and Masonic orders, doubtless derives from Rosenberg. The Party might incorporate an esoteric doctrine (Geheimlehre) and inculcate it by means of cultic symbols and secretive rites.¹ Although the Fuehrer later warned against the political danger of the cultic element, he nevertheless did not hinder the SS and other Party organizations from developing in this direction. Finally, Hitler also toyed with Rosenberg's idea of a senate to elect his successor.²

Foreign policy was Hitler's chief interest throughout the whole of his career, and he alone directed the foreign affairs of the Third Reich. Hitler's views on German foreign policy display a remarkable consistency from beginning to end, and his actions indicate a striking harmony between theory and practice, belying a nihilistic and opportunistic Fuehrer without fixed goals.³ This is not to say that there was no development whatever in his outlook or that his actions always corresponded to his ideology. The goal was one thing, method quite another thing. As Hitler maintained at the end, it was impossible to lay down any fixed principles (feste Lehraätze) in foreign affairs since circumstances were constantly changing. Yet the Jewish threat was, in this very context, a constant factor, and even a defeated Germany

¹Rauschnig, Gespräche mit Hitler, 226-227, 233ff.

²Hitler's Secret Conversations (24.6.1942), 501.

³Cf. H. Rothfels in Zweites Buch, 10. M. Broszat, 'Betrachtungen zu "Hitlers Zweitem Buch"', VJHZG 9:4 (1961), 417, 429. Broszat admits this while still trying to hold onto the nihilism formula (428f). Jäckel, Hitlers Weltanschauung, 12ff and passim. Most historians have come around to this point of view. That Hitler alone directed Nazi foreign policy, is clear from Goering's testimony at Nuremberg (PHKV 9, 413, 446, 684).

would have to honor the laws of Nazi racial doctrine.¹

There was some development in Hitler's views on foreign affairs in the 1920's. But most all of the final picture was there right from the beginning. Foreign policy played a dominant role in his earliest speeches. The formula was simple: 'first awaken nationalistic sentiment, with this gain power to become capable of making alliances (bündnisfähig) and shake off the yoke'. Or as he put it later in 1920: 'Nations are only capable of greatness when they have gone through domestic reforms which make it possible to sick the whole race en bloc on foreign policy goals'.²

Contrary to the opinion of some, the Nazi Party opposed Jewish Marxism in the form of Communism from the very beginning. This was the case in the DAP even before Hitler, though anti-Bolshevism was coupled with a readiness to co-operate with a post-Bolshevik nationalistic Russia. Moreover, Hitler's earliest notes assume the essentially Jewish character of Bolshevism in Russia.³ They also reveal the seeds of his policy of eastward expansion.⁴ This outlook is found in Point 3 of the Party Program demanding land for overpopulated Germany as well as in Hitler's earliest speeches. As early as 1919 he inquired whether it was just that Russia

¹Testament (2.4.1945), 105-107; cf. Briefe und Notizen, 379.

²VJHZG 3:3 (1955), 242f; 7:2 (1959), 206, 209, 214, 224.

³Briefe und Notizen, 241, 255, 349. Cf. W. Horn in VJHZG 16:3 (1968), 285f. Given this evidence, the thesis that Hitler and the NSDAP were not originally anti-Communist but adopted this line from Russian émigrés like Rosenberg (e.g., W. Laqueur, Russia and Germany, 55ff), is simply untenable. It is true that Eckart and others were favorable to co-operation with a nationalistic post-Soviet Russia (Horn, 285f) and spoke out in favor of 'German Communism' (VJHZG 7:2, 1959, 210f), but this in no way meant any sympathy for Bolshevism, or Communism as such, which all considered a distinctively Jewish phenomenon.

⁴Briefe und Notizen, 267, 269, 277. Maser, whose viewpoint demands that Hitler's radical anti-Semitism and expansionist Bodenpolitik first appear in 1924, misinterprets these notes (267ff).

had for each inhabitant 18 times more land than Germany. There could be no alliance with Soviet Russia ruled by political mass murder and economic misery. Moreover, Bolshevism was only a cover for building a great Russian Empire. A Russo-German alliance was only conceivable once Bolshevist Jewry had been dethroned. When the Nazi Party Program had been realized, the German State would become biologically strong (lebensfähig) again. 'And then, when we are strengthened within, we can as well turn to the East'.¹

Hitler presented the details of his foreign policy in Mein Kampf with ominous threats toward the Jews and special emphasis on eastward expansion. After power in Germany, then alliances with Italy and England, war with France, and finally a war of conquest with Russia for Lebensraum. This program was amplified in his unpublished Zweites Buch (1928) with particular stress on its ideological base in the Nazi racial Weltanschauung. As a result of its ideology the Nazi Movement had to place even foreign policy in the service of the racial substance.²

In carrying out this program one had to reckon, above all, with the dreadful influence and power of world Jewry. He who fell prey to the devil, had little choice in his allies. The real enemy in the world struggle (Weltkampf) was ultimately the international Jew whose racial and religious solidarity formed the basis of awesome political power in the form of a truly international state without territorial limitations.³

On the other hand, when Hitler prophesied to Rauschning his ruthless war against Soviet Russia, he declared that the ultimate danger was not so much Bolshevism but Russian nationalism in the form of a pan-Slavic colossus in the East; not Jewish Communism in Germany, but a kind of National Socialism in Russia. According to Hitler, even Rosenberg only opposed the Bolsheviks

¹VJHZG 11:3 (1963), 327, 289f, 297, 299, 306, 308, 318, 322, 329. In view of this evidence it is incredible that R.H. Phelps can maintain that Hitler's Ostpolitik is missing in those early speeches (288).

²Zweites Buch, 219, 44, 46ff, 78f; Mein Kampf, 1, 143ff, 684ff, 726ff.

³Zweites Buch, 220ff, 175f, 76.

because they made it impossible for Baltic Germans to be important in Russia. Like all Germans in Russia he was fascinated by the 'stupendous space' (gewaltiger Raum).¹

It is obvious that Rosenberg and Hitler cherished similar views on German foreign policy. Vitally interested in this crucial aspect of the Party Program (Points 3-6), both were agreed that the primary political goal was in the area of foreign affairs (as opposed to any domestic development such as social and economic betterment). Both stressed that Nazi foreign policy flowed from the Nazi worldview and the organic unity between domestic and foreign politics. Both emphasized the twofold goal: negatively, the removal of the Jews from Europe; and positively, living space in the East. This involved both racial policies (Rassenpolitik) and territorial politics (Raumpolitik): a twofold struggle against the Jewish world state without territory on the one hand, and those territorial states who might hinder eastward expansion on the other. As for means, they were basically agreed: the neutralization of the West by alliances with Italy and England and, if necessary, war; and then the war of conquest in the East.

There were, to be sure, minor differences in emphasis and detail. But the only major differences had to do with Rosenberg's idea of using the ethnic minorities of the USSR against Moscow, and his conception of an anti-Semitic Western Europe and North America united as a bastion of the superior white race against the inferior colored races under the influence of Jewish Communism. The idea of a four-power pact to keep the peace in Europe and further European interests abroad, found little response in Hitler, who thought more in terms of German world hegemony. Moreover, there is little

¹ Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 111ff, 123-125, 127ff, 138f. According to Rauschning Hitler stopped short of destroying (vernichten) in the form of directly exterminating (ausrotten) Slavs and Jews (129, 223). The following cryptic comment about Rosenberg has been interpreted in the above manner: 'Have you noticed how Germans who have been in Russia for a long time can never again be Germans? The stupendous space has fascinated him. Indeed Rosenberg is only against the Bolsheviks because they make it impossible for him to be a Russian' (125).

in Hitler of any world alliance of the white race. He thought of white North America not as an ally but as an economic and political threat, on the order of Russia, to a Germanic Europe. At the end of his life, for instance, he regretted having supported Fascist Italy and Falangist Spain in North Africa and not having fomented revolution among colonial peoples against their European masters.¹

Despite a similar outlook, it is very unlikely that Hitler got the basic components of his foreign policy from Rosenberg. There are two good reasons for maintaining this. One, Hitler's basic outlook seems to have been settled in 1919 and 1920. Two, Rosenberg's detailed views on foreign policy were published only after Hitler's views were fairly clear both orally and in print. It is of course conceivable that he was influenced by Rosenberg's views as early as 1920. But this cannot be demonstrated; and it may well have been the other way around in that, in contrast to Hitler, foreign policy was not Rosenberg's major interest at that early date.

This does not mean, however, that Rosenberg had no influence whatever on Hitler's foreign policy. There can be little doubt that his early anti-Jewish and anti-Bolshevist writings, not to mention personal conversations, both confirmed and colored Hitler's conception of Jewry and Soviet Russia. Though it is highly unlikely that Hitler got the anti-Semitic--anti-Bolshevik equation from Rosenberg, it is very likely that Rosenberg cemented it in his mind. Moreover, it is very probable that Hitler's conception of the Russian psyche, as well as of the racial inferiority of the Slavic peoples as compared with the Germanic, was confirmed by Rosenberg's racial interpretation of Russian history and the Russian Revolution.² The Baltic refugee

¹Testament (7./10./17.2.1945), 45f, 48, 70. Cf. Zweites Buch, 110, 121, 123ff, 142, 173, 218 for Hitler's fear of the USA as a political and economic power.

²Horn (VJHZG 16:3, 1968, 293f) claims that Rosenberg (cf. EA, 1.9.1917 in S&R 1, 20 and AGD, 4.4.1919) introduced the notion of Slavic inferiority, unknown to Hitler and the NSDAP before 1924. But it is much more likely that the Austrian Hitler was convinced of this while still in Vienna. One should remember in this connection that, while Rosenberg believed the Germans racially superior, he also spoke of the Russians as a great people; and that for Chamberlain, the Slavs were Aryans!

was always Hitler's expert on Russia, and often when the Fuehrer expressed himself on the subject, he sounded like his ideologist.

At one very crucial point it is quite possible that Rosenberg had a decisive influence on Hitler's outlook. It seems that Hitler's ideology reached its final synthesis in his Zweites Buch. This synthesis consisted not simply in the anti-Semitism--anti-Bolshevism equation, but primarily in the link-up between anti-Semitism and Lebensraum, in tying together his racial view of history and spacial view of foreign policy. In other words, Hitler's historic mission as theoretician and politician--namely to do away with the Jews in order to restore the meaning of history, and to conquer living space in order to secure the destiny of the German people--were practically one and the same. International Jewry had derailed the course of history's racial struggle for living space by holding power without territory. This was contrary to nature. The Aryan, whose life struggle was based on land, was to put history back in the right track by conquering territory and doing away with the parasitic Jew at one and the same time.¹

If this thesis is correct, then it is highly probable that Rosenberg helped Hitler toward this synthesis. The suggestion is that Rosenberg contributed toward that crucial unity in Hitler's mind between race and space underlying the historic actions of 1941: the invasion of Russia and the destruction of the Jews. This synthesis brought together the two levels in Hitler's mind: the programmatic and the pragmatic, the theoretical and the practical, the ideological and the political. Racial and spacial conceptions, considerations of ideological theory and political power, pointed in the same direction toward one single struggle. Race and space, ideological right and practical might, amounted to one and the same thing. To conquer living space in the East, one had to destroy Jewish political

¹JHckel, Hitlers Weltanschauung, 131-142. Cf. Zweites Buch, 220-223; Mein Kampf, 165, 331-334.

power. But since this was not based on conquerable territory, the only way to vanquish Jewish power was to destroy Jewry itself. By invading Soviet Russia one could kill two—even three or four—birds with one stone: on the one hand, gain living space in the East; on the other, destroy world Jewry, the international state without territory, and with it Communism and, eventually, Christianity.

That Rosenberg may have been the inspiration behind this outlook, is suggested by the following considerations. Although Hitler did not receive his racial outlook from Rosenberg, he always considered his ideologist the prophet of race, of the racial ideology of history, and of its radical application to foreign policy. This is indicated, for instance, by his 1930 comment to Otto Strasser to the effect that Strasser's defective foreign policy (*i.e.*, his pro-Russian viewpoint) was the result of not having Rosenberg's racial understanding.¹

At the same time, Rosenberg may also have been the apostle of space in Hitler's mind. It is difficult to determine the origin of his Lebensraum concept of eastward expansion (the seeds of which, as we have seen, were in his mind as early as 1919 and 1920); but Rosenberg, if not the inspiration behind it, may have helped him develop the idea.

In the first place, the concept of space (Raum) played a significant role in Rosenberg's thinking regarding Russia. According to his own memoirs and Hitler's cryptic comment to Rauschning, he was fascinated by Russia's vastness.² This fascination was certainly communicated to Hitler as early as 1919 or 1920. Moreover, as a Baltic German Rosenberg was very conscious of the historic German Drang nach Osten. His 1922 commentary on the Party Program spoke in glowing terms of 'settlement in the East on a grand scale'

¹O. Strasser, Ministersessel oder Revolution?, 13 (Baynes, Speeches, 1, 988f).

²Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 125; LA, 58: 'Endless fields, vast plains. The expanse of the East one felt as it were throughout the whole body as if one were travelling into infinity'.

(grosszügige Ostsiedlung). But although Russia was mentioned as an example of an unjust population-territory ratio contrary to nature, the only specific reference to eastern expansion had to do with acquiring land in the border areas of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Given constantly changing political possibilities, one could not be more specific. At any rate, securing territory (Raumsicherung) for agriculture and settlement (Ernährungs- und Siedlungsraum) in the East was a most important goal of German foreign policy.¹

It is of course possible that here Rosenberg was only reflecting Hitler's viewpoint. But according to Ludecke Hitler not only used this commentary in public in 1923 but as early as 1922 extolled Rosenberg's 'large conception of foreign policy'.² Since the émigré Balt was always the symbol in the NSDAP of the coming conflict with, and crusade against Jewish Bolshevism in Russia, it is highly probable that Jewish race and Russian space were eventually linked together in Hitler's notion of Rosenberg's foreign policy on a grand scale.

Nevertheless there seems to be no evidence of Hitler's distinctive Lebensraumpolitik in Rosenberg before Mein Kampf. His first extensive treatment of Raumpolitik came afterward in his 1927 book on foreign policy. But even here his viewpoint was somewhat different. For instance, Germany would only expand naturally into territory bordering on the Reich, for example Poland. Also, Rosenberg did not speak in terms of conquering land in Russia for Germans but of alliances with Russia's ethnic minorities against Moscow. Moreover, his new anti-Russian, as well as anti-Bolshevik line could be traceable to Hitler's influence, as well as to conflicts

¹S&R 2, 135, 165. Cf. Wesen, Grundsätze und Ziel der NSDAP (1922 ed.), 16. For some strange reason the original phrase 'Raumsicherung im heute polnisch-tschechischen Osten', etc. is not in S&R 2, 135. It is however in the 1930 ed. (16). Cf. Horn, op. cit., 291-293. While Horn may be right that the term Lebensraum does not appear in Nazi circles until 1923, one should not conclude from this that the idea was absent.

²Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 79, 96.

with stubborn Russian émigrés.¹

Nonetheless, Rosenberg's book, somewhat similar in scope to Hitler's later Zweites Buch, concluded by linking up the two-fold struggle: on the one hand, against national territorial states for land; on the other, against the international world state without territory. Both were necessary and had to go hand in hand since world Jewry was out to rob the German people not only of living space (Lebensraum) but also of the very concept of space (Raubegriff), of being bound to territory (Boden) in general. Also, Jewish domination of the territorial states allegedly strengthened their fighting power against Germany, even when they ceased to be determined by national interests. Finally, it was necessary to set up an international political system based on nationality and territory (Raum) to remove and replace the international Jewish political system based on money. The struggle was at once both social or nationalistic and racial or anti-Semitic.²

This similarity—plus Rosenberg's constant stress on Jewish parasitism, on Eastern Jewry (Ostjuden) as the real source of Jewish conspiratorial power, and on Jewish and Slavic inability to build a strong state—would point in the direction of his influence on Hitler at this crucial point. In addition, Hitler's 1941 comment that Rosenberg's hour had come would indicate that his ideologist symbolized, in Hitler's mind at least, the consistent Nazi attitude to Russia in the form of the synthesis between racial and spacial conceptions, the ideological and the practical. By attacking the USSR one could win living space and overthrow Bolshevism and world Jewry at one and the same time! The fact that the invasion of Russia was linked in Hitler's mind with a radical anti-Christianity, of which Rosenberg was also the symbol, would tend to confirm the suggestion that he

¹Cf. Rosenberg, Zukunftsweg einer deutschen Aussenpolitik, 18-21, 85ff.

²Zukunftsweg, 142-144. Cf. Zweites Buch, 220-224.

contributed to the Fuehrer's ideological synthesis.

Hitler's attitude toward the war in the East was expressed in a nutshell in his July 1941 conference on the subject: cut the giant cake in order, first, to rule, second, to administer, and third, to exploit. All opposition, including the Jews, was to be exterminated.¹

Although Rosenberg had little choice but to go along with Hitler, this was not his original conception, and he protested to the Fuehrer. Hitler's reply was that the Jewish question was none of his business but Himmler's, and that he did not really understand the brute exigencies of practical politics. Rosenberg argued that even on pragmatic grounds Hitler's policy (which he did not attribute to Hitler but always to his subordinates like Koch) was unwise, that the only way to win the East for Germany was to enlist its peoples against both Bolshevism and Moscow. Indeed, it is one of the great ironies of history that Hitler, the so-called pragmatist, dogmatically followed his racial ideology of brute power politics in the name of expediency to the bitter end; whereas Rosenberg, the alleged ideologist, pleaded for a more moderate approach likewise in the name of political expediency. When the war in the East was lost, he reminded Hitler of his original conception.²

¹Rosenberg, Aktenvermerk, 16.7.1941 (TMWC 38, 88; L-221). Hitler maintained that the Partisans were a godsend providing the Germans with the advantage of exterminating all opposition, by which he obviously meant the Jews who allegedly stirred them up. Since Rosenberg attended this conference, he knew Hitler's viewpoint but apparently hoped he could soften it by stressing his own viewpoint that one could not treat all the eastern peoples alike, e.g., the Ukrainians (89). Or, as was the case with so many of Hitler's followers, he blindly saw Hitler as representing his views regardless of what the Fuehrer said. Or, as was so often the case, Hitler either gave the impression or explicitly said he agreed with Rosenberg's viewpoint in order to keep him happy. Doubtless all three factors played a role. Why Hitler appointed Rosenberg to govern the East, given their basic differences in approach and his conception of Rosenberg as impractical, remains somewhat of a mystery. Perhaps for sentimental reasons, perhaps to keep Rosenberg happy, perhaps because Rosenberg somehow symbolized Barbarossa in Hitler's mind—who knows?

²Rosenberg to Hitler, 12.10.1944 (TMWC 41, 190; Rosenberg-14). Cf. Dallin, German Rule in Russia, 8, 30, 49f, 129f, 148, 167, passim; Bräutigam, So hat es sich zugetragen, 412; TMWC 27, 287 (1520-PS).

Hitler held onto his racial anti-Semitism and spacial expansionism with religious tenacity to the bitter end. Uppermost in his mind in the last hours of his life, these obsessions were at the core of the real Hitler.¹

HITLER AND RELIGION

According to Hitler in 1933, the political revolution was over but the ideological struggle (Kampf der Weltanschauungen) had only begun. Nazism was a Weltanschauung bringing its adherents into an 'organic community'. The Nazi ideology led necessarily to a new orientation in almost every area of ethnic (völkisch) life. The Nazi mission was only justifiable so long as it lifted Germans out of the abyss of a materialistic outlook on life by satisfying the thirst of the human soul and hunger of the human spirit. Ideologies always determined not only the character of politics but also the countenance of cultural life. 'Ideologies (Weltanschauungen) see in the attainment of political power only the prerequisite for beginning to fulfil their real mission'.²

Thus the Fuehrer was not simply interested in political power but proclaimed the Nazi cultural revolution no less emphatically than Rosenberg. This occurred both privately, for example to Rauschning, and publicly with Rosenberg at the Nuremberg Congress Cultural Rallies. In these speeches Hitler sounded much like his ideologist whom he followed to the rostrum. According to the Fuehrer, the Nazi Revolution would never have succeeded had it not proceeded from those 'ideological foundations' which would

¹Cf. Political Testament and Message to Keitel, 29.4.1945 (Domarus, Hitler, 2239, 2242).

²Nürnberg 1933 (Berlin, 1933), 84-86.

determine not only the German people's outer political life but also their inner cultural life. It would replace the 'spiritual confusion' prevalent since the end of the Middle Ages.¹

In all ages of human history there were prophets who tried to get beyond the individual's temporal experience to the causes, and thus the inevitable necessity (Zwangsläufigkeit), of the greater historical reality as a whole. Fortunate the peoples whose prophets were not literati but politicians! The 'historic mission' of Nazism was to banish political and spiritual anarchy by setting up a new stable and self-confident authority in the new Nazi Age, which by implication was to replace its Christian predecessor.² All such authority, indeed all human culture, rested on the spirit of community (Gemeinschaftsgeist), whether religious or secular. The Third Reich was not to represent power without culture, force without beauty. The aim was not the raw power (Gewalt) of a Genghis Khan but a political community as the champion and guardian of a higher culture. 'Indeed arming a people is only morally justified when it is the shield and sword of a higher mission'.³

There was doubtless a propaganda motive in all this Rosenberg-repeating rhetoric. However, Hitler's life-long interest in art and culture would

¹Der Kongress zu Nürnberg 1934, 96f. Rosenberg often appealed to this speech to justify his work. Cf. Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 165, 229-238, 210; 'Our revolution is not simply political and social—we are on the verge of a tremendous upheaval in moral ideas and the spiritual orientation of mankind'.

²Der Parteitag der Ehre 1936, 55, 65-67. Rosenberg also appealed to this speech in support of his conception of the Nazi cultural and religious revolution (B&E 4, 56-57).

³Der Parteitag der Arbeit 1937, 77-79. Hitler's speech immediately followed Rosenberg's receiving the first Nationalpreis für Kunst und Wissenschaft. Their common emphasis on the importance of art and culture did not mean that their views on specifics always co-incided. For instance, Rosenberg admitted specific differences with Hitler on art (cf. PT, 149; LA, 334f).

indicate that it was more than mere rhetoric and propaganda.

Moreover, not only the aesthetic but also the religious interest is very striking throughout Hitler's career. As a schoolboy Hitler, like Rosenberg, suffered from the contradiction between instruction in the dogmas of traditional religion and natural science, for example, between the ancient teaching of the Bible and the modern theory of evolution. According to Hitler the Christian religion could not get out of the dilemma with a symbolical interpretation of the Bible. Forced to choose between the two, he chose natural science and rejected traditional Christianity. Yet science signified the search for, not the certain knowledge of the truth. Modern science did not claim to know the essence or why of things, and religion or dogma in some form was necessary for puny and ignorant man.¹

From the standpoint of practical politics Hitler knew that it would be foolish to oppose Christianity as such. He would have to attempt to combine his political program with Christianity in some form with a view to using and redirecting the religious fervor of the German people. This interest, especially in the form of anti-Semitic Christianity, was very evident in the early Party meetings, as is clear from the police reports. According

¹Hitler's Secret Conversations (24.10.1941), 105-107; cf. 197-200, 328f, 648. Hitler's table talk reveals this profound religious interest. For its life-long expression, see F. Heer, Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler: Anatomie einer politischen Religiosität (Munich, 1968).

to the official Nazi Program, which for Hitler always functioned as a religious dogma, the Party represented a 'positive' or anti-Semitic Christianity without favoring any particular Confession (Point 24). At the same time Hitler posed as an 'apostle of a new truth' from the very beginning of his political career. This truth included an anti-Semitic 'purification of the Bible'. The Biblical view of history was to be recast in racial terms. The Party represented something new. 'Today we stand here as apostles—we want to create a new age'.¹

In his early speeches Hitler, unlike Rosenberg, did not attack the Jesuits or the Roman Church, though he did make clear that the Nazi was first and foremost a German and only then something else. Though the Bible was not regarded as a fully reliable, infallible authority, Hitler appealed to it in support of his anti-Semitism, since it certainly was not the work of an anti-Semite! Jewry used Christianity, just as it used Socialism, to further its own pernicious purposes. The Jews made a mockery of family life and that religion which still provided inner peace for many; whereas for Nazis religion remained holy and untouchable. The Jew, however, only destroyed without offering any substitute. He who was detached from religion in this age of deception could only despair unto suicide or become a scoundrel!²

In the early days Hitler even professed to be a Christian. His alleged Christianity meant simply anti-Semitism and supposedly pointed to him who had driven the Jews out of the temple with a whip. 'My Christian feeling points me to my Lord and Savior as fighter'.³ That this professed Christian-

¹Briefe und Notizen, 341, 293-297, 257. Cf. VJHZG 11:3 (1963), 292, 294, 301, 321, 323.

²VJHZG 16:4 (1968), 403, 406, 408, 414; 11:3 (1963), 288, 298.

³Munich, 12.4.1922 (Boepple, Adolf Hitlers Reden, 20).

ity was anything but the traditional version, was clear: 'We do not want to have any other God—only Germany'.¹

The mentality behind these public speeches is clearly seen in Hitler's conversations with Eckart, which reveal the profound religious interests of both men. Here, appealing to both Christ and the Bible, Hitler identified the Jews with the devil and Antichrist. Christ was not a Jew. The Nazis allegedly fought for the Christian foundations of the nation without ulterior motives on the basis of the Aryan or Christian worldview. This meant the 'simple doctrine of the Lord' not its Pauline distortion. Traditional Christianity, both Catholicism and Protestantism, was infected with the Jewish plague. But, unlike Catholicism, Protestantism was beyond hope of reformation. Despite his polemic against the Jews it was Luther's tragedy to have given to the German people the Old Testament—'Satan's Bible', 'the arsenal of Antichrist'. This Jewish humbug (Judenschwindel) was not genuine religion.²

It would appear that the messianic strain was in the early Hitler as in Rosenberg. Hitler allegedly said in a private conversation in 1923 that he was only a forerunner waiting for the Redeemer.³ By 1924, when he wrote Mein Kampf, he was convincing himself that he was a prophet indeed.

Nonetheless Hitler was, from the very beginning, very afraid of the political dangers inherent in getting involved in religious issues. Thus the Party stood for a 'temporal program' (Zeitprogramm), beyond which there were to be no new goals. Hitler emphasized this early on: 'We want no

¹Bayerischer Kurier, 25.5.1923 (Baynes, Speeches of Adolf Hitler, 367).

²Eckart, Bolschewismus von Moses bis Lenin, 13, 18f, 23f, 29, 31ff, 45. Eckart had previously called the Old Testament the 'Bible of Satan' (VB, 11.8.1921—Heiden, A History of National Socialism, 88). These themes often recur in Hitler's Tischgespräche, where he, however, attacks Christianity as such in every form, something he never did in public.

³Heiden, A History of National Socialism, 59. Although this alleged remark unfortunately is not documented, it probably has some basis in fact since Heiden's knowledge of the early NSDAP has been shown to be trustworthy in the main.

new ideas but only to fight for the old ideas recognized as right. Only the most pressing problem (das Notwendigste) has to be solved. We have only a temporal program....We are fighting today for our immediate future'.¹

Despite the allusions to his prophetic calling, Hitler tried to make this abundantly clear in Mein Kampf. Religious reformation was not to be confused with the work of a political party. Here one could not serve two masters. Political parties should have nothing to do with religious problems so long as religion was not alien to the people (volksfremd) or undermining the customs and morals of the race. The political leader had to hold the religious doctrines and institutions of his people inviolable or become a religious reformer—if he had what it took! It was difficult to determine the boundary between a religious and a political Weltanschauung. In any case, every worldview, Nazism included, fought less to destroy the opposing ideology (Ideenwelt) than to implement its own. Destroying another ideology could not be accomplished by force alone without fighting for a new spiritual outlook. Political anarchy and religious nihilism had to be avoided at all cost. The politician had to judge a religion not on its own merit but in terms of whether an obviously better substitute could be found. So long as a substitute was apparently lacking, existing religion could be demolished only by fools or criminals.²

Still the visionary anti-Christianity was never far from the surface of Mein Kampf and sometimes emerged. Ideologies, like Christianity and Nazism, were of necessity fanatically intolerant. For instance, in the much freer ancient world Christianity represented the infernal intolerance of intellectual terror. Such terror could only be broken with terror in order to create a new frame of mind. Nazism was an ideology in the form

¹ Munich, 11.5.1920 (VJHZG 11:3, 1963, 302f). Cf. the Preamble to Party Program (S&R 2, 129).

² Mein Kampf, 124, 127, 189, 293f. For a summary of Mein Kampf (and Hitler in general) on religion, see Baynes, Speeches 1, 333ff.

of a political party. As such it had to reckon with opposition, and have a limited program. But there was always the danger of losing the original ideological drive in the direction of attracting those small-minded spirits incapable of being led on crusades. Whereas the program of a mere political party was only a recipe for the next election, that of a worldview signified a general declaration of war against an existing order and dominant ideology. In this war it was not necessary for every individual in the Movement to know fully and exactly the ultimate ideas and intentions of its Fuehrer. The individual soldier need not be initiated into the thought processes of higher strategy! At any rate, no religious or humane considerations were to prevent the implementation of Nazism's racial foreign policy.¹

Nevertheless Hitler called upon the adherents of both Confessions to support his anti-Semitic program as the will and work of God. In this connection, he was convinced that in 20th century Germany, 'religious feelings still were deeper than all considerations of national and political expediency'.²

Although Hitler was out to channel völkisch religiosity in a political direction, he was afraid that religious disputes would destroy the Nazi Movement. This fear was so prevalent in his mind that he made it the burden of his call to refound the NSDAP in 1925. The adherents of both Confessions were to make common cause against Jewry, the mortal enemy of any sort of Christianity. 'Religious reformations cannot be made by political children'.³

If necessary, the Fuehrer was prepared to oust in the name of political expediency influential supporters whose religious views endangered his political ambitions—as in the case of Dr. Arthur Dinter.

¹Mein Kampf, 506-509, 630f, 687.

²Mein Kampf, 631; 'alle nationale und politische Zweckmässigkeiten'.

³VB, 26.2.1925 (NSMH 9:100, July 1938, 648; Baynes, Speeches 1, 368).

As Fuehrer of the Nazi Movement, and as a man possessing the blind faith to belong one day to those who make history, I see your activity as a detriment to the Nazi Movement so long as it can be connected with your reformation (reformatorisch) intentions. This conviction is rooted... exclusively in political not religious considerations....I only object to the idea that religious missions could possibly gain their creative force from political insights. On the contrary, they are often alien to such. Certainly under no conditions at all will political necessities be able to overthrow a Church from one day to the next. Thus political movements with definite concrete goals have been destroyed simply because they thought they had to fulfil missions of religious reformation....

As a politician—and I must stress most sharply that I neither am nor want to be anything more—as a fanatical fighter for another Germany, I see this danger in its full extent and, obeying my inner conscience and led by my insight, I dutifully oppose such a development. The destiny of our people, at least as a racial issue, will be decided more quickly than the realization of a religious reformation....

Today I am...39 years old so that, if fate does not decide otherwise, I only have a short 20 years left....In these 20 years a new political movement can very well achieve victory in the struggle for political power. For a religious movement, however, the first 20 years are comparable to the first nine months before a man is born. For the struggle for the present a religious reformation is now too late; for the struggle for the future, too soon. I know that you—unintentionally, but nonetheless in effect—are helping to weaken the Movement which alone were in a position to carry through the life struggle of our generation and thus provide the prerequisite for the future development of our people. In that I myself am dedicated indeed to the struggle of the present, I believe that by this means I am gathering the stones for a foundation which one day will be capable of supporting a universal structure.¹

Even when Hitler stressed the limited and purely political character of his objectives, the long-range goal of religious revolution was ever in the back of his mind. This is very clear in his private conversations.

For instance, the Fuehrer told Ludecke in 1932 that practical politics precluded even the appearance of a campaign against the Church, at least for the present. He was careful to re-emphasize that he was a politician with no ambition to become a prophet. But Nazism was a Weltanschauung and in fact 'a religion in the process of self-development and self-propagation'. Hitler was impressed with the fact that National Socialism seemed to mean more to the masses than traditional religion. Nazism was 'a form of conversion, a new faith'. But one did not need to force that issue—it would come of itself. It was certain that sooner or later, once in power,

¹Hitler to Dinter, 25.7.1928 (Tyrell, Fuehrer Befiehl, 204f).

Christianity would be vanquished; and a German Church without Pope or Bible, established. Hitler sounded like Rosenberg's Mythus: 'Of course, I myself am a heathen to the core'. The day would come when Nazi shrines and temples would replace those of the Christian Church. The enemy in Liberalism, Marxism, Bolshevism was the abominable levelling mania, 'the cursed universalism of Christianity, which denies racialism and preaches suicidal tolerance'. It was the tragedy of the Germanic world that it had produced no Savior. The crime that Jesus was judaized and an alien Asiatic spirit forced upon the Germans, had to be redressed. In the meantime, however, it would be politically stupid to show the masses too many enemies at once. For the time being the fight had to be concentrated against the fewest possible number of enemies, mainly the Jews and Marxists.¹

Hitler made his long-range program unmistakably plain to Rauschning in 1933. The Churches had no future, at least not for Germans. The masses would ~~never~~ again be Christian. Temporary peace with the Church would not prevent him from exterminating (ausrotten) Christianity in Germany root and branch. Unlike the Italians and French, whose Christianity was only skin deep, the German was earnest with his religion and had to be either a Christian or a heathen, not both. Contrary to Chamberlain, and what Hitler himself had once professed, it was impossible to purify the Bible. Whether Old Testament, New Testament, or Jesus' words—it was all still the same Judenschwindel. A German Church or German Christianity was nonsense.

According to Hitler one was either a Christian or a German, not both. It was crucial whether the German people espoused the Jewish Christ-creed and its effeminate morality of pity or a manly, heroic faith in God in Nature, God in one's own Volk, God in one's own destiny and blood. Gutless

¹Ludecke, I Knew Hitler, 519-521. There is no reason to doubt Ludecke's report since his account of Hitler's views is confirmed by Rauschning and the Tischgespräche.

liberal clergymen, no longer having a faith only an office, would teach the Nazi God in their Churches. Those who had made Darwin and Ernst Haeckel, Goethe and Stefan George, the prophets of their Christianity would replace the Cross with the Swastika. They would celebrate, in place of the blood of their former Redeemer, the pure blood of the German people. But this would take time. Without its own distinct faith the German people would have no stability (Bestand). But this faith was not that of those professors and obscurantists who wanted to found Nordic religions. Such were only tolerated because they helped to subvert the old order and excite creative unrest.

Hitler had only contempt for Protestantism. For the Roman Church, on the other hand, he had awesome respect. Nevertheless, he could destroy the Church in a few years! By pushing this hollow affectation of faith (Glaubensgetue) in the right way, one could make the whole structure collapse. But it was better to wait than to squabble since the Nazis were the heirs of the Church. 'Once the Church was something. Now we are the heirs. We too are a Church'. As the Catholic Church had done with heathen religion, the Nazis should keep what could be preserved and give it a new meaning. For instance, Easter no longer would mean resurrection but the eternal renewal of the Volk. The German people were still basically heathen with only a veneer of Christian mythology. The Nazis would wash away this affectation and arrive at their own faith (arteigener Glaube). 'If we give the masses nothing for that which we take from them, they will later fall prey to every sort of swindle'.¹

¹Rauschnig, Gespräche mit Hitler, 50-52. In the conversations with Rauschnig Hitler maintained, contrary to those with Eckart, that Chamberlain was stupid in trying to make an Aryan out of Jesus (51); but in his later table talk he maintained again that Jesus was not a Jew (though he may have had a Jewish mother), that he had been liquidated by the Jews for opposing Jewish materialism, and that the Jew Paul had diabolically distorted his original Christianity—Secret Conversations (21.10.1941; 29./30.11.1944), 664. For some reason Hitler at the end of his political career apparently returned to his outlook in the beginning.

In 1934, after the Blood Purge, the Fuehrer claimed to have ended the Nazi Revolution externally. But it was now shifted to the internal sphere. One's hate was put on ice until the day when the mask could be ripped off to stand revealed as that which one really was and would ever remain. As the greatest creative genius of all time, the Fuehrer was full of colossal plans but had so little time to realize them. Even his most intimate Party comrades had little idea of what was really in his mind, that for which he intended to lay at least the foundation. They did not realize the revolution in all of life (Umwälzung des ganzen Lebens) envisioned by Hitler the seer. Above and beyond his significance as a politician, he was the prophet of a new humanity. Man was becoming God. Nazism was only at the beginning of its ascent. First, the end of the political struggle; then, the decisive and inevitable war; afterwards, the reconstruction of Germany; finally, his sacrificial death for the Volk, after which would follow a great revelation. 'He who understands National Socialism only as a political movement, understands almost nothing of it. It is more than a religion; it is the will to create humanity anew'.¹

Meanwhile in his public speeches the Fuehrer assured the German people that Nazism regarded Christianity as the foundation of national morality. In an atheistic age the Nazis were creating the conditions for a real revival of religion on the basis of a 'positive Christianity'. The Christian Churches were being put under the protection of the State in order to enable them to fulfil their religious mission. They had been abolished as political organizations in order for them to be strengthened as religious institutions. The Nazis were simply following true Christianity in maintaining a clear-cut distinction between the terrestrial sphere of politics and the celestial realm of religion.²

¹Ibid., 232, 165, 229ff, 236-238.

²Baynes, Speeches of Adolf Hitler 1, 369ff, 375, 383, 385f.

At the same time Hitler presented the Nazi faith to the German people, and especially to the Party, using religious and Christian terminology.¹ He tried to harness Roman Catholic religiosity for Nazism with his successful Concordat with the Vatican. He also tried to harness Protestant piety for his own ends in his unsuccessful attempt to unify the Protestant Churches in one German Christian Church. In preparing for his war for Lebensraum, he felt it necessary to justify his intentions, in a secret speech to Propagandaleiter, by announcing that, finally after difficult inner struggles, he had freed himself from his childhood religion: 'I now feel fresh as a filly frolicking in the field'.²

In the meantime the Fuehrer permitted Rosenberg to probe the popularity and power of the Churches. Hitler the prophet envisioned that one day Nazism would replace Christianity in Germany. This was clearly implied in a speech at the 1938 Nuremberg Party Congress. At the same time, Hitler the politician was afraid that this development would take a mystical form endangering the practical realization of his realistic political goals. Nazism was allegedly a cool-headed doctrine of reality (kühle Wirklichkeitslehre) based on strictly scientific knowledge which had nothing to do with mysticism. Organizationally it embodied knowledge from experience in the sphere of expediency (Erkenntnis aus Erfahrungen, die im Zweckmässigen liegen). Nazism was not a mystic or cultic movement but exclusively a racial and political doctrine. Cultic religious rites had nothing to do with National Socialism; this was the province of the Churches. The Nazi 'cult' meant exclusively cultivating the natural and thus the divine will. The center of its conviction and confession was the preservation of God's creation and thus fulfilling His creative will, not in the secretive twilight

¹Heer, Glaube des Adolf Hitler, 249ff, 307ff; Baynes, Speeches, 1, 391, 412ff.

²Berlin, 31.10.1937 (Domarus, Hitler, 745). This statement most certainly was not a genuine confession of religious experience (as interpreted by Heer, Glaube des Adolf Hitler, 313f). Hitler had long since shaken off any Christian inhibitions he ever had. It is, however, significant that he felt he had to make some such statement.

of new cultic places of worship but openly before the face of the Lord! Should anyone believe that this mission was not enough for him, it was for him to prove that God wanted to use him to change things for the better!¹

On the eve of war Goering told Rosenberg that he wanted to know what the Fuehrer really had in mind (zuinnerst will).² That this included eventually providing a substitute for Christianity, is unmistakably clear from Hitler's war-time table talk, in which he time and time again returned to his interest in religion and bitter concern with Christianity.³

Here Hitler repeated the substance of the conversations with Eckart some 20 years before. But meanwhile he had come to the conclusion, much like Rosenberg, that Christianity in any and every form, even a spiritual one à la Chamberlain, was essentially Jewish. A form of Jewish Bolshevism, tyrannical Christianity was the enemy of humanity, the worst regression ever experienced by mankind. This was because it was a protest and rebellion against Nature and natural law. What was opposed to Nature could not possibly have come from God. Furthermore, Christianity's out-dated notions did not correspond to the level of modern knowledge. The Copernican Revolution had destroyed the Church's philosophy and proved Christian doctrine false. There were no truths in the Jewish Bible and to believe this 'Jewish mumbo-jumbo' was tantamount to mental illness.⁴

¹Nuremberg, 6.9.1938 (Domarus, Hitler, 893f; Baynes, Speeches 1, 394-397). Domarus maintains, no doubt correctly, that Hitler had Rosenberg and Himmler (and their followers) in view. But despite the slap at their pretensions the speech presupposed that Nazism was a worldview over against Christianity and challenged them to prove the long-range Nazi mission in practice.

²Diary, 22.8.1939 (PT, 91).

³Cf. Heuss, Hitlers Weg, 105: 'Hitler is a politician who wants to come to power. The religious realm concerns him only in so far as it furthers or bothers his political will' (1932). In view of Hitler's conversations this oft-repeated opinion is simply not tenable.

⁴Hitler's Secret Conversations (1941-1942), 37, 312, 76, 140f, 479-482, 565, 159f.

Christianity was a deliberate lie, the invention of sick brains. Church doctrines like original sin, children entering the terrors of hell, etc., were nonsense which no educated priest could believe. The idea of one universal God and truth was madness. If such existed, why did not God give everybody a chance to know this truth, rather than allowing so many religions and concerning himself only with a limited period of human history? Those propagating this fairy story invented by the Jews were the real purveyors of atheism. With its stress on spiritual unreality Christianity was simply ripening men for materialistic Bolshevism. But 'truth' in the long run would be victorious. Personally the Fuehrer could never come to terms with 'the Christian lie'.¹

In the long run Nazism and Christianity, contrary to Reichskirchenminister Kerrl, were utterly incompatible and would not be able to exist side by side. The fact that synthesis was impossible, however, did not necessarily mean war with the Churches. The ideal solution would be to let them destroy themselves without persecution. The only way of getting rid of Christianity was to let it die a slow death. But the whole matter needed much thought and would be worked out in due time. At any rate, in order to stem the tide of atheistic belief and save faith in God, it was necessary to keep the Party aloof from confessional issues. Moreover, nobody had the right to rob simple people of their childish certainties until they had acquired others more reasonable. The Nazis had to achieve this in time, but it would be useless to replace the old beliefs by a new faith merely filling the place of its predecessor. At all costs one should not 'replace the Church with something equivalent'. It was not the Party's function to be a religious counterfeit, and the NSDAP should not acquire a religious character in the form of instituting worship services. At the same time:

¹Hitler's Secret Conversations (1941-1942), 330, 328ff, 566, 583, 99, 92, 397f, 159, 37.

'We shall continue to preach the doctrine of National Socialism, and the young will no longer be taught anything but the truth'.¹

Thus Hitler the prophet, much like Rosenberg, believed that Nazism was eventually to replace Christianity, but that the substitute faith should not be a mere replica of its predecessor. The State was supposed to take both a passive and an active part in this process. On the one hand, the Church was supposed to rot away; on the other, the Fuehrer had a big book and would settle accounts with Galen and company after the War. Practically the religious issue was unavoidable for both Hitler the prophet and the politician:

The war will be over one day. I shall then consider that my life's final task will be to solve the religious problem. Only then will the life of the German nation be guaranteed once and for all....It's impossible to escape the problem of God. When I have the time, I'll work out the formulae to be used on great occasions.²

For instance, the marriage ceremony would have to be reworked. In addition, Hitler repeatedly threatened to remove the Church's financial support. Furthermore, men would have to be taught a religious spirit but without benefit of clergy. Unlike the Bolsheviks the Nazis should not be purely negative in the fight against the Church but should practise the 'cult' of those heroes who, like Kepler in Linz, enabled humanity to escape the rut of error. Although the Nazi epoch would see the end of the Christian plague, Hitler admitted in his more sober moments that this would take another 100 or 200 years and regretted that he, unlike Moses, would not be able to see the promised land from afar. 'What is important above

¹Hitler's Secret Conversations (1941), 86, 36f, 160, 83, 85f.

²Hitler's Secret Conversations (1941-1942), 158, 175, 111, 296, 520, 583. Even though Hitler permitted (and even encouraged) Rosenberg to quarrel with the Church, he claimed that initially he had opposed such: 'I still think it was a great mistake that Rosenberg ever let himself be drawn into a battle of words with the Church. He had absolutely nothing to gain from it' (519f).

all is that we should prevent a greater lie from replacing the lie that is disappearing. The world of Judaeo-Bolshevism must collapse'.¹

It is certainly strange that history's greatest liar, who denied even the possibility of universal truth, should dismiss Christianity in the name of veracity. Yet Hitler was not without his religion. This consisted in faith in the 'truth' of Nature pantheistically identified with God, Providence, Destiny. To deny this supreme creative Power was sheer folly. Religion was absolutely necessary in the form of 'natural piety' in the sense of an intimate harmony or communion with Nature. But, ultimately, Nature was unknowable and God the Unknown. Salvation consisted in the individual's effort to understand Providence and obey Nature's laws. Rebellion against Nature was revolt against Heaven. God or Providence helped those who helped themselves by submitting to and using Nature.²

This religion Hitler confessed in his last public speech: He was perhaps no shining church light (Kirchenlicht), certainly no Holy Joe (Frömmling). But deep within he was nevertheless a pious (fromm) man believing that he who bravely fought according to the God-created laws of Nature, never capitulating, would not be left in the lurch by the Lawgiver and, in the end, receive the blessing of Providence.³

At the end of his career Hitler returned to the theme of the Aryan Jesus fighting Jewish materialism and Paul's diabolical distortion of the Christian idea. Christianity was still identified with Communism. But Marxism, though a very powerful force, was no match for Christianity—Judaism's other, incomparably stronger, stepchild.⁴

¹Hitler's Secret Conversations (1942), 331, 175, 298, 389f, 517f, 523, 312f, 330f.

²Hitler's Secret Conversations (1941-1942), 35f, 108, 83-85, 565, 141, 157, 328.

³Obersalzberg, 4.7.1944 (Domarus, Hitler, 2, 117).

⁴Testament (25.2.1945), 94; Secret Conversations (29./30.11.1944), 664.

In conclusion, two seemingly contradictory keys to understanding Hitler's baffling mind are his complex dialectical ambivalence and simple diabolical consistency.¹ Complexity and simplicity were the hallmarks of his thought world.

The ambivalence, which makes him so difficult to understand, refers primarily to his capacity to live and think on different levels simultaneously. Hence there was at one and the same time more than one Hitler.² For instance, Hitler the programmatic prophet basically agreed with Rosenberg's ideology, whatever their practical differences. He understood Nazism ultimately in terms of Rosenberg's worldview. Hitler the believing visionary was convinced that Nazism eventually would introduce a new age to replace the Christian era. On the other hand, Hitler the practical politician was wary of the dangers of being bound to any dogma and skeptical of what could be accomplished in his brief lifetime. The cynical practitioner of political power was suspicious of Rosenberg's religious Mythus, of naively tying himself to any ideology. Yet, in the end, he was the prisoner of his own mythical worldview.

A second key, which makes Hitler easier to understand, is his simple consistency. This refers to the fact that despite all his pragmatism he religiously believed his dogmatic racial ideology and with ruthless and relentless rigor acted accordingly. This was the real, the ultimate Hitler whose ideology included pragmatism to the extent that, in the case of his Ostpolitik and final solution, what he thought was political pragmatism was in reality the height of consistent dogmatism. Chamberlain recognized early on that this was what differentiated Hitler from all ordinary

¹Cf. Schramm, Hitler (23ff, 28, 88, 91ff, 97, 120f) for a significant discussion of these two keys.

²Cf. Cohn, Myth, 212, on the reality of the two Hitlers.

politicians.¹ Heiden also recognized that one key to understanding Hitler was his incredible logical consistency.² Rauschning pointed out that no one else drew the same revolutionary conclusions from ideas put forth by others in a non-political context. To Hitler these ideas were no longer a literary luxury but for practical application in the political sphere. According to Hitler, he alone acted accordingly, utterly unafraid of consistency or consequence.³ As he once remarked, 'The main thing is to be honest and logical with oneself'.⁴

That Hitler's contemporaries had difficulty believing that his acts would follow his ideas logically and literally, is a fact of history. Their difficulty in taking his awesome ideology seriously put them face to face with his awful actions. The difficulty in seeing his deeds as the logical consequence of his ideas, is illustrated by the reluctance of some historians to admit it even after events in the light of Mein Kampf. The historians should not be too hard on the contemporaries—they have had the same problem.⁵

In the end even Rosenberg was fooled by Hitler's ambivalence and consistency. Like so many others, he saw in Hitler what he wanted to see. Rosenberg the intellectual ideologist was amazed at the Fuehrer's consistency and

¹Chamberlain, Adolf Hitler zu seinem Geburtstag, 20.4.1924 (Schott, op. cit., 16-17).

²Heiden, A History of National Socialism, 62: Hitler's 'gift of logic', his 'utterly logical way of thought'.

³Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler, 213, 255f, 258.

⁴Hitler's Secret Conversations (20.8.1942), 595.

⁵Hitler's consistency is incredible, but the evidence for it is unmistakable, and most historians would stress the importance of Hitler's ideology in determining the reality that was the Third Reich. Besides Jäckel (Hitlers Weltanschauung, 12ff, passim) and Schramm, who stresses the logical connection between Hitler's biological (Darwinian) worldview and his political ethics (Hitler, 88, 97), see, e.g.: Trevor-Roper in Hitler's Secret Conversations, viiif ('systematic thinker'), xxv ('terrible cohesion'), also in The Testament of Adolf Hitler, 1f; J. Fest, Hitler, 205ff, 779.

unprepared for his final solution and Ostpolitik. Nevertheless, Rosenberg did not criticize Hitler during his lifetime; and even when he did so in his memoirs, the Fuehrer's mistakes always seemed to be blamed on the bad influence of others. Hitler's story, like that of Lucifer and Wotan, was one of tragic greatness.

Adolf Hitler, the deeply moved (ergriffen) disciple of Richard Wagner, experienced the "Nibelungen" in the Linz Theater. I have had people show me the pillars where he used to stand. Now like Wotan he wanted to build a Valhalla. But as I wrote in the Mythus, when the will to power and justice fell apart, the fortress fell in ruins. Hitler experienced Wotan's tragedy himself, without being warned by it, and with his Valhalla buried the Reich....

At any rate Adolf Hitler goes down in history as a demonic figure of fabulous format. I revered him and remained true to him to the end. And now with his has come Germany's destruction. Sometimes there wells up within me a feeling of hate when I think of the millions of murdered and exiled Germans; of the unspeakable misery, the looting of that which is left, the political partition of a thousand-year treasure. But then there comes back the feeling of sympathy (Mitleid) for a human being who was also the victim of Fate, one who had loved this Germany passionately as we all, and whose fate it was to be wrapped dead in a blanket, laid in a ditch, doused with gasoline, and burned....

To understand all this in its deepest meaning, is not possible for us.¹

At the end of the Nazi episode, as at the beginning, the ultimate meaning of things was shrouded in mystery. Ultimately, the ruin of the Third Reich was no less a riddle than its rise.

¹LA, 260,342-343.

10. CONCLUSION: NAZISM AS RELIGION

This study has endeavored to understand Rosenberg's Nazi ideology (and as far as necessary that of Hitler as well) with a view to understanding the Nazi phenomenon. It is not possible in this concluding chapter to deal with all the questions arising from the study. The purpose here is simply to suggest, on the basis of the preceding chapters, tentative answers to the fundamental questions raised in the introductory chapter as to the nature, origin, and appeal of the Nazi Movement.

THE NATURE OF NAZISM

Any attempt to grapple with the problem of Nazism with a view to illuminating its nature, is faced at the outset with the basic methodological problem of how to define the complex Nazi phenomenon. What criteria should be used? For instance, whose National Socialism should be taken as the authentic and normative version? As Hitler Youth leader Schirach testified, practically every leading Nazi had his own brand of Nazism.¹ The Nazi mass movement, as Ernst Niekisch recognized in 1932, was in many respects a complex conglomeration of contradictions. 'The National Socialist Movement is ambiguous and ambivalent; diverse streams, passions, desires, and dreams join in it as in a common bed'.²

Nevertheless there was one common denominator holding all this diversity together—Adolf Hitler. National Socialism was, above all, Hitlerism. Nazism was Hitlerism, first, in the sense that Hitler's ideas and actions determined the Movement's history and destiny; and second, in the sense that Hitler's person was somehow both the concrete embodiment and mythical symbol of all his follower's diverse dreams. Thus if Nazism is to be defined in terms of Hitlerism, Hitlerism must mean more than what Hitler himself thought and did. A comprehensive account of the Nazi phenomenon has to include the

¹B. v. Schirach, Ich glaubte an Hitler (Hamburg, 1967), 87.

²E. Niekisch, Hitler—ein deutsches Verhängnis (Berlin, 1932), 5. Cf. Heiden, History of National Socialism, xvi.

mentality of his followers, that is, what Hitler symbolized to them—for example, to Rosenberg.

Hence Rosenberg's mentality and ideology would be significant for understanding the total Nazi phenomenon, even if he were only on the fringes of the Nazi Movement. Such, however, was not the case. Enough evidence has been produced to show that Rosenberg was a genuine representative of Nazism. The Nazi ideologist, his ideology and following, were not a Nazi oddity, not something on the lunatic fringe of the Movement (insofar as one can ascribe sanity to it). Rosenberg made a significant and essential contribution to Nazism.

In the first place, Rosenberg was a leading figure in the Nazi melodrama from beginning to end (Chapter 1). Then, more than anyone else (including Hitler), he provided the Movement with its basic ideology, and he and his ideology had a significant following in the NSDAP and the Third Reich (Chapter 2). Also, more than anyone else, he was the architect of the Nazi myth, gave it intellectual justification, related it to German intellectual history, and preached it to the German people (Chapter 3). Moreover, it was Rosenberg who was the foremost Nazi exponent and symbol of intellectual anti-Semitism, the Jewish conspiracy, and the racial myth (Chapter 4). In addition, his political ideology corresponded to Nazism as a political reality, and he openly analyzed the Nazi political revolution in terms of its true character (Chapter 5). Further, the Nazi ideologist was the public symbol of the Nazi cultural and religious revolution, and of Nazism as a substitute religion to take the place of Christianity (Chapter 6). Moreover, Rosenberg's ideology regarding the world racial struggle for living space made a significant contribution to the basic course of Nazi foreign policy and to its justification before the German people (Chapter 7). Furthermore, Rosenberg helped make Hitler essential to the Nazi myth, enjoyed Hitler's confidence as Party ideologist, and shared his conception of the importance of ideology in politics (Chapter

8). Finally, despite certain differences in detail, Hitler's own ideological outlook, including the notion of a Nazi religious revolution, basically corresponded to that of Rosenberg, who confirmed and consolidated Hitler's ideological convictions (Chapter 9).

If Adolf Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg were not genuine representatives of the Nazi Movement and mentality, then nobody was. If their Nazism was not the real thing, then such was non-existent. If we cannot get at the nature of Nazism through Hitler and Rosenberg, then we shall have to despair of ever understanding it. Nevertheless the objection to approaching the nature of Nazism through Rosenberg is that some Nazis opposed, and Hitler even mocked the Mythus, Rosenberg's religion of the blood. Moreover, getting at Nazism through Rosenberg as an exponent and example of Hitlerism, faces the problem that there was more than one Hitler: Hitler the dogmatic ideologist and Hitler the cynical opportunist.

In reply to this objection, it may be urged, first, that even if Hitler and other Nazi leaders were complete cynics, even if all talk of the Nazi Weltanschauung were pure propaganda (which this study would not grant), Rosenberg's ideology and his followers still would be significant for an historical understanding of the Nazi phenomenon. For even the cynical use of the ideology as propaganda presupposed that somebody in Germany, indeed significant segments of the German people including the educated, would take it seriously and believingly accept it as gospel truth.¹

Second, that Rosenberg and his ideology were a significant and essential part of the Nazi Movement, and thus a fruitful avenue of approach in understanding it, is clear from Hitler's attitude and actions. Even if Hitler himself took a cynical view of the Mythus, he was convinced that Rosenberg was necessary, indeed essential to achieve his political ends. Whatever

¹Cf. A. Bein, VJHZG 13:2 (1965), 146n: 'Using these theories to undermine opposing forces indeed presupposes that the masses are prepared to accept them as truth'.

our attitude, it seems clear that for some reason Hitler could not conceive of Nazism apart from Rosenberg. Proof of this is the fact that, despite the obvious political liability of the Mythus and many convenient opportunities to drop Rosenberg, Hitler consistently refused to do so. One word from the Fuehrer would have meant the end of Rosenberg and all talk of Nazism as a substitute religion. But the word never came. It is not likely that this is to be explained by Hitler's sentimentalism. The more likely explanation is that Rosenberg's ideology was basically his own, and he was not about to repudiate his own faith. But even if this were not the case, it is clear that Hitler the politician par excellence was convinced, contrary to others, that Rosenberg was more a political asset than a liability. Apart from his appeal to certain intellectuals, Rosenberg's ideology was absolutely essential if Hitler were to make the most of the peculiar religious character of the German people, the scientific undermining of traditional Christianity, the resultant 20th century religious crisis, the anti-clerical yet believing segments of the Volk, and last but not least German nationalist and völkisch religiosity.

Third, the real Hitler, insofar as he can be found, despite all his cynicism and statements to the contrary, was Hitler the programmatic ideologist. The ultimate Hitler was one with Rosenberg in believing that eventually Christianity was doomed. In the long run Liberalism and Marxism were by nature incapable of taking its place. Thus Nazism, or some similar nature-oriented Weltanschauung more in tune with natural science, some such political ideology with an essentially religious nature and appeal, sooner or later would have to replace it—at least in Germany, given the deeply religious character of the German people.

Hence, it is not unwarranted to generalize from the Nazi ideology of Rosenberg and Hitler with a view to illuminating the nature of the Nazi phenomenon, or at the very least a significant aspect of it. This study suggests, on the basis of the preceding chapters, that Nazism represents,

at bottom ultimately a religious ideology and mentality. That is, Nazism was not simply a political, economic, and social phenomenon but ultimately functioned as a secular religion, especially for the Movement's hard core and to a lesser extent for others. Nazism was basically a peculiar religious attitude and atmosphere, a self-created aesthetic world of make-believe. This believing outlook—embracing agnosticism, anti-Semitism, and Aryanism—culminated in a fanatical faith in Hitler as the messianic incarnation of Germany.

This thesis raises basic questions as to the significance and character of Nazi ideology in relation to the Nazi political movement. On the basis of the self-understanding of Rosenberg and Hitler, this study stresses the primacy of ideology, as understood by these Nazi leaders, in the Nazi Movement. But how is the primacy of ideology to be understood in the face of Nazi anti-intellectualism, ideological disinterest and heterogeneity, pragmatism and cynicism, not to mention the sudden disappearance of the ideology in 1945? The primary significance of Nazi ideology can only be understood in the light of its distinctive character and content as put forth by Rosenberg and Hitler. Despite a certain simplicity, Nazi ideology was many-sided and meant more than one thing. Taken as a whole and understood in its own terms, Nazi ideology included four basic interrelated dimensions.

First of all, corresponding to the timeless noumenal world, there was the idealistic or theoretical aspect of Nazi ideology. In that Nazi ideology in this sense despaired of any absolute or ultimate truth, it was on its own terms, like all ideology, ultimately mythological in character and content. Insofar as this mythological dimension permeated Nazi ideology as a whole, all Nazi ideology, despite its formal intellectualism, was basically anti-intellectual in the material sense that it disowned truth content in the form of abstract metaphysical truth in favor of concrete, organic, or personal 'truth'. This 'truth' was epitomized by the myth of race, or religion of

the blood, not to mention other aspects of the Nazi myth as cherished by individual Party members.

Second, corresponding to the real or phenomenal world of brute biological existence, there was the realistic or pragmatic aspect of Nazi ideology. Here Nazi ideology simply assumed the Darwinian view of a biological struggle for existence issuing in the survival of the fittest by means of natural selection. This was self-evident scientific truth, truth for all practical purposes as far as man could know it. In the power struggle for existence all theoretical ideology or myth was subservient to the end of biological and political survival. According to this pragmatic outlook, Nazi ideology in this sense could justify at any given moment the expedient sacrifice of any given idea, of all ideology in the idealistic sense, with a view to Nazi political survival.

Third, there was also a creedal or dogmatic dimension to Nazi ideology in the overall sense. This was the case for three reasons: One, the Nazi racial myth, or idealistic faith, though admittedly untrue in an ultimate sense, was believed and preached in the most dogmatic fashion as dogma practically necessary if life were to have any meaning. Two, the Darwinian ideology, with its emphasis on the practical necessity of functional expediency (Zweckmässigkeit) in life's struggle, was dogmatically presupposed and proclaimed as unquestionable scientific dogma absolutely necessary to the creed of modern man. Moreover, scientific and religious dogma were tied together in that the dogma of biological struggle was understood and presented as a racial struggle. Three, in this world of unrelenting biological struggle dogmatic ideology, in the idealistic sense of myth or religious dogma, was practically necessary for biological and political survival. Without it man lacked the will to struggle to survive. The Nazi myth of race was in this sense both a pragmatic and dogmatic necessity. Thus the pragmatic and dogmatic dimensions of Nazi ideology taken comprehensively went hand in hand, each presupposing and conditioning the other.

Lastly, there was the individual or personal aspect of Nazi ideology. The Nazi Movement exhibited a certain tension between the idealistic, pragmatic, and dogmatic dimensions of Nazi ideology. But all such tension was transcended, all problems resolved, by personal faith in Hitler. Belief in the 'truth' of Nazi ideas and ideals was not primarily a matter of their intellectual truth content as such, but of faith in their practical realization through the Nazi Movement and its Fuehrer. Applying Nazi ideology in the idealistic sense to the realm of real life was a matter of combining pragmatism and dogmatism as the occasion demanded. The Fuehrer with a foot in both worlds symbolized the connection between Nazi faith and the real world of biological struggle and practical politics. The Fuehrer knew how to balance the ideal and the real and would do what was best. Ultimately Nazi ideology in the overall sense boiled down to an attitude of religious faith in Hitler, a believing atmosphere engulfing and educating a community of believers. Hitler was in this sense the Nazi Weltanschauung, and vice versa.

The primacy of ideology in the Nazi Movement refers to the primary importance of all four dimensions of the Nazi Weltanschauung understood in this comprehensive sense: the idealistic religion of the blood, the pragmatic truth of Darwinian science, the dogmatic myth of race and racial character, and personal faith in Hitler to realize the racial myth. But it also refers to the fact that the actual historical course of the Movement as set by Hitler was determined ultimately by Nazi theory in the form of the racial myth and Darwinian ideology. Even when Hitler and Rosenberg thought pragmatically, their thinking was determined by that Darwinian dogma which was part and parcel of Nazi ideology. Moreover, Rosenberg and Hitler never lost sight of the fact that the ultimate goal of the political movement was an ideological one, namely a new Nazi religion.

The peculiar character and content of Nazi ideology itself helps explain how there could be ideological disinterest in a party as ideologically-oriented

as the NSDAP. It also explains Nazi ideological anti-intellectualism, how Nazis could be at once anti-intellectual and ideologically oriented. The anti-intellectual and personal aspects of Nazi ideology also help account for the degree of ideological heterogeneity existing in the Nazi Party, in contrast to Marxist parties for example. It is in one sense true that the Nazi Movement was not primarily a movement of ideas but a movement of men personally committed to Hitler, not a narrow ideology but a broad Weltanschauung.¹ Nevertheless personal faith in Hitler presupposed a distinctive ideological mentality. Also faith in the Fuehrer committed the unwitting believer to Hitler's brutal ideology. Hence ideological diversity among Nazis, insofar as it was transcended by Hitlerism, gave the Movement, paradoxically, a certain ideological uniformity in the shape of Hitler's dogmatic ideology.

The distinctive character and content of Nazi ideology also sheds light on Nazi pragmatism, explaining how ideological flexibility and dogmatism could exist side by side. Pragmatism was essential to the content of Nazi ideology. Pragmatism was built into the ideology in the sense that the ideology of biological struggle, while necessitating ideology in the sense of dogma or religion, also called for ideological expediency (Zweckmässigkeit). The anti-intellectual or irrational content of Nazi ideology allowed for a certain amount of ideological inconsistency. Yet even this pragmatism was rational in the sense that it was consistent with the overall ideological picture demanding realization in actual practice.²

The anti-intellectual character and mythological content of Nazi ideology helps explain Nazi cynicism, that is, sheds light on the puzzling question as to whether the Nazi leaders really believed their own ideology. The

¹Cf. J. Nyomarkay, Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party (Minneapolis, 1967), 19ff, 86, 149. Nyomarkay's analysis suffers from a narrow definition of 'ideology', the fact that he does not see Nazi ideology from within as a many-sided whole. Moreover he underestimates the dogmatic aspect of Nazi ideology.

²Cf. G. Mosse, German Ideology, 317: 'The irrational is made concrete through rational acts within the terms of its own ideological framework. These rational acts are implemented by a political pragmatism....But always the

answer is Yes and No. They were at once believers and unbelievers—believing unbelievers. In one sense Hitler and Rosenberg, for example, really believed the ideology insofar as it was supposed to represent scientific and practical truth. At the same time they did not really believe their ideology in the idealistic sense in that they knew that it was ultimately myth because man would never really know the truth beyond biological existence, what life was really about. Nonetheless Hitler proclaimed the unity of 20th century science and Nazi faith. Rosenberg, more philosophically aware, admitted that all scientific conclusions were ultimately dependent upon non-empirical presuppositions, ideas, myths. He was more honest than Hitler when he openly characterized Nazi ideology for what it really was, namely a 20th century myth. In another sense the Nazi leaders were believing unbelievers in that, although they knew that their ideology was not really true, they clung to it with fanatical faith since it was all they had—without it life lost all meaning. In still another sense Rosenberg and Hitler were believing unbelievers in that, although they knew that Nazi ideology was a myth, they would make it a 'true myth' by realizing it in this phenomenal world. They would create a religious atmosphere of make-believe in which men would believe and live as if the myth were true; and by their faith and works, make this fantasy world a psychological, social, political, and biological reality. This atmosphere of religious fervor was an awesome force. But once it was gone, the whole edifice of Nazi ideology, raised on the foundation of success rather than truth, collapsed in a ludicrous heap.

The extent to which Nazism was a substitute religion, is evidenced in the preceding chapters; for example, by the ideology, propaganda, religious language, and interest in religion on the part of Rosenberg and Hitler. In his study of Nazi language Klemperer stressed the tremendous importance of religious language in the Nazi mentality, both among the intellectuals and the masses. The language of the Third Reich reached its zenith in the

ideology provides the basic presuppositions and the eventual goal'.

language of religious faith. This was the believing language of Christianity and culminated in personal faith in Hitler. This fanatical faith had no intellectual or rational basis. Nazism was obviously a cultic movement, and Hitler was viewed in messianic terms as the divine Savior of the German Volk.

From 1933 to 1945, up to the Berlin catastrophe, this deification (Zum-Gott-Erheben) of the Fuehrer, this likening of his person and work to Savior and Bible, took place day after day and always "like clock-work"—and it was never in the slightest way possible to contradict it....Nazism was accepted by millions as gospel because it availed itself of the language of the Gospel.¹

The thesis that Nazism was at bottom a religious ideology or mental atmosphere of belief—as opposed to a political, economic, or social movement as such—raises the question of the relationship between Nazism and religion. To stress that Nazism had a religious dimension, that it was to a significant extent a secularized substitute religion, is nothing new. For example, Ernst Niekisch wrote as early as 1932: 'The Third Reich is less a political possibility than a religious hope: it is no earthly state but a sort of Kingdom of God on earth. If it is to come to us, it is necessary that a national Messiah bring it. National Socialism is a form of national Messianism; the Messiah is Hitler'.² The distinctive contribution of this study is, one, to stress that Nazism was far more a religious phenomenon than is commonly realized; and, two, to try to shed light on the nature, origin, and appeal of Nazism as a secularized religion.

If Nazism was, in part if not at bottom, a secularized Christianity, what sort of Christianity lay behind it? Both Niekisch and Klemperer stressed Roman Catholicism. It seems that the Nazi Movement did contain certain

¹Klemperer, Lingua Tertii Imperii, 120, 125, 110ff, 116ff, 126. Klemperer gives several significant examples of Nazi religious language and fanatical faith in Hitler. For additional evidence of Nazi religion, see J.S. Conway, The Nazi Persecution of the Churches (London, 1968), Chap. 6.

²Hitler—ein deutsches Verhängnis, 12f. Cf. Niekisch, Reich der niederen Dämonen, 102, 228ff; Mosse, German Ideology, 301, 312f, 316; Cohn, Myth, 197ff, 208f, 277. Orlow, History of the Nazi Party 1, 2ff.

secularized elements taken from the Catholic Church, for example, its cultic symbolism. Hitler himself suggested this when he characterized Nazism as the heir of the Church. His Catholic background, life-long religious interest, and awe of the Church—not to mention the depth of Catholic piety in Bavaria and other areas of Germany and Austria—would lend support to the view that Nazism was to some extent, a secularized version of the Catholic religion.

This view is confirmed by the religious mentality of other leading Nazis of Catholic background. For example, Goebbels' writings reveal a profound religious interest and are replete with religious language. An analysis of the language of his book Die Zweite Revolution (1926) reveals Goebbels' exploitation of religious language. Religious terms (e.g., miracle, deliverance, sacrifice, faith, apostle, mission) are twice as numerous as words belonging to the vocabulary of morality, the next most frequent word group, followed by the language of emotion and the vocabulary of biology. In fact, Goebbels' language exhibits a certain biologizing of religion and religious vocabulary (e.g., the word blood); or, put another way, the tendency to give religious concepts biological significance. This fact is by no means insignificant given the tremendous influence of Goebbels' language in the history of the Nazi Movement.¹

That Goebbels' religious language was not mere propaganda, is suggested by his diaries and letters. For instance, he claimed that the first time he heard Hitler speak he was 'reborn'. After one Hitler speech he wrote: 'Deep and mystical—almost like a Gospel'.² He wrote to the Fuehrer in 1924:

Like a rising star you appeared before our wandering eyes, you performed miracles, to clear our minds and, in a world of skepticism and despair, gave us faith. You towered above the masses, full of faith and certain

¹W. Betz, 'The National Socialist Vocabulary', The Third Reich, 787ff, 789f, 793.

²Tagebuch 1925/26 (6.7.1926), 87. Cf. W. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (London, 1964), 161-162.

of the future, and possessed by the will to free those masses with your unlimited love for all those who believe in the new Reich....You named the need of a whole generation, searching in confused yearning for leadership and a mission. What you said is the catechism of a new political belief, born amid the despair of a collapsing, godless world.¹

This profound religious interest was not peculiar to Nazism's man of words but was also shared by its men of deeds. Himmler had a pious Catholic background. His fanatical religious worldview is well-attested by the following report of SS officer Dieter Wisliceny, a close associate of Adolf Eichmann.

According to this view the Jews represented the principle of evil. Their organized accomplices (Hilfsorganisationen) were: the Church (Jesuit Order), Freemasonry, and Bolshevism. The literature of this outlook is well-known, the older writings of the NSDAP teem with these ideas (Vorstellungswelt). There is a straight line from the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" to Rosenberg's Mythus....It was absolutely impossible to make a dent in this ideological world (Vorstellungswelt) with logical or rational reasons; it is a sort of religiosity (Religiosität) which impels to sectarianism. Under the influence of this literature millions of men believed these things—an historical reality which can only be compared to similar phenomena in the Middle Ages, for instance the witch-mania. Opposite this world of evil the race-mystics (Rassenmystiker) placed the world of good, of light, embodied in blond, blue-eyed men, who alone were supposed to have the capacity to create culture and build states. These two worlds were alleged to be in perpetual struggle, and the 1939 war begun by Hitler represented simply the final conflict between these powers.

Most people are inclined to see in Himmler an ice-cold cynical politician; this view is certainly incorrect. Himmler was, in his whole mentality (Haltung) a mystic, who cherished this "worldview" with religious fanaticism. In possession of the necessary power, he began to realize his new "religion" of race" with ice-cold fanaticism, which is indeed characteristic of one fallen prey to religious delusion. Thus he wanted to make the SS into the "Order of Nordic Blood" as a "bullwark against Jewry, Church, and Bolshevism". All the phenomena of life that did not fit into this conception (Vorstellung) were either brushed aside or annihilated....Toward the "world of inferior humanity (Untermenschentum)" Himmler demanded the harshest measures. So the concentration camps came into being. According to Himmler's view humanitarianism was Christian "spinelessness" (Rückenmarkserweichung). Nietzsche's maxim "Blessed be whatever toughens" hung in almost all SS offices on Himmler's orders. Without question Hitler knew Himmler's mentality (Einstellung) and approved it since his own fantasy world (Vorstellungswelt) was similar.²

At Nuremberg Auschwitz Commandant Höss, brought up a strict Roman Catholic, described how he had become ever more alienated from religion until he broke with the Church in 1922. He had studied Nazi ideology à la

¹J. Goebbels, Die Zweite Revolution—Briefe an Zeitgenossen (Zwickau, n.d.), 7. Cf. Fest, Gesicht des Dritten Reiches, 101-103, 383.

²Wisliceny Report (CDJC-XXXVIII-67), 18.11.1946 (Poliakov/Wulf, ed., Das Dritte Reich und die Juden, 91-92). Cf. Cohn, Myth, 198-199; Ackermann, Himmler als Ideologe, 17ff, 31ff, passim.

Rosenberg, Hitler, and Goebbels.

"As an old fanatic [sic] National Socialist, I took it all as fact—just as a Catholic believes in his Church dogma. It was just truth without question; I had no doubt about that. I was absolutely convinced that the Jews were the opposite of the German people, and sooner or later there would have to be a showdown between National Socialism and World Jewry.... But everybody was convinced of this; that was all you could hear or read.... I didn't think of it all as propaganda, but something one just had to believe."

"You said you accepted this propaganda like church dogma. Was your early training strongly religious?"

"Yes, I was brought up in a very strict Catholic tradition. My father was really a bigot. He was very strict and fanatical....My father took a religious oath...dedicating me to God and the priesthood....He directed my entire youthful education toward the goal of making me a priest. I had to pray and go to church endlessly; do penance over the slightest misdeed....My mother also lived in the shadow of this fanatic [sic] piety".¹

The suggestion is that many other Nazis or Nazi sympathizers came from similar religious backgrounds. In their youth they rebelled against it because of personal revulsion or intellectual skepticism, or both. This created a spiritual vacuum, and the religious earnestness and thought forms remained to be filled by Nazism. It is perhaps no accident that Rosenberg received an especially enthusiastic response in such traditional Catholic strongholds as Münster, Freiburg, and Graz.² It would be a worthwhile pursuit to try to explain the Nazi phenomenon as a secularized Catholic piety in terms of the distinctive development and character of Catholicism in Germany and Austria.

But the old Germany of Bismarck and Hitler was two-thirds Protestant; Rosenberg, as well as many other Nazi leaders and Party members, came from Protestant backgrounds. If Nazism was a secularized religion, it was also to some extent a secularized Protestantism. But what sort of Protestantism? The suggestion here is that many Nazis and Nazi sympathizers came from more or less pious Protestant backgrounds, and that Nazism was to a significant extent a secularized German Pietism. Is it accidental that Rosenberg seemed especially popular in the traditional strongholds of German Pietism: for

¹Gilbert, Nuremberg Diary (16.4.1946), 246-247. Niekisch stresses the role of secularized Catholics in the SS, many of whom became priests after 1945 (Reich der niederen Dämonen, 228).

²~~The implication here is not that these cities taken as a whole were pro-~~

example, Halle, Stuttgart, Wuppertal, and Siegen. The hypothesis here is that German Pietism, not in isolation but in interaction with other historical developments, helped prepare the German mind for Nazism. The following summary is a tentative attempt to explain the Nazi phenomenon in part as a secularized Pietism in terms of basic trends in the religious and intellectual history of modern Germany.¹

THE ORIGINS OF NAZI RELIGION

There have been many, not altogether successful, attempts to illuminate the historical origins of Nazism. That there is some significant connection between certain basic trends in modern German history, particularly 19th century intellectual and political developments, seems clear; but pin-pointing precisely what these connections are, is another matter. All such questions of historical origin and connection are exceedingly difficult. The purpose here is not to give a comprehensive account of Nazi origins, but simply to suggest a particular line of approach for elucidating the origins of Nazism as a secularized German Pietism.

According to this hypothesis Pietism refers initially to the evangelical movement in Germany originating with Philipp Jakob Spener in the latter half of the 17th century, together with its distinctive religious mentality. With antecedents in German mystical piety, both Catholic and Protestant, Pietism stressed a living personal religion in reaction to dead Orthodoxy in its Protestant form. In contrast to Protestant Orthodoxy, belief in doctrinal truth was played down in favor of the experience of personal faith and inner conversion. True religion was more a matter of the heart

Rosenberg, but that many disgruntled and alienated Roman Catholics, especially among the youth, were sympathetic to his Nazi religion; and that it was people fitting into this category who joined the Party and became its fanatical hard core. The suggestion is that the same would apply to the traditional centers of Protestant piety as well. In addition, there would have been other Protestants, somewhat less alienated from the faith of their forbears, whose believing background prepared them to combine faith in Hitler with some form of pietistic faith.

¹Insofar as German Catholicism was affected by these developments in the direction of a distinctively German Catholic piety, the summary would be relevant to the thesis that Nazism was also a secularized Catholicism.

than the head. The great emphasis was on the subjective and practical aspects of the Christian life rather than its objective and rational basis in divinely-revealed propositional truth. But despite this anti-intellectualism Pietism was a movement with profound intellectual interests and inclinations, so that it represented a sort of intellectual anti-intellectualism. This very anti-intellectual character allowed for doctrinal diversity among those with a similar religious experience of spiritual life through personal faith in Christ. In time the emphasis in the Pietist movement was more and more on spiritual life and personal truth at the expense of metaphysical and historical truth.

As historians would generally admit¹, the Pietist movement had a tremendous influence in Germany: first, in shaping the religious mind and spiritual life of Germany's Protestant population; but, even more important, in shaping the mind of educated Germany as a whole by means of its influence in the schools and universities, especially in Prussia. Pietism made a lasting impression upon the mind of modern Germany through its influence in German intellectual life and history in the 18th and 19th centuries, not to mention its influence on the masses through recurring revival movements (Erweckungsbewegungen) and its crucial contribution to the rise of German nationalism in the 19th century.²

In the course of time, the original Pietist mentality became increasingly secularized to the point where some educated people of Pietist background became explicitly anti-Christian but still retained their religious fervor and thought forms filled with new content. Others still wanted to retain a form of Christianity with a liberal, anti-metaphysical, and anti-historical

¹Cf. M. Schmidt, Pietismus (Stuttgart, 1972), 165f; Pulzer, Rise of Political Anti-Semitism, 272f.

²Cf. K.S. Pinson, Pietism as a Factor in the Rise of German Nationalism (New York, 1968), 25ff, passim.

content. In other cases the original Pietist mentality still managed to maintain itself more or less materially intact in certain areas of Germany by means of family, church, local tradition, and revival movements. Thus, depending upon the degree of secularization, we may distinguish three types of pietistic thinking (with various nuances in between) amenable to Nazism: one, a fully secularized pietistic outlook strongly anti-Christian; two, a more or less secularized pietistic mentality espousing a liberal Christianity; and, three, a less secularized pietistic outlook of a more or less traditional evangelical character.

All three types contributed, indirectly if not directly, to the Nazi mentality, or at least to a way of thinking friendly to the Nazi Movement. How? In the first place, all three shared the same religious forms of thought only with different intellectual content. Given the materially anti-intellectual character of pietistic thinking, these forms both could be, and actually were filled with new content by the Nazis. Moreover, in all three cases pietistic concepts had been filled to an amazing extent with the new wine of German Nationalism. Most anti-Christians and liberal Protestants in Germany were gripped by a fanatical faith in Germany. Even the mentality of evangelical Pietism had been secularized to the extent that it thought of Fatherland and Reich in religious terms.

The consistently anti-Christian pietistic outlook contributed among others Rosenberg to the NSDAP; and Nazi ideology could appeal to it by offering a new pseudo-scientific, anti-Christian, racial faith of an anti-intellectual sort. The liberal pietistic outlook, regnant among educated Protestants, contributed to Nazism indirectly by way of its historical contribution to the formation of the modern German mind (through Kant, Schleiermacher, and many others). Many Nazis and Nazi sympathizers shared this outlook represented in the Party, for example, by the early Rosenberg with his liberal, anti-metaphysical, anti-historical, anti-Semitic, allegedly Germanic, 'positive Christianity'.

It is almost incredible that so many liberal Protestants (not in the political but in the religious sense) could think Christianity compatible with Nazism. There are, however, various examples of this outlook, for instance, theologian Hermann Sauer, who wrote a strange 800-page book to show that the 'Aryan myth' was compatible, under some sort of divine truce, with 'Christian reality' or the 'Christian myth'. The alleged historical basis for such was the coming of Christianity, the apocalyptic experience of the Nordic Völkerwanderung, and the German people's experience of Pietism. Historically, according to Sauer, the modern national idea, where it was really rooted in the life of the Volk, grew out of Pietism. Without Pietism there would have been no national uprising in 1813, no Prussian spirit, and no revival of the Reich idea. On the basis of Christian and German spirituality (Innerlichkeit) the renewal of Christian faith and of the Volk went hand in hand in the face of modern rationalistic Liberalism from Erasmus to the present. In the Third Reich education was only paying lip service (schulische Treue) to Rosenberg's ideology. The Mythus, however, was allegedly opposed to both superstitious and rationalistic religiosity (Glaubigkeit). On the basis of Kant's critical philosophy there had to be not only the renewal of mythical thinking but the fixation of cultic living in the form of a practical religiosity rooted in the Volk. There had to be a unity between religious and political life and practice.¹

It is more incredible that evangelical Pietists could reconcile traditional Christianity and Nazism. But with some this was apparently the case as indicated by one living in Württemberg, an area strongly influenced by Pietism. The following was written against Rosenberg's Mythus in 1935 and finally published for German youth in 1946 as a Gegenmythus by one who himself reveals a liberal pietistic mentality secularized in a leftist direction.

¹H. Sauer, Abendländische Entscheidung: Arischer Mythos und christliche Wirklichkeit (Leipzig, 1938), 81, 236, 249, 257ff, 397, 513, 758. Cf. the evidence mentioned above in Chap. 6.

National Socialism is a spiritual power. Therefore it is not to be taken lightly; on the contrary, it cannot be taken seriously enough. Our bourgeoisie (Bürgertum) took it much too lightly. Often even the church-oriented and the pious middle class (das frömmelnde Bürgertum), which saw and feared in the threat of Communism the enfant terrible as suggested by German Christian preachers, was only too glad to see in Fascism the lesser evil. And so to my great regret it was the Pietists themselves who as early as 1932 succumbed to the out and out lying Hitler propaganda and gave their votes to this greatest, by far the greatest, criminal of all ages and nations—this crude subhuman underling of the devil, son of hell, and Antichrist. They who had preached the coming of Antichrist for a hundred years chose him themselves before others.¹

Given Pietism's anti-intellectualism in the material sense, the Pietist mentality could be secularized in diverse directions depending upon the new content poured into pietistic thought forms. Distinctively Pietist language occurs constantly in Rosenberg, either unconsciously as a result of his background or perhaps consciously as an attempt to win those influenced by pietistic patterns of thought. For instance, the leading Pietist concepts were: life (Leben) through the experience (Erlebnis) of rebirth (Wiedergeburt), renewal (Erneuerung), conversion (Bekehrung), and enlightenment (Aufklärung); on the basis of redemption (Erlösung), by virtue of blood (Blut) and sacrifice (Opfer), by means of the decision (Entscheidung) of faith (Glaube) leading to surrender (Hingabe), fellowship (Gemeinschaft) and mission (Mission). Filled with new meaning all these terms are found repeatedly in Rosenberg as well as in Nazi ideology and propaganda in general.

This is also the case with the anti-clerical and anti-Church outlook of both ecclesiastical and sectarian Pietism. Sectarian Pietists opposed the official Protestant Churches from without while the vast majority of Pietists criticized them from within by the very existence of their conventicles (ecclesiolae in ecclesia) or fellowships (Gemeinschaften). In many ways the Nazi Party was a secularized Pietist Gemeinschaft trying to win the unbelieving Church and Volk by means of an atmosphere of faith.

¹F. Rothacker, Licht in die Finsternis—Aufklärung über Rosenbergs Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts (Stuttgart, 1946), 7, 5ff, 12ff, 19, 24, 28.

Historically Nazi ideology and the Nazi religious mentality are inconceivable apart from certain basic developments in 18th and 19th century Germany: namely, the philosophical, theological, nationalistic, scientific (i.e., historical and biological), social, and aesthetic revolutions.

The Pietist mentality helped prepare the way for the German Enlightenment: negatively, in that Enlightenment rationalism was to some extent a reaction against Pietist faith as well as Protestant Orthodoxy; but also, positively, due to the fact that in Pietism reason was more or less irrelevant to faith so that one could be at once pietistic and rationalistic. Moreover, leading figures of the German Enlightenment carried their pietistic mentality over into the intellectual sphere. The classic example is of course Kant. His Pietist background is no secret; nor the motive behind his Copernican revolution in philosophy, namely to limit knowledge in order to make room for faith. Kant wanted to save his own Pietist faith by making it intellectually respectable to modern ethical humanism and natural science. This he did by separating faith and science, relegating science and technology to this phenomenal world of nature and faith and morals to the noumenal world of human freedom and subjectivity. It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of Kant's intellectual and moral revolution on the modern mind, especially in Germany where the Kantian outlook was commonly coupled with the pietistic mentality of religious enthusiasm and moral earnestness.

Kant's theory of knowledge and consequent destruction of metaphysics, together with his stress on the primacy of the practical reason and moral earnestness, opened the way for the Age of Ideology. Modern political ideologies such as Marxism and Nazism are incomprehensible apart from Kant's philosophical revolution. Before Kant, ancient philosophers and Christian theologians on the whole really believed that their doctrines were an expression, however imperfect, of the truth in an objective and

ultimate sense. To those following Kant all philosophy, theology, political theory is no longer truth in this sense but myth, mythology, ideology to become true in experience by means of practical, particularly political activity. The modern notion of ideology (or Weltanschauung) is opposed to truth in the old classical and Christian sense. In view of the chasm between ideas and reality, ideology is necessary as untrue total truth, practical or situational truth, the truth of the historical situation, the truth having become true by being realized historically.¹

According to the primacy of the practical reason, all thought and theory is conditioned by historical circumstance and only has real truth value in terms of its practical value. With the negation of metaphysics and theoretical truth in favor of ideology or practical truth, it is no wonder that the necessary realization of such 'truth' takes a distinctively political direction of a revolutionary type. This mentality is manifest in Marxism as evidenced for instance in Marx's Thesen Über Feuerbach. According to Marx the question of objective truth is not a theoretical but a practical issue. In practice man has to prove the truth, that is, the empirical reality and potency of his thought (ii). Once the imaginary religious world is reduced to its secular basis in the real world, it is necessary to criticize the real world in theory and then revolutionize it in practice by removing the theoretical contradiction between the religious and the secular worlds (iv). 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it' (xi).²

¹H. Zeltner, Ideologie und Wahrheit (Stuttgart, 1966), 42, 10, 65, 103ff, 42: 'Certainly all ideologies as such have an affinity to political power: indeed an ideology is asserted as a total truth intended for all; and on the other hand, ideology can only find its fulfilment by being realized historically—only when it is realized is it really true'. Cf. H.D. Aiken (ed., intr.), The Age of Ideology (New York, 1956), viii-ix, 13ff.

²Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels Über Religion (Berlin, 1958), 54-56. For an analysis of Marxism as a myth with its origin in the development of German philosophy from Kant to Feuerbach, see R. Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx (Cambridge, 1972), 9ff, 26f, passim.

This mentality of the primacy of the practical reason, as a means of uniting the religious and real realms in theory and practice through revolutionary myth and morality, is also in Nazi ideology--only filled with different ideological content. Chamberlain, by no means ignorant of both pre- and post-Kantian philosophy, consciously built on Kant's philosophical revolution. Kant's philosophy made room for Chamberlain's Aryan myth, a self-conscious attempt to reconcile religion and reality by forcing a religious ideal upon this phenomenal world. Since this was theoretically impossible, Chamberlain's myth was, admittedly, a tragic expression of the original myth (Urmythos aller Mythen) that such was possible. But one could and would realize the myth in practice.

Following Chamberlain Rosenberg's Mythus also justified itself philosophically by appealing to Kant's Copernican revolution. Rosenberg's 20th century religion of the blood was supposedly a product of the practical reason of the Germanic race in the relativistic 20th century; not that of Kant in the rationalistic and universalistic 18th, or of the Jew Marx in the positivistic and materialistic 19th century. Hitler was not so philosophically oriented, but he knew that Kant had destroyed Christian dogma once and for all. His own version of the Germanic racial myth began with the agnostic presupposition that man really knows nothing beyond the biological and political realities of this phenomenal world. Hitler's practical reason prescribed his brutal religion of nature. The chief Nazi philosophers, next to Rosenberg, were all devotees of Kant: Professors Krieck of Heidelberg; Heyse, rector at Königsberg; and Baeumler of Berlin, Rosenberg's philosophical consultant. 'From Kant's theory of knowledge to Hitler's "völkisch worldview"--this is the path of the German bourgeois spirit from the beginning of the 19th to the middle of the 20th century'.¹

¹Niekisch, Reich der niederen Dämonen, 193.

Moreover, the Kantian moral revolution is not irrelevant to Nazism. Chamberlain could transform the principle of ethical autonomy, given its formal and subjectivistic character, into his 'historical morality'. According to Chamberlain, Kant's subjectivizing ethic, his reducing reality to practicality or the practical sphere, his removing morality from any basis in metaphysical theory or reality, his allowing for the creation of a non-existent moral realm by the autonomy of the will—would have been a very dangerous and audacious thing (eine wie gefährliche Kühnheit) were it not for the Germanic ethical character epitomized by him.¹

Rosenberg likewise appealed to Kant's principle of autonomy and categorical imperative. In conscious opposition to Christian ethics the Nazi ideologist based Nazi morality on the Party Program's (Point 24) Germanic 'moral sensitivity' on the part of 'a Volk with such high moral standards' (ein so sittlich hochstehendes Volk).² In his private anti-Christian speeches to the Party's hard core Rosenberg repeatedly made the point that the Nazi Movement had forsaken the field of natural science and dogmatic metaphysics (whether Greek, Jewish, or otherwise) to fight on the lofty plane of ethics. That therefore nothing bad could come of this pure motive (saubere Haltung)—this was the faith enabling Nazis to found a new Gemeinschaft.³ True religion was self-assertion. Faith in the goodness (Güte) of the German moral character and German ethical values was more important than anything else (das Allerprimärste).⁴

At a war-time mass rally in which he openly spoke of the possible extermination of eight million Jews, Rosenberg stressed Germanic honor and the Prussian

¹Chamberlain, Grundlagen, 509-510.

²Weimar, 28.5.1937 (BA: NS 8/45, 175, 171f, 174).

³Sonthofen, 22.11.1938 (BA: NS 8/47, 122; 8/80, 138). Cf. H. Buchheim, VJHZG 8:2 (1960), 179: 'Moral subjectivism has a special affinity to totalitarian rule, i.e., the conduct of those men who, under the influence of the idealistic philosophy, direct their moral striving only to the purity of their will but do not include in their conscience the question of the outworking of their deeds'.

⁴Berlin, 27.2.1942 (BA: NS 8/65, 152). At the same time Rosenberg lamented the fact many German railroad officials in the East had to be executed for

ethic of duty (Pflichtbewusstsein). The Nazi Movement had not given the world a new ethos but only helped the essence of the Germanic character (Wesen des germanischen Charakters) to obtain political power.¹ Hitler's ethic was thoroughly compatible with his own ethical autonomy and interpretation of Germanic character. Is it accidental that Eichmann, on trial for his life in Jerusalem, claimed that he had tried to keep to the spirit of the Kantian categorical imperative?²

This is not to enlist Kant in the SS; but simply to contend that, by sweeping away all objective absolutes, he prepared the way, negatively, for that distinctively ideological mentality and morality without which Nazism and Marxism are inconceivable. Of course, the positive content of the Marxist and Nazi myths greatly differed. Also, there was an undeniable universalistic element in Kant's philosophy. The point, however, is that Kant's epistemology and ethics, in good 18th century fashion, presupposed the uniformity of human nature and some sort of common sense. But once this presupposition gave way to a relativistic view of man, Kant's formal critique of knowledge and categorical imperative could be utilized to justify Nazi myth and morality.³

No less a professional philosopher than John Dewey stressed the crucial significance of Kant's philosophy, not only to the Nazi mind in particular, but also to the mentality of German Nationalism in general. Both were to be traced back to the Kantian 'intellectual catastrophe' and its influence on the German educational system. Kant's philosophy, according to which the subjective realm of freedom is to dominate the empirical world of

stealing (Reise ins Ostland, May 1942--BA: NS 8/65, 188); other corrupt officials, for arbitrary tyranny (Berlin, 3.8.1942--BA: NS 8/66, 41)!

¹Trier, 8.5.1943 (BA: NS 8/67, 207, 204f).

²H. Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem (London, 1963), 120-122. Eichmann admitted that the Final Solution was against Kantian morality, but had to bring in God in the process: 'It could not have been in accordance with the Kantian principle to kill people, for that is not the will of God'. Cf. Moshe Pearlman, The Capture and Trial of Adolf Eichmann (London, 1963), 533.

³According to Nietzsche's Antichrist, the laws of organic life commanded that each organism, each Volk, invent its own categorical imperative! Cf.

nature, introduced the Age of Subjectivism. For instance, his principle of ethical autonomy led to a formal and empty concept of duty, 'the gospel of Duty devoid of content'. The Kantian void was filled with the German mission.¹

Before Dewey Chamberlain anticipated that Kant's intellectual revolution would have revolutionary religious and political repercussions in Germany. But it was the Jew Heinrich Heine who, in his Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland, first predicted that the German philosophical revolution initiated by Kant, coupled with the distinctive religious development of Protestant Germany, would produce a unique political revolution. According to Heine there was a close relationship between religion, philosophy, and politics in Germany. Kant had precipitated not only the death of Deism but that of 'the old Jehovah himself'. Dante's words 'Abandon hope' epitomized Kant's epistemology. But though ready to abandon reason, German philosophy would not abandon faith and religion. In Germany political revolution would have to draw upon a more popular, religious, and German philosophy than that which the materialistic revolutionaries had in mind.²

The German philosophy is an important matter, of significance to the whole human race; and our remotest grandchildren will have to decide whether we are to be blamed or praised for having first produced our philosophy and only then our revolution. It seems to me that a methodical people like us Germans had to begin with religious Reformation, only then be concerned with philosophy, and only after the consummation of a philosophical

Morgan, What Nietzsche Means, 191.

¹J. Dewey, German Philosophy and Politics (New York, 1942), 14ff, 57ff, 83ff, 87, 137. This is a revised edition of a work originally published in 1915. It is interesting that Dewey saw no similarity between Kantian formalism, Hitler's opportunism, and his own pragmatism.

²H. Heine, Samtliche Schriften (Munich, 1976) 5, 558, 514ff, 553ff, 590ff, 600ff, 604, 606. Cf. W. Wieland, 'Heinrich Heine und die Philosophie', Heinrich Heine (ed. H. Koopman), 134ff, 137ff, 154.

revolution be in a position to pass on to political revolution.

The German revolution will not be milder or gentler because it has been preceded by Kant's Kritik, Fichte's transcendental idealism, and even the philosophy of nature. Through these doctrines revolutionary forces have developed which only await the day when they can break forth and fill the world with horror and amazement. Kantians will come to the fore—who will know no piety (Pietät) in the phenomenal world as well, and who will mercilessly plow up the ground (Boden) of European life with sword and axe in order to exterminate (ausrotten) the remaining roots of the past. Armed Fichtians will step onto the stage, who in their fanaticism of will are not to be restrained either by fear or self-interest; for they live in the spirit and defy matter like the early Christians.... The transcendental idealist...is unreachable in the citadel of his own thoughts.

But even more terrifying still than anything else would be the philosopher of nature who would actively intervene in a German revolution and identify himself with the work of destruction itself....The philosopher of nature will be frightful in that he enters into contact with the original forces of nature, in that he can conjure up the demonic powers of the old Germanic pantheism, and in that in him is awakened that ancient German lust for battle which fights not to destroy, nor to win, but simply to fight. Christianity—and this is its greatest merit—has softened somewhat that brutal Germanic lust for battle but could not destroy it; and when the restraining talisman, the Cross, is once shattered, then the savagery of the ancient warriors, the wild berserk rage of which the Nordic poets sing and speak so much, will come to the surface again. That talisman is decaying, and the day will come when it pitifully collapses. Then the old stone gods arise from long-forgotten ruins and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes, and Thor finally leaps to life with his giant hammer and smashes the Gothic cathedrals....

Do not smile at my counsel, the advice of a dreamer who warns you of Kantians, Fichtians, and philosophers of nature. Do not smile at the prophet (Phantast) who expects in the realm of phenomena the same revolution that has already taken place in the sphere of the spirit....There is performed a play in Germany in contrast to which the French Revolution might appear an innocent idyl.¹

Kant's philosophical subjectivism, coupled with his anti-metaphysical and anti-historical liberal religion, triggered a theological revolution in 19th century Germany from Schleiermacher, the acknowledged father of distinctively modern liberal theology, through Albrecht Ritschl to Adolf von Harnack. Schleiermacher himself and many liberal theologians in Germany came from Pietist backgrounds. While students they lost whatever orthodox faith they ever had, in the end proclaiming a practical and emotional faith in ethical values independent of metaphysical and historical truth. Many factors contributed toward the extraordinary influence of their often anti-

¹Ibid., 638-640. Rosenberg had read Heine and criticized him for not being able to understand Kantian religion devoid of Jewish metaphysics and historical faith. Cf. S&R 1, 297ff; WK 5:58 (Oct. 1929), 469f; Der Sumpf, 266ff.

clerical liberal theology, for instance, the custom that many students did theology as a second subject in order to be qualified to give religious instruction in the schools. Thus in time the mentality of the liberal theology permeated the schools and filtered down to the masses.

Liberal theologians in Germany were not, for the most part, politically liberal but tended to be very nationalistic and even anti-Semitic. Lagarde is an instructive example. As a boy from a strongly Pietist family, he literally sat on Schleiermacher's knee. As a theological student he lost his faith in organized Christianity only to proclaim, as a critical theologian and Biblical scholar, a secularized pietistic faith in Germany and a new Germanic religion to replace unbelieving and mealy-mouthed 19th century Protestantism. In a sense Lagarde's Germanic faith was itself a secularized religious reaction to secularized Protestantism in Germany.¹

Pietism played a crucial role in the development of Nationalism in Germany. Some of the most influential figures in the rise of German Nationalism in the early 19th century came from strongly Pietist backgrounds, for example Fichte and Schleiermacher. They were secularized or 'enlightened Pietists'. Fichte's Reden an die deutsche Nation (1808) were full of Pietist expressions. Pietism's spiritual regeneration had become Fichte's national rebirth. The same goes for the patriotic sermons of Schleiermacher who once styled himself a 'Pietist (Herrnhuter) of a higher order'. With Schleiermacher liberal religion was identified with unbounded faith in the Fatherland. The loss of the old Pietist faith, as a result of the rationalistic attack on historic Christianity, created a spiritual vacuum, a void filled with a nationalistic religion—in that long process of secularization whereby ideas, attitudes, and psychological predispositions became transferred from the religion of German Pietism to the religion of

¹Cf. Stern, Politics of Cultural Despair, xxv, 5ff, 43ff, 49f, 53ff. W. Tilgner, 'Volk, Nation, und Vaterland im protestantischen Denken zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus (ca. 1870-1933)', Volk-Nation-

German nationalism'.¹

Thus the decline of traditional Protestant faith in 19th century Germany did not mean necessarily a decline of religious faith of a pietistic character. Though the object of faith changed, the pietistic mentality remained. As Ernst Moritz Arndt, one of the most influential German nationalists of Pietist background, put it: 'We are a God-seeking (gott-suchend), spiritual, pious people'.² Skepticism regarding traditional religion was not without faith. It was a believing skepticism, what Rosenberg once called 'the German form of skepticism'.³

Meanwhile the scientific revolution was running roughshod over traditional Christianity. This meant the rise of modern naturalism, developmental historicism, and organic thinking stemming from roots in German Romanticism. Of particular significance to Nazi ideology was the biological revolution symbolized by Darwinism and disseminated in Germany by renowned biologist Ernst Haeckel. But Haeckel was not only a natural scientist but the prophet of a new religion of nature to take the place of the religion of the Churches. This was the pantheistic religion of monism, an attempt to face the riddle of the world by uniting romantic German Idealism and realistic scientific Positivism by means of a biological philosophy of nature. Haeckel came from a Pietist family under the influence of Schleiermacher's secularized liberal

Vaterland: Der deutsche Protestantismus und der Nationalismus (ed. H. Zillesen), 135ff, 138f, 146ff.

¹Pinson, Pietism as a Factor in the Rise of German Nationalism, 206, 120, 26f, 4f, 59, 62, 73, 190ff, 194f. Cf. G. Kaiser, Pietismus und Patriotismus in literarischen Deutschland: Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Säkularisation (Frankfurt, 1973), 224ff, 235, 238: 'emptying Christianity of its meaning in favor of a national religion'. That the Deutsche Christen were a product of this development from German Pietism to German Nationalism, is the thesis of J.A. Zabel, Nazism and the Pastors: A Study of the Ideas of Three Deutsche Christen Groups (Missoula, 1976), xi, 222ff, 225.

²E.M. Arndt, Versuch in vergleichender Völkergeschichte (Leipzig, 1843), 418 (Quoted in Tilgner, op. cit., 135).

³Rosenberg, Friedrich Nietzsche (1944), 14.

Pietism. But as a young man he came to the conclusion that this religion could not be reconciled with the discoveries of modern science and the cruelties of nature, leading to a bitter hatred for Christianity. Haeckel did not lose, however, his völkisch faith in Germany, which was closely tied to his religious monism, and he became a sort of völkisch prophet. Biological thinking of a Darwinian variety, especially Social Darwinism, became widespread in Germany. For Haeckel and others it had a religious significance, filling the spiritual void left by the loss of a traditional or liberal Christian faith.¹

In Germany the historical and biological revolution had a philosophical, as well as a religious significance in the form of the Lebensphilosophie. The roots of the German life-philosophy probably go back beyond German Romanticism to Pietism, especially the mystical variety. The idea of life was the central concept of German Pietism—illustrated, for example, by Friedrich Christoph Oetinger's classic Sylloge theologiae ex idea vitae deducta (1753).² Of course, life for the Pietist meant spiritual life or experience (Erlebnis). But in the academic and popular Lebensphilosophie of the 19th century the Pietist notion of life was secularized to become biological life or the experience of it. The influential exponents of Lebensphilosophie in Germany stressed both the biological and experiential aspects of life. In Nietzsche's philosophy of life, for example, the affirmation of biological life itself was predominant. In Dilthey's neo-Kantian Lebensphilosophie the emphasis was more on the experience of life as a means of grappling with historical relativism. For Dilthey historical relativism which put all philosophy and religion on the same level could only be overcome by means of its being absolutized in the concept of life—or man's experience of biological existence, the riddle of life, the mystery of the world in general.

¹Gasman, Scientific Origins of National Socialism, xviiff, 58ff, passim. Cf. C. Bolle, 'Darwinismus und Zeitgeist', Zeitgeist im Wandel (ed. H.J. Schoeps), 235ff, 268ff; H.-G. Zmarlik, 'Der Sozialdarwinismus in Deutschland als geschichtliches Problem', VJHZG 11:3 (1963), 246ff, 258ff.

²Cf. Schmidt, Pietismus, 116ff, where Oetinger is designated the forbear of 19th and 20th century German Lebensphilosophie.

Every genuine Weltanschauung is intuitively derived from the experience of life. Hence all of man's ideologies are 'true' since biological life is the truth. Life itself is the ultimate root of all Weltanschauung.¹

Without Kantian agnosticism, historical relativism, the biological revolution, and subsequent Lebensphilosophie the mentality of Chamberlain, Rosenberg, Hitler, and Nazi ideology in general is inconceivable. Whatever the deficiencies of Georg Lukács' account of the intellectual origins of Nazism, he was certainly right in pointing out the crucial connection between the development of Lebensphilosophie and Nazi ideology. The mentality of the Mythus was a vulgarized version of this most significant development in 19th century German intellectual history.²

In the second half of the 19th century the racial interpretation of history in the form of the Aryan-Semite antithesis was coupled with German nationalism and biological thinking. Gobineau was no German nationalist and had worked out his racial ideology before the Darwinian revolution. But scientific and Social Darwinism became good grist in the mill of German nationalism of a racist variety. Racial doctrines were widespread in the 'Aryan Era' but especially strong in Germany. The German race mongers, like Chamberlain and later Rosenberg and Hitler, were more interested in race as a spiritual and practical idea than as a scientific reality. For

¹W. Dilthey, 'Weltanschauungslehre', Gesammelte Schriften (Stuttgart, 1960), 8, xi, 78ff, 80f, 99, 109, 215, 234. Both Nietzsche and Dilthey came from religious family backgrounds: Nietzsche's father and forefathers were Lutheran clergymen. Dilthey was the son of a Reformed clergyman under the influence of Schleiermacher and wrote a biography of him—Das Leben Schleiermachers (1870).

²G. Lukács, Die Zerstörung der Vernunft (Berlin, 1962), 351ff, 356, 360ff, 471ff, 577ff. 'It seems as if precisely this age were called to make the world made desolate and Godless by reason coherent, full of perspective, and meaningful once again through the "experience" of "life" in the new contours of a new myth. In a word: the essence of Lebensphilosophie consists in a turning of agnosticism into mysticism, subjective idealism into the pseudo-objectivity of myth' (360).

instance, Ludwig Schemann, foremost historian of the idea of race and popularizer of Gobineau in Germany, maintained that one could learn as much about race from life as from science and stressed the emotional factor involved in race and its power as an idea. Race was not simply a scientific reality; race was also an idea in the ideal world. As such it would arouse its enthusiasm, do its wonders, celebrate its victories. No people could afford to dispense totally with race as an idea, as 'a quasi-religious factor'.¹

Racial anti-Semitism also latched on to the revolution in science and biology to hatch a pseudo-scientific biological anti-Semitism. In the Enlightenment and early 19th century, Christian anti-Semitism had experienced a certain secularization to breed an intellectual anti-Semitism with religious overtones. This was further secularized into political anti-Semitism, which in Germany developed into racial and biological anti-Semitism. This new brand of anti-Semitism did not manage, however, to outgrow its religious roots. Indeed, a case could be made that the anti-Semitism, so widespread in late 19th century Germany, may be traced to basically religious motives, that the religious element played a significant role in all types, and that political anti-Semitism in Germany procured its power primarily from religious roots.²

The popularity of political anti-Semitism in late 19th century Germany cannot be understood apart from the spectre of social revolution inspired by the materialist Marx, Lasalle, and other Jews. The educated bourgeoisie in Germany feared the Marxist menace. But their anti-Marxism was not due merely to their economic self-interest and social status, but also to their religious and educational background. Whatever their need for a substitute

¹L. Schemann, Die Rasse in den Geisteswissenschaften Vol. 1: Studien zur Geschichte des Rassengedankens (Munich, 1928), 46, 43ff, 446. Cf. Vol. 3: Die Rassenfrage im Schriftum der Neuzeit (Munich, 1931), 47ff, passim. Cf. also Poliakov, Le mythe aryen, 229ff, 263ff.

²Cf. S. Lehr, Antisemitismus—religiöse Motive im sozialen Vorurteil (Munich, 1974), 3-4, 132ff, 134.

faith—and this applies especially to their rebel youth—they were not about to opt for Marxism as a surrogate religion. Their idealistic bourgeois piety, whether orthodox or liberal, had no time for Marxist materialism. This is illustrated, for instance, by the middle-class following of Hofprediger Adolf Stoecker's anti-Marxist and anti-Semitic Christian Social Worker's Party. Stoecker himself was an evangelical Pietist, an exponent of the pietistic revival movement (Erweckungsbewegung), and chiefly interested in saving the souls of the workers both from sin and the false prophets of materialistic atheism. The main interest of his bourgeois followers, however, was in an anti-Semitic crusade, and his non-racial political anti-Semitism eventually gave way to a more radical type.¹

Finally, there was another crucial development without which the Nazi mentality and ideology is incomprehensible, namely the aesthetic revolution symbolized by Wagner. This meant the tragic mood of revolutionary dissatisfaction with the world as it is together with the heroic and violent will to create another, to escape this meaningless world by fashioning another more to one's aesthetic taste. Man was nothing in nature but could become something by creating a new nature through art. The world of nature made no sense, but one could make another world. Reality could be a human work of art. Man could escape chaotic flux by means of creative form. One could find salvation, a substitute religion, in art. In Wagner's case this meant Germanic paganism, mythological pessimism, heroic irrationalism, aesthetic naturalism, anti-Semitic racialism, and German nationalism—in brief, Holy German Art!²

All these developments were reflected, to one degree or another, in völkisch thought. All these streams flowed into the river of that völkisch movement

¹Cf. P.W. Massing, Rehearsal for Destruction: A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany (New York, 1949), 22ff, 31, 46. K. Kupisch, 'Bürgerliche Frömmigkeit im Wilhelminischen Zeitalter', Zeitgeist im Wandel (ed. H.J. Schoeps), 40ff, 53.

²Cf. J. Barzun, Darwin, Marx, Wagner (New York, 1958), 3ff, 229ff, 264, 274, 279. For the significance of the aesthetic mood and Bayreuth mentality for Nazism, see Kinser and Kleinman, Search for Aesthetic Reality in Germany, 5ff, 19f, 21f.

which constituted the ideological basis of the Nazi appeal. Taken as a whole, the mentality of the völkisch movement, with all its amorphous doctrinal heterogeneity, was profoundly religious culminating in a fanatical piety and faith in the German Volk.¹ All these themes were epitomized in Chamberlain, who nevertheless tried to combine them with a liberal form of Christianity. This fact made Chamberlain more palatable to bourgeois piety than the radical anti-Christians like Haackel, and Chamberlain's religious effect and appeal in certain circles of the bourgeoisie must not be underestimated. But the World War and its outcome threw the whole völkisch ideology into a great crisis.²

THE APPEAL OF NAZISM

If National Socialism was basically, or at least to a significant extent, a religious ideology resulting in fanatical faith in Hitler, the real problem of Nazism is how to explain this religious mentality. What was its peculiar nature, origin, and appeal? What were the historical and contemporary factors which produced this cast of mind? Why were so many Germans, educated and uneducated alike, prepared to believe in Hitler and Nazism? The problem is not only why many believed, but why so many even accepted or tolerated Hitler and the NSDAP.

To summarize the argument thus far, Nazism was at bottom a religious mentality of a distinctively modern or post-Kantian type. That is, it wanted faith without dogma. It wanted nothing to do with any absolute metaphysical truth or historical faith—though, as a secularized version of Christianity, it could not escape metaphysics or historical religion, accenting the metaphysical reality of race and the racial ideology of history. Religion, the meaning of life, was supposedly unrelated to eternal reality or historical truth and relegated to the existential here and now. Religious faith,

¹G. Mosse, German Ideology, 43ff, 50, 52, 203, 301, 312, 316, passim. Cf. Lehr, Antisemitismus—religiöse Motive, 227ff.

²Kupisch, 'Bürgerliche Frömmigkeit im Wilhelminischen Zeitalter', op. cit., 42ff, 45.

considered good and necessary, was allegedly divorced from metaphysical knowledge and historical truth and reduced to the realm of personal ethical experience.

This religious mentality, which we might call fideism, had its historical roots in German Pietism. It received philosophical formulation in Kant and further stimulation and expression in the uniquely German 19th century historical developments discussed above. This fideism, or secularized Pietism, permeated Germany's educated classes through the general intellectual influence of German Idealism; and from the fact that many university-trained people came from Pietist backgrounds (whether theologically conservative or liberal), lost their original faith, and became secularized or 'enlightened Pietists'. In the course of time this mentality gradually filtered down, through increased education, to the uneducated and generally credulous masses. The völkisch movement reaped the harvest of these developments and German fideism was fundamental to the völkisch ideology. The völkisch mentality obtained a tremendous hold upon Germany's educational system and German youth by means of its institutionalization in the schools and universities. Apart from this fact the appeal and success of the Nazi Movement is incomprehensible.¹

Hence Nazism, insofar as it was a positive faith, was a distinctively German, rather than general European phenomenon. It is true that the basic religious problem underlying the German ideology, namely the progressive loss of faith in traditional Christianity, was not peculiar to Germany. But the German people seem to have felt this loss of faith more deeply than others—as a result of the profound influence of religious faith in the land of the Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and Pietism. It seems that the religious crisis was more acute in Germany than elsewhere. At any rate, the peculiar völkisch and Nazi answer to the problem in terms of German

¹Cf. G. Mosse, German Ideology, 149ff, 152, 171ff, 189, 190ff, 193, 196.

fideism, was something distinctively German and inconceivable apart from the peculiar religious and intellectual development of modern Germany. Nazism and its appeal are incomprehensible apart from this unique history. In this sense Nazism was no mere accident of German history.¹

Of course all of these revolutionary developments were reflected in, and in some cases exported to, other countries. But all were much stronger and more keenly felt in Germany. Who would deny that the philosophical, theological, scientific, biological, social, and aesthetic revolutions had much more of an impact in Germany than elsewhere? Nationalism was a general European phenomenon in the 19th century but who would deny that German Nationalism had its own distinctive character and was a more potent force than Nationalism elsewhere? The secularization process occurred in other countries, but it would seem that the process of secularization was different in Germany than elsewhere. This was because the character of the religion secularized was different, namely German Pietism as opposed to English Puritanism for instance, thus producing a different secularized product in the political sphere.²

This does not necessarily mean, however, that Nazism was the inevitable consequence of German history, the revolutionary developments discussed above, and the mentality of German fideism. The historical development as such is not sufficient to explain Nazism and the Nazi appeal. There had to be some crisis to challenge and expand the credulity of German fideism and prepare

¹The position adopted here is that of Mosse (German Ideology, 8, 193, 315f, passim) and Stern (Politics of Cultural Despair, xxiii, 295) as opposed to G. Ritter, 'The Historical Foundations of the Rise of National Socialism', The Third Reich, 381ff, 384ff.

²This tentative suggestion touches upon very complex historical questions which cannot be discussed here. For similar suggestive thoughts along these lines, see French historians E. Vermeil, 'The Origin, Nature, and Development of German Nationalist Ideology in the 19th and 20th Centuries', The Third Reich, 3ff, 18, 21ff, 92ff; and L. Poliakov, Le mythe aryen, 322.

it for Hitler. This catalyst was provided by World War 1. Beginning in 1914 faith in Germany was tried by fire in the crucible of war, revolution, and economic instability. The swift collapse of 1918, coupled with the Socialist Revolution, shook that faith to its foundations. It was a profound psychological shock for all those whose faith revolved around things German, those for whom the Fatherland had become a surrogate religion. The subsequent political, economic and social instability, and especially the spectre of Bolshevism, added successive jolts to the initial shock. These factors were very important, but must be seen in the broader context of the crisis of the German ideology as a whole. After 1918 the religious crisis did not simply threaten the Christian faith but engulfed the German faith as well. To the crisis of Christianity was added that of 'Germanity'.

Both Chamberlain and Rosenberg, not to mention Hitler himself, faced this crisis; but their fideism would not die in the face of empirical reality. Nazism became the only hope of putting their world back on its axis. It was a case of Nazi faith or no faith, Nazism or total despair. Nazi failure only fed Nazi fideism. Nazi success and the euphoria of the Third Reich only confirmed the Nazi faith centering in the person of Hitler. Hitler somehow became the symbol and the object of faith in Germany. In Pietism it was not so much doctrine but personal faith in a person that mattered, and the personality ideal was crucial in Kant, the development of German Idealism, and the German ideology. Nazism and Hitler could appeal to those influenced by German philosophy and the German faith. There is perhaps something to John Dewey's claim that there was a sort of pre-established harmony between Hitler's appeal and this distinctively German mentality having filtered down from the philosophers to the people at large. According to Dewey Hitler did not only preach a gospel of political force; he also preached the gospel of a spiritual faith, of German religious idealism. It was Hitler's mission to transcend the gulf between spiritual faith and empirical fact, between the noumenal world of faith and the phenomenal world of force, by virtue of the concrete practical reality of his own

personality.¹

The general religious and intellectual crisis, compounded by the crisis of the German ideology, was especially acute among students. For instance, in 1933 one of Rosenberg's youthful devotees spoke of the shattered legacy received from one's parents—of the insecurity, the religious confusion, and political chaos of the times. The German people had lost every standard for assessing things and events.² The crisis was felt by older academics as well. As Alfred Baeumler, later Rosenberg's philosophical advisor, wrote in 1931:

For centuries Europe has been living under pressure. It is as if, since the end of the Middle Ages, she had been looking for something but could not find it: a form of life, lost unity, a certainty, in existence. Thus Europe calls herself Christian. But she is also a thousand-and-one other things....All in all, she does not know herself what she really is....The inhabitants of Europe live in the midst of countless uncertainties and countless contradictions. Each man tries to work out his own solution: one kneels before the sacraments as medieval man did, another attempts to infuse something of the vitality of modern ideas into Protestantism, while a third seeks refuge in art or in scientific aestheticism. Political and social "problems" appear; no one is capable of mastering them; no one knows what course to steer.³

There is no denying the fact that Nazism appealed to many German intellectuals; even more significant, that educated Germans on the whole did not resist Hitler or unmask Nazi ideology and immorality. One must not think that Nazi ideology à la Rosenberg was basically alien to much of the German intellectual atmosphere of the 1920's and 1930's. On this point the testimony of one who spent this period in a university atmosphere is instructive. According to Theodor Litt the Nazis appealed to the morally earnest. Consciously or unconsciously students were under the influence of the Jugendbewegung and

¹Dewey, German Philosophy and Politics, 14ff, 17ff, 25ff.

²Hart, Alfred Rosenberg, 5f.

³A. Baeumler, Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker (Leipzig, 1931), 10 (Quoted in W. Grenzmann, The Third Reich, 218).

found their Weltanschauung in the Lebensphilosophie. The success of the Nazi appeal was due primarily to its lack of concern for truth--which became simply various aspects of life's dynamic movement, nothing more than a means in life's struggle. Most effective was the appeal to the 'truth' of race and to many 'scientific' authorities supporting it. Students were prone to racial anti-Semitism due to their school backgrounds. That a large part of Germany's youth rallied to the banner of Nazism, was due to its messianic appeal. The German people, taking ideas very seriously, fell prey to the new Nazi content put into old concepts. Nazi ideology and phrase-mongering had even greater success with the semi-educated lower middle classes on the fringes of German academic life. The 'people of poets and thinkers' were vulnerable to Nazi ideology because of their 'gullibility'.¹

The concept of Weltanschauung, so integral to the neo-Kantian Lebensphilosophie of Dilthey and others, was in vogue. For example, a contemporary of Rosenberg and disciple of Dilthey wrote a big book on the subject containing terminology and ideas very similar to the Mythus. According to Karl Joël historical relativism not only made everything passé but belonged to the essence of life itself; as such it was fruitful and, according to Goethe, what was fruitful was true. The present was a turning point in history. The contemporary longing for ideology (Weltanschauung) already indicated a certain despairing of truth. Still historical relativism had to be overcome by means of the only remaining absolute: life itself! One

¹T. Litt, 'The National-Socialist Use of Moral Tendencies in Germany', The Third Reich, 455, 438ff, 443ff, 452f, 455. Litt admits that it is 'painful' to have to admit the failure of educated Germans (451, 439). The evidence that many of Germany's educated were pro-Nazi or at least not anti-Nazi, is indisputable. See for example, The Third Reich, 385 (G. Ritter!), 525, 666. Poliakov/Wulf (ed.), Das Dritte Reich und seine Denker, Fest, Gesicht des Dritten Reiches, 294ff. M. Weinrich, Hitler's Professors (New York, 1946). NS Lehrerbund, Bekenntnis der Professoren an den deutschen Universitäten und Hochschulen zu Adolf Hitler und dem nationalsozialistischen Staat (Dresden, 1934), 5ff. D. Bröndel, Bevor Hitler kam (Hannover, 1964), 14ff.

had to relativize relativism by identifying truth with organic life. Truth was life eternal! In the post-Enlightenment period myth had become the mother of history. The death of God à la Nietzsche meant not only the death of one being (ein Wesen) but of being (Wesentlichkeit) in general. 'Ja, life is the God of the age, and God is again preached as the highest, the true life as by the mystics long ago'.¹

The concept of myth was likewise in vogue in respectable academic circles. For instance, Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, in opposition to the racial understanding of Judaism, was concerned to maintain that the Jews too had their myth.² In the 1920's neo-Kantian Jewish philosopher Ernst Cassirer, following Schelling and others, put forth a positive view of myth. Mythology was something real, true, and necessary in human life. The world of myth had to be understood in its own terms. Man was not so much the conscious creator of myth as the being created by it. Myth was not the creation of any individual but the testimony of the common consciousness of an ethnic or religious group. Understanding myth, insight into the nature of mythical thinking, was an indispensable medium of historical knowledge.³ In the same

¹ K. Joël, Wandlungen der Weltanschauung: Eine Philosophiegeschichte der Geschichtsphilosophie (2 vols., Tübingen, 1928/1934) 2, 874, 594, 861, 873ff, 875, 901f; 1, viif, 1f, 9, 12ff, 18ff. Joël himself rejected the racial doctrine (909); but the point is, his general outlook lent itself to the appeal of Nazi ideology.

² M. Buber, 'Der Mythos der Juden', Der Jude und sein Judentum, Gesammelte Aufsätze und Reden (Cologne, 1963), 78ff. This essay, written in 1916, was first published in 1923 (831).

³ E. Cassirer, The Problem of Knowledge (New Haven, 1969), 297ff, 305, 308. The original German edition, never published, was finished in 1932. Cf. The Myth of the State (London, 1946), in which Cassirer during World War 2 tried to explain the contemporary crisis in terms of the power of mythical thought, entitling a whole section of his study 'The Myth of the Twentieth Century', without ever mentioning Rosenberg. Yet at the end of the work he stressed the importance of philosophy as a means of understanding political myths (296). But Cassirer's philosophy seemed to be more of a hindrance than a help in the matter of understanding the Nazi myth.

year of the Mythus (1930) theologian Paul Tillich published an article on 'myth and mythology' in a standard reference work. Following Cassirer Tillich maintained that myth was an essential element of intellectual life. The study of history always involved creating a meaning for history, and thus myth. The interpretation of history as a whole necessarily contained mythical features. Since myth was an expression of man's approach to reality beyond this phenomenal world, there was no such thing as a truly non-mythical intellectual outlook.¹

Rosenberg and Nazi ideology could appeal to the Aryan myth, which was so influential in the 'Aryan Era' that even Jewish intellectuals fell prey to it.² The Nazi myth of race as a static substance had an appeal for those seeking historical meaning and identity amid the meaningless flux of historical relativism. Moreover, the notion of race was an important concept in contemporary biology and anthropology. Anthropologist Karl Saller reported that German anthropology on the whole capitulated to the Nazi racial doctrine, the crucial core of Nazi ideology. During the Third Reich Saller himself tried to deabsolutize race by putting forward a dynamic concept of race, but his work was confiscated and he was forced to leave Göttingen. However Rosenberg had no trouble finding academic support for the racial doctrine of the Mythus. For instance, one Göttingen anthropology professor wrote in 1923: 'In the beginning was the Mythos; and the myth was born from the spirit of the race....Ja, race itself is a myth, less a reality of the empirical world than an ideal to be fulfilled'.³

The foolishness of the racial interpretation of history, understood in

¹P. Tillich, 'Mythus und Mythologie', Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (2nd ed.) Vol. 4 (Tübingen, 1930), 363ff, 368-370. About the same time Jewish intellectual Theodor Lessing published a book entitled Geschichte als Sinngebung des Sinnlosen, oder die Geburt der Geschichte aus dem Mythos (Berlin, 1929).

²Poliakov, Le mythe aryen, 263ff, 340ff.

³Saller, Rassenlehre des Nationalsozialismus, 81ff, 100, 9ff, 36ff, 61ff. Saller was quoting a certain Prof. Lenz.

terms of the identification of physical heredity with mental outlook, is illustrated by Joseph Tenenbaum's visit to Poland after World War 2. The baptized children of liquidated Jewish parents raised in convents by nuns literally shivered when approached by their Jewish relatives.¹

But understood in terms of the force of ethnic consciousness and **solidarity** in history, the racial view is not so ridiculous. Purified of its crass physical side, the view that race in the sense of ethnic group is a very significant fact and factor in history, a more important index to historical reality than social class, has a certain appeal. Before laughing at the racial conception in this sense, one must remember that a whole generation of historians accepted the dogma of social class, a reality even more difficult to define and much more elusive than the ethnic group. Certainly in the perspective of world history as a whole—one need only mention human history before industrialization or man's long tribal past—race in the sense of ethnic or national consciousness has been a more concrete social reality and historical force than social class or class consciousness. As for 20th century history one need only mention the fiasco of the German Workers' Movement in 1914 and 1933, Stalin's appeal to mother Russia in the crisis of 1941, the phenomenon of National Communism and the Sino-Soviet split, or the black revolution in the USA with its appeal to the racial 'soul'. One could also mention the Zionist phenomenon and Jewish-ethnic solidarity. For instance, Tenenbaum still considered the baptized children of Jews as Jews and thought it tragic that their Catholic mental outlook did not correspond to their Jewish physical heredity.

The notion of a Jewish conspiracy, though ridiculous in retrospect, also had a certain plausibility and appeal in the confusing period after World War 1—for several reasons. In the first place, the notion of a racial conspiracy readily fit into the already widespread Aryan myth and racial anti-Semitism. Moreover, the shock of the 1918 collapse and the consequent

¹J. Tenenbaum, Race and Reich: The Story of an Epoch (New York, 1956), 81f.

crisis of the German ideology produced a psychological atmosphere amenable to the conspiracy concept which served as a means of explaining what happened and of doing something about it. In the midst of confused complexity there had to be some simple explanation and solution. Der Jud' ist schuld! met this deep psychological need.

Furthermore, the conspiracy theory of historical explanation, the belief that the devil is not divided against himself, dies hard; and people tend to resort to it when faced by a momentous crisis of faith and identity. For example, in the shock of Auschwitz even some Jews resorted to the conspiracy notion to explain their plight.¹ The Allies could not get along without it at the Nuremberg Trial. In their case it was allegedly more a judicial concept than a vehicle of historical explanation, but for all practical purposes it served in this capacity.² As for the 1920's, the Nazis were not the only ones to fall prey to the idea of Jewish Bolshevism instigated by a Jewish conspiracy in the wake of World War 1 and the Red Scare. No less a statesman than Winston Churchill toyed with the notion of the 'hidden hand'.³

In Germany many educated people, and especially students, were captivated by the conspiracy notion in the early 1920's.⁴ This propensity was fed by the fact that Rosenberg and others could appeal to contemporary phenomena in evidence of a Jewish conspiracy, or at least of Jewish Bolshevism and inordinate Jewish influence in Germany. This evidence was not simply a

¹Cf. G.J. Lintzer/N. Levy, The International Anti-Semitic Conspiracy (New York, 1946). This brochure was published by the American Jewish Committee.

²Indeed, it is one of the great ironies of history that the Nazis who charged the Jews with the conspiracy motive should be condemned for conspiracy themselves in the end, and that the Allies who blamed the Nazis for considering the Jews conspirators in the end should themselves resort to the conspiracy notion.

³Cf. Laqueur, Russia and Germany, 311ff, 354; Cohn, Myth, 138ff, 164ff.

⁴B. Segel, Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion kritisch beleuchtet (Berlin, 1924), 37-38. Cf. Cohn, Myth, 13f, 150f, 192, 196.

figment of Rosenberg's Nazi imagination but is admitted by present-day Jewish or pro-Jewish scholars. For instance, one could appeal to Jewish economic self-interest and the doubtful business practices of the Ostjuden.¹ Although German Jews were not ideologically or politically united and had no unified power position in the Weimar Republic, there was obviously a sharp increase of Jewish influence in almost all branches of German public life and a great preponderance in certain areas.²

Moreover there was in point of fact a Jewish ethnic awakening, indeed a new Jewish consciousness of race, during this period, and one could appeal to Jewish völkisch thinking and Zionism as a racial phenomenon. According to Jewish novelist Emil Ludwig, for instance, Zionism was the product of an ancient racial instinct. Furthermore one could appeal to the fact of Jewish revolutionary radicalism, even cite instances where Jews themselves attributed the revolutionary tendencies of the times, including political revolution, to Judaism.³ Though most Jews were passively opposed to revolutionary extremism, there was obviously a high percentage of Jews involved in the Marxist revolutionary movements of the day. According to

¹S. Friedlander and R. Weltsch in Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923 (ed. W.E. Mosse, Tübingen, 1971), 35,632.

²E.G. Lowental, 'Die Juden im öffentlichen Leben', Entscheidungsjahr 1932: Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik (ed. W.E. Mosse, Tübingen, 1966), 81f; cf. 403,488 for the divided state of German Jewry.

³E.G. Reichmann, 'Der Bewusstseinswandel der deutschen Juden', Deutsches Judentum 1916-1923, 511ff,528,556ff,566,600. Cf. Entscheidungsjahr 1932, 549. Rosenberg capitalized on the writings of Zionist leader Theodor Herzl which appeared in the early 1920's. These were an embarrassment for the Jew Klemperer (Lingua Tertii Imperii, 219): 'Lord, preserve me from my friends. In these...volumes those desirous of doing so can find evidence for much of what Hitler and Goebbels and Rosenberg allege against the Jews. For this one does not need undue skill in interpretation and distortion'.

one scholar, it is no wonder, given the facts, that the thesis of a strong Jewish influence in revolutionary politics could become rooted in the popular consciousness. In view of the circumstances in which the impression developed, this one-sided presentation is 'thoroughly understandable'.¹

According to another recent commentator, Jewish propensity to Marxist revolution stemmed from a secularized messianic consciousness. Ghetto-free Jews saw in the Revolution a sort of substitute religion. The crucial notion of 'Jewish Bolshevism', which played such a powerful role in Nazi propaganda, was 'believable because it was supported by facts'.²

What was the appeal of Nazi anti-Semitism? There is a real element of truth in the view that its appeal was economic and social in that Nazi anti-Semitism was a substitute for Socialism. Both Hitler and Rosenberg spiritualized Socialism, and the Nazis redirected economic discontent and social resentment against the Jews. The thesis that Nazi anti-Semitism meant a spiritual revolution instead of a social revolution, cannot be denied.³

¹W.T. Angress, 'Juden im politischen Leben der Revolutionszeit', Deutsches Judentum 1916-1923, 299, 142ff, 163. Cf. S. Friedlander in ibid., 50ff.

²R. Weltsh, 'Schlusswort', Deutsches Judentum 1916-1923, 625-626. According to Weltsh the crisis of World War 1 brought to light that the thought patterns (Denkstrukturen) of Jews and non-Jews were different. 'Every group bears the legacy of the past in its bosom, even though we want to refrain from the ambiguous and discredited concept of "national Mythos". In practical and intellectual life it is often only a case of subtle nuances, but in the shock of national and spiritual crises this different character (Verschiedenheit), often previously ignored or tolerated as a fact of nature, was emotionally forced to the surface. It became a wall, like a frontline between hostile forces' (633). One could not deny that the Jews were often novarum rerum cupidi, and that certain Jewish publicists (e.g., Kurt Tucholsky) often went too far with their 'unscrupulous radicalism' (Entscheidungsjahr 1932, 547-549). Cf. Friedlander, 'Die politische Veränderungen der Kriegszeit und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Judenfrage', ibid., 52: 'a kind of secularized messianism, as if the Revolution could bring the redemption of all sufferings'.

³Mosse, German Ideology, 8, 243, 279, 290, 292, 294, 299, 307. Of course, this spiritual revolution had very real physical effects.

But Nazi anti-Semitism went much deeper; its appeal was not merely economic and social, but basically religious. The very fact that the Nazi Movement achieved its anti-Semitic revolution, that the NSDAP succeeded in cutting across all class distinctions¹ points in this direction. Apparently man's need for a sense of meaning and community in life was greater than economic discontent. Moreover, it is more likely that the middle classes succumbed to Nazi anti-Semitism more on account of the prevalence of the German ideology and the crisis of the German faith, than because of the conscious desire to avert economic and social revolution. Nazi anti-Semitism exhibited a religious character and fulfilled a religious need by providing a secularized substitute for the discredited Christian view of history and Biblical apocalyptic. Nazi racial ideology provided the Nazi hard core with an historical framework and religious purpose for everyday activity—a sense of ideological identity, contemporary conflict, and eschatological excitement—in terms of the war between the heroic Aryan Messiah and the demonic Jewish Antichrist. This apocalyptic atmosphere and vision² had its religious roots in a long tradition of apocalyptic interest in Germany from the Medieval sectarians through the Zwickau prophets at the time of the Reformation to the eschatological expectation of the Pietist preachers of the modern era. It appealed to those from whom modern life had taken, not primarily economic security or prosperity but a sense of spiritual purpose, security, and community.

To conclude, National Socialism, though a very complex movement, was by nature at bottom more a religious ideology rather than an economic, social, or even political phenomenon. Nazism was not political Nihilism but the exact opposite, namely an attempt to overcome intellectual and

¹Cf. Z. Barbu, 'Die sozialpsychologische Struktur des nationalsozialistischen Antisemitismus', Entscheidungs-jahr 1932, 161ff, 170.

²Cf. Cohn, Myth, 17f, 197f, 208f, 277.

religious Nihilism, meaningless historical relativism, and spiritual and cultural despair by political means. That is, the Nazi Movement—Nazi ideology, activity, and community—was an attempt to return politics to the fold of religion, to make political involvement a secularized substitute for Christian fellowship. As for the form of this substitute religion, it was to a significant extent a secularized German Pietism.

With respect to its origin, National Socialism was a distinctively German phenomenon. Nazism was a modern German phenomenon insofar as the Nazi mentality is inconceivable apart from modern post-Christian rationalistic humanism, post-Kantian philosophical agnosticism, and post-Darwinian historical relativism. That is, the Nazi Movement grew out of a mentality produced by distinctively modern historical developments in Germany and jolted into a state of shock by the catastrophic collapse of 1918 and subsequent developments. However insofar as Nazism was a secularized religion, it went back beyond the modern era through the Age of Pietism and the Reformation into the Middle Ages (and was to a remarkable extent a Medieval phenomenon. For Nazism was not only a secularized substitute for modern liberal religion of a pietistic variety, but also for a more traditional Christianity in the form of evangelical Pietism and Roman Catholic piety. Nazism was an attempt to restore, in modern forms, the lost unity of life, the unity between religion and politics, regnant in the Middle Ages and the early modern era. Furthermore, Nazism was not only a substitute for Christianity, but reached back further into the dark recesses of ancient paganism and was in this sense an ancient phenomenon. For in the final analysis the Nazi Revolution was not simply a secularization of Christianity, but also of ancient pagan religion and mythology—as Heine forewarned. Ultimately Nazism was ancient Germanic paganism garbed in Christian undergarments and dressed up in modern German religiosity. In other words, Nazism was a distinctively modern, post-Christian paganism; a return to pagan pantheism, nature religion, hero worship, superstitious demonology—

to the meaningless, mythical, tragic world of the heroic and the demonic.¹

Finally, Nazism had a powerful religious appeal, especially to many of Germany's educated. In understanding this appeal it is necessary to think in terms of the alternatives facing those schooled in the German ideology. In the throes of the religious and ideological crisis—compounded by political, economic, and social instability—the pietistic, fideistic mentality produced by the distinctive religious and intellectual history of Germany roundly rejected the atheistic and materialistic Marxist secularization of Jewish and Christian messianism. Likewise, the Liberal and Conservative secularizations were ideologically discredited because inimical to modern science, hostile to nature, and poisoned by Jewish presuppositions. Traditional Christianity itself, whether Catholic or Protestant, was likewise unacceptable on the same grounds. What was left but some form of völkisch ideology rooted in the mythical memory of the German Volk and its mythical Germanic past? Nevertheless Nazi ideology could not escape the history which had produced Catholic and Protestant Christianity, early modern Conservatism, modern Liberalism, and Marxism—and borrowed from them all. The eclectic character of the Nazi Movement was no insignificant factor in its broad appeal and success story.

A well-known modern historian once posed the real problem of National Socialism in terms of the question as to why Germany's educated classes did not recognize Hitler as the incarnation of evil, why virtually none of them exclaimed: This is anti-Christ! His answer is in terms of the peculiar political situation: their fear of Communism blinded Germany's educated classes to Hitler's true character.²

¹It is a curious fact, illustrating the consternation of those endeavoring to interpret and explain the Nazi phenomenon, that they resort again and again to the religious category of the demonic. This is the case with the following interpreters (among many others): E. Niekisch, H. Rauschning, F. Meinecke, M. Picard, R. Diels, L. Poliakov, P. Schramm, A. Bein. This fact alone points in the direction of the religious character of Nazism and indicates the difficulty of interpreting it without resorting to religious categories.

²A.J.P. Taylor, 'The Seizure of Power', The Third Reich, 525.

There can be no doubt that the fear of Communism goes a long way in explaining German blindness to Hitler. The fear of the Communist Antichrist blinded many to the character of the Nazi Antichrist. But the answer goes deeper than the political, economic, and social realm. Can Hitler's positive appeal, the euphoria of 1933 for example, be explained solely in terms of the negative fear of Communism? Was this pathological fear due simply to political, economic, and social factors? Or did it have deeper causes in the realm of ideology and religion? Why did so many educated Germans prefer Hitler and Nazism to other alternatives such as Conservatism or Liberalism? They preferred Nazism because these ideologies apparently could provide no effective opposition to Communism for the simple reason that they were ideologically incredible and discredited, whereas the Nazis preached a new Weltanschauung in consonance with the German ideology. The answer to the problem of Nazism's appeal to Germany's educated classes lies ultimately in the crisis of the German faith on which the Nazis capitalized. They secularized this ideology even further and made it into even more of a substitute religion than it had been for a hundred years.¹

In brief, Germany's educated could not recognize the Nazi Antichrist, not because he did not exhibit his true character, nor simply because of fear of the Communist Antichrist, but because for over a hundred years they had been seduced by the German Antichrist in the form of the German ideology. Hitler was able to fool many of them because when they saw him they saw the messianic incarnation of Germany, not what Hitler was but what they wanted him to be.

¹Cf. Stern, Politics of Cultural Despair, 293ff, xiiff, xxvff.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

This Bibliographical Essay is not intended as a comprehensive critical discussion of all the sources relevant to this study, but simply as a brief account of the relevant primary sources underlying it together with a word or two on some of the relevant secondary literature. Full bibliographical information on the sources mentioned is to be found in the General Bibliography. The abbreviations employed are spelled out in the List of Abbreviations.

The most helpful and up-to-date general bibliography of which the author is aware, covering the general area of this study is that found in Armin Mohler's handbook Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932 (2nd enl. ed., 1972, 173-483), which includes just about all of the significant literature up to 1971. Mohler may be augmented by the bibliographical data on National Socialism published intermittently by the Wiener Library in London and the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich, and of course by the bibliographies contained in the secondary works mentioned below and in the General Bibliography.

With regard to the secondary literature on Rosenberg's career, a definitive biography has yet to appear. The only one to date—Robert Cecil's recent The Myth of the Master Race, Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology (1972)—is by the author's own admission not a definitive one. While helpful and based upon many of the relevant sources, Cecil has left many others untapped. Moreover, despite the title, the book contains a very inadequate presentation of Rosenberg's thought; it would appear that the author has not read much of what the Nazi ideologist himself wrote. There is, however, a detailed and thorough study of Rosenberg's office to coordinate ideological education in the Nazi Party including an account of his conflicts with other leading personalities of the NSDAP: Reinhard Bollmus, Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner (1970). Bollmus should be supplemented by Herbert Phillip Rothfeder's unpublished doctoral disserta-

tion, A Study of Alfred Rosenberg's Organization for National Socialist Ideology (Ph. D., Michigan, 1963). Rosenberg's role in the occupation of Norway is exhaustively portrayed in Hans Dietrich Loock, Quisling, Rosenberg und Terboven (1970); his role in the occupation of the Soviet Union as Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete, in Alexander Dallin's classic German Rule in Russia 1941-1945 (1957).

There is also no satisfactory study of Rosenberg's thought as a whole. Those produced during the Third Reich and occasioned primarily by the Kirchenkampf naturally suffer from the limitations imposed by the historical situation, their partisan character, and their sources. They are almost entirely limited to studies of Rosenberg's chief work Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts (1930). Many of these are listed in 'The Story of Rosenberg's "Mythos"', WLB 7 (1953), 33f. Perhaps the most serious study of Rosenberg's thought to come out of the Third Reich is that of professional philosopher Alfred Baeumler, Alfred Rosenberg und der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts (1943). This work constitutes the introduction to the Nazi philosopher's Schriften und Reden (1943, Vol. 1, v-cvii). But Baeumler was in Rosenberg's employ at the time, and from the nature of the case his study suffers from a lack of necessary perspective. A.R. Chandler's brief Rosenberg's Nazi Myth (1945, repr. 1968), which appeared at the end of the War, also lacks perspective and is limited almost entirely to the Mythos. A doctoral dissertation on one particular aspect of Rosenberg's thought is: W.J. Kaiser, Das Rechts- und Staatsdenken Alfred Rosenbergs (Dr. jur., Cologne, 1964). Finally, there is Robert Pois' superficial and misleading introduction to Alfred Rosenberg: Selected Writings (1970).

The primary sources for the mind of Alfred Rosenberg are of two basic sorts: one, his numerous published works; and two, a vast amount of unpublished archival material.

There is no complete bibliography of Rosenberg's works in existence.

Baeumler, responsible for editing his Schriften und Reden (of which only the first two, of many projected volumes appeared in 1943), was in the process of compiling an exhaustive bibliography; but according to his wife, all of his work was destroyed in Berlin during the War. In 1941 Rosenberg's subordinate Karlheinz Rüdiger published an annotated bibliography of publications to that date, a shortened version of his unpublished bibliography, for official use only, found in the Bundesarchiv at Coblenz (BA: NS 8/17, 10-51). But Rüdiger's bibliography is not exhaustive and furthermore only deals with works published independently or in collections, to the exclusion of articles and speeches in periodicals and newspapers. The latter are numerous indeed. Fortunately many of these may be located in the four periodicals which Rosenberg either edited himself or with which he was closely associated (the dates indicating the appropriate years): Auf gut deutsch (1919-1921); Völkischer Beobachter (1921-1923, 1925-1945), Der Weltkrieg (1924-1930, 1941), and the Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte (1930-1944). There are, however, many other periodicals in which Rosenberg articles or speeches may be found. For the period 1936-1944 the Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie (ed. P. Buhler) contains annotated references to some of Rosenberg's contributions to periodicals, especially those in the Völkischer Beobachter. The best source of information, however, is the Rosenberg files preserved at the Bundesarchiv, Coblenz, containing countless clippings of articles and speeches.

This leads to a brief account of the archival material on Rosenberg. In 1945 the U.S. Army captured intact the vast majority of his files hidden in a Bavarian castle. Many of these documents were removed for use at the Nuremberg Trial and distinguished by various reference numbers, mostly falling in the series labeled PS because sorted out in Paris by a staff under Colonel Robert G. Storey. A few of these documents have been published in the official record of the Nuremberg Trial: Trial of the Major War Criminals

before the International Military Tribunal (42 vols., Ger. ed. Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher, etc.), Vols. 25-42. Translations of some of these documents, plus a few not in TMWC, have been published in Nazi Conspiracy and Agression (10 vols.), a collection prepared by the American and British prosecuting staffs. Originals or copies of the unpublished Nuremberg documents may be consulted in such repositories as the Staatsarchiv, Nuremberg, and the National Archives, Washington.

The remaining Rosenberg documents—that is, the vast majority, which were not included in the Nuremberg collection—subsequently found their way into several archives. Most of the files were taken to Alexandria, Virginia, where together with the mass of other captured German documents they were partially microfilmed. The captured German documents on microfilm are described in general, and the American reference numbers indicated, in the numerous Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, mimeographed by the National Archives, Washington. The Guide which covers most of the material from the Rosenberg files is No. 28, Records of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, 1941-1945 (1961), a misleading title since it deals with documents relating to the whole of Rosenberg's career.

All of the original documents which were at Alexandria are now in the Bundesarchiv where they have been reorganized and given new catalog numbers. By far the most important collections of Rosenberg documents for the present study are those indicated in the BA catalog (Findbuch) Bestand NS 8: Kanzlei Rosenberg. BA: NS 8 comprises 270 volumes in all, including some Rosenberg documents transferred to the BA from other archives. There are a few relevant documents, chiefly newspaper clippings of articles and speeches, in BA: NS 15: Der Beauftragte des Führers, etc. The records of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg are found in BA: NS 30, but these are basically irrelevant to the present study. BA: NSDAP/143 contains fragmentary correspondence of Rosenberg from 1918 to 1928. BA: R 6 contains the extant records of the Reichsministerium

für die besetzten Ostgebiete, including memoranda and speeches of Reichsminister Rosenberg. Lastly BA: NS 26 comprises most of the former Hauptarchiv der NSDAP which includes a few significant items on Rosenberg (and of course much on Hitler). A general description of these documents may be found in G. Heinz and A.F. Peterson, NSDAP Hauptarchiv (1964)—which follows, however, the American microfilm reference numbers. The present study employs the Bundesarchiv rather than the American, or microfilm, reference numbers.

A sizeable number of diverse documents from the Rosenberg files found their way directly from Nuremberg into the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris. These are ably cataloged, chronologically under various headings, in Joseph Billig: Alfred Rosenberg dans l'action idéologique, politique et administrative du Reich hitlérien, Inventaire commenté, etc. (1963). Some of these documents have been published, either in the original German or in French translation, in various publications of the CDJC, including its journal Le Monde Juif, and in the several document collections of Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf.

A few scattered items—either duplicative, irrelevant, or unavailable for this study—found their way into archives of various other institutions: the Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdokumentatie (Amsterdam), the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (New York), and the Yad Vashem Remembrance Authority (Jerusalem). Many books and periodicals from Rosenberg's files and library found their way into the Library of Congress (Washington) and the Hoover Institution and Library (Stanford).

Other documents of biographical significance may be found in other repositories. For example, the Munich Stadtarchiv preserves documents from the years 1922 and 1923 relating to Rosenberg's application for German citizenship (Einbürgerungsakt 1922/121), and a record of his interrogation by the police after the abortive 1923 Putsch is preserved in the Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich (Heinz and Peterson, 100). In addition, the Wiener Library in London preserves, besides copies of various Nuremberg documents

pertaining to Rosenberg, a few newspaper and magazine clippings primarily of biographical significance.

Biographical material may be found throughout the documents in the BA, the CDJC, and the National Archives. Especially relevant for the early years are BA: NS 8/1-8 and Rosenberg's own recollections in BA: NS 8/20, BA: NS 8/22, and NA 7/PS-1749, 518-554. These documents should be compared with his Nuremberg memoirs published as Letzte Aufzeichnungen (1956). Interesting, if not always very reliable, biographical information is provided by the memoirs of old Nazis Kurt Ludecke, I Knew Hitler (1937), and Ernst ('Putzi') Hanfstaengl, Unheard Witness (1957). Significant references to Rosenberg may be found in the memoirs of others personally acquainted with him. For instance, Albert Krebs, Tendenzen und Gestalten der NSDAP (1959), contains a chapter on the Nazi ideologist. For the war years one may consult the memoirs of Ostministerium subordinate Otto Bräutigam, So hat es sich zugetragen (1968).

In tracing the mind of Alfred Rosenberg through the years, the author is aware of no contemporary sources before 1917, although such may still be extant in the Soviet Union. For the period from January 1917 to February 1919 we have his Erste Aufzeichnungen, published in part in Schriften und Reden 1 (1943), 1-124. Some of this published material is found in the form of typewritten copies of the original manuscript in BA: NS 8/19, Tagebuchauszüge 1918-1919, which also contains portions not published in S&R 1. The original handwritten notebook entitled Anmerkungen und Bemerkungen is in the CDJC (Billig, 105; cf. Poliakov and Wulf, Das Dritte Reich und seine Denker, 11-15).

For the period 1919-1932 we are almost entirely dependent on Rosenberg's published works since the archival material is almost exclusively concerned with the years 1933-1945. There is, however, some rather isolated material, mainly correspondence, from before 1933 (e.g., BA: NSDAP/143).

The sources for the years 1919-1923 are articles in Auf gut deutsch 1919-

1921 and the Völkischer Beobachter 1921-1923, plus seven separately published works: Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten (1920); Unmoral im Talmud (1920); Das Verbrechen der Freimaurerei (1921); Der staatsfeindliche Zionismus (1922); Pest in Russland (1922); Wesen, Grundsätze und Ziele der NSDAP (1923); and Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion und die jüdische Weltpolitik (1923). Fortunately all of these works are reprinted in the Schriften und Reden (2 vols., 1943), the second volume of which also contains many VB articles from 1921-1923 (S&R 2, 429-739).

For the years 1924-1929 the sources are the articles in the VB and Der Weltkampf plus several published works including: Börse und Marxismus (1924); Die internationale Hochfinanz als Herrin der Arbeiterbewegung in allen Ländern (1925); Dreissig Novemberköpfe (1927); Der Weltverschwörerkongress zu Basel (1927); Houston Stewart Chamberlain als Verkünder und Begründer einer deutschen Zukunft (1927); Der Zukunftsweg der deutschen Aussenpolitik (1927); Nationalsozialismus und Jungdeutscher Orden (1927); Dietrich Eckart—Ein Vermächtnis (1928); Freimaurerische Weltpolitik im Licht der kritischen Forschung (1929); and Der Sumpf, Querschnitte durch das "Geistes"-Leben der Novemberdemokratie (1930). Most of these works contain material previously published in Der Weltkampf or the Völkischer Beobachter.

The sources for the years 1930-1932 are chiefly the VB and the Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte which first appeared in April 1930. The best introduction to Rosenberg's mind from 1917 on is, of course, his chief work Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts—first published in 1930 but containing material written, or at least conceived, as far back as 1917. The Mythos should be supplemented by Das Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus (1932). For an overview of the range of Rosenberg's thought throughout the period 1919-1933, one should consult In Kampf um die Macht (1937) containing articles, mostly in the VB, from the period 1921-1932; and Blut und Ehre (1934) containing articles and speeches from 1919-1933.

For the Nazi ideologist's thought from 1933-1945, the published works

must be supplemented by the vast amount of available archival material. Just about all of Rosenberg's published works during these years are individual speeches or collections of speeches and articles. In fact, the only publications which do not fall into this category are two small brochures: Die Entwicklung der deutschen Freiheitsbewegung (1933) and Revolution in der bildenden Kunst? (1934); plus two polemical works defending the Mythus: An die Dunkelmänner unserer Zeit (1935) directed at Roman Catholic critics, and Protestantische Rompilger (1937) against Protestant critics. The most significant volumes of collected articles and speeches are: Gestaltung der Idee (1936) covering the period 1933-1935, and Tradition und Gegenwart (1941) covering the years 1936-1940. Apart from articles, mostly in the VB, Rosenberg published comparatively little during the years 1941-1945. The sources for his thought during this period are to be found almost entirely in archival materials.

With regard to archival sources the BA collection is by far the richest repository and needs only be supplemented by others, for example, the CDJC and the NA, as well as the published Nuremberg documents. For example, BA: NS 8/25-28 contains mostly clippings, along with some manuscripts, of articles from 1933-1943. BA: NS 8/37-70 comprises 34 volumes of manuscripts (or to be more exact, typescripts—with some duplicates) of articles, addresses, interviews, memoranda, etc. from 1932-1945. Some clippings and printed items are also included. BA: NS 8/71 contains manuscripts of Rosenberg in his capacity as Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete from 1941-1945. BA: NS 8/99-270 is primarily concerned with the Nazi ideologist's voluminous correspondence with various major and minor functionaries and organizations of the Third Reich, as well as with many private individuals.

By far the most important vehicle for the expression of Rosenberg's thought during the Third Reich was his numerous speeches. BA: NS 8/36 includes a list of these, by no means complete, from July 1933 to June 1943. This

last indicates date, place, audience, and theme. BA: NS 8/72-98 embraces 27 volumes of clippings, manuscripts, printed texts, and excerpts of these speeches. Numerous speech manuscripts and some printed texts are also included in BA: NS 8/37-71. Manuscripts, printed texts, and clippings of Rosenberg speeches may also be found in BA: NS 15/108, 112, 141, 155, 159a, 169; and in BA: R 6/35 and 37. Most of these speeches were reported in the VB where they are often reproduced in whole or in part. Excerpts from speeches reported in the VB may also be found in the many volumes of Das Archiv (Nachschlagwerk für Politik-Wirtschaft-Kultur) 1934-1944. Excerpts and sometimes full texts may also be found in the Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte, as well as other Nazi periodicals. Several of Rosenberg's speeches were published separately, or in the previously mentioned collections Gestaltung der Idee and Tradition und Gegenwart covering the period 1933-1940, or both. The texts of his speeches at the annual Nuremberg Party Rallies from 1933-1938 are found in the several volumes published to commemorate these gatherings (see General Bibliography). An edition of Rosenberg's war-time speeches was also planned, but never saw the light of day. The material for this projected volume, along with the texts of the speeches to be included, may be found in NA 4/PS-1749, 132-336.

Certain significant unpublished works of Rosenberg (not included in the items mentioned above) are included in BA: NS 8/22-24. For example, there is a very interesting and important memoir entitled Wie der Mythos entstand (BA: NS 8/22, 33-74). Then there is part of a typewritten book manuscript entitled Die Form der Deutschen--Die Form im nationalsozialistischen Zeitalter (BA: NS 8/23, 2-291). This manuscript is mentioned in Rosenberg's Nuremberg memoirs as a sequel to the Mythus under the title Die Macht der Form (cf. Memoiren, 326f; Letzte Aufzeichnungen, 261f; Grossdeutschland, 229f). Internal evidence indicates that the work was begun in the summer of 1939. According to the title page it was to have been published in 1942 with a first printing of 100,000 copies. But the book never saw the light

of day, presumably because of the prolongation of the War. There is also another typescript entitled Wissenschaft und Forschung (BA: NS 8/24, 1-138), which may have been intended as a separate publication; or more likely, as a part of the sequel to the Mythus to be published as Die Form der Deutschen.

A particularly important source for Rosenberg's mind during the Third Reich is his private diary. This was begun in May 1934 and continued intermittently until 1944, and maybe even into 1945. Apparently the whole of the original handwritten manuscript was at Nuremberg, where American prosecutor Robert M.W. Kempner claims to have seen it and to have copied out of it entries relating to the persecution of the Churches and the occupation of the Soviet Union, topics of special interest to him. But for some unknown reason only about one-third of the original manuscript was preserved among the Nuremberg documents under the reference number PS-1749. This portion (consecutive entries from 14 May 1934 to 18 March 1935, and from 6 February 1939 to 12 October 1940) was subsequently edited and published by Hans-Günther Seraphim in Das politische Tagebuch Alfred Rosenbergs (1956)—which, incidentally, includes an important appendix of other hitherto unpublished Nuremberg documents relating to Rosenberg.

No one seems to know the whereabouts of the missing parts of the original manuscript of Rosenberg's diary. Seraphim wrote in his introduction that he had heard that additional entries, especially from the years 1941-1944, were in private hands in the USA (1964 ed., 23). Presumably he had Kempner in mind. The latter has from time to time published excerpts. For example, entries from 1936-1938, 1941, and 1943 relating to the Kirchen-kampf appeared in Der Monat 1 (1949), 26-38. A few of these same excerpts were also published in Kempner, Edith Stein und Anne Frank (1968), 132-136. A few very significant entries from 1941 relating to the invasion of Russia appeared in the Frankfurter Rundschau on 22 June 1971.

Kempner has repeatedly maintained that he has no more unpublished excerpts, but this was also his story before June 1971. Thus it is probable that he

still has hitherto unpublished portions in his possession, which he probably intends to use in his memoirs. According to Reinhard Bollmus all attempts to get Kempner to publish a critical edition have failed. Nevertheless the present author is convinced that Kempner is telling the truth when he maintains that he does not have the missing original; otherwise, he would not have become so interested when informed that the National Archives in Washington had indicated (erroneously as it turned out) that they had 600 pages of Rosenberg's diary. What happened to the 'lost' portions of the diary remains a mystery. Der Spiegel noted in 1963 (30 January, 114) that the Soviet Foreign Office would publish in the spring of that year two handwritten diaries of Rosenberg (Bollmus, Das Amt Rosenberg, 252). But these have never appeared, and the Hamburg journal has not been able to trace its source of information. Conceivably the 'lost' portions may have fallen into Soviet hands (they certainly had a vested interest in them) and perhaps may be among secret documents at the Deutsches Zentralarchiv in Potsdam.

For Rosenberg's Nuremberg incarceration (1945-1946) there are, first of all, the official records of the Nuremberg Trial mentioned above. Rosenberg's name comes up constantly throughout the Trial and may be consulted in the excellent index volume (TWNC 24). Mr. Walter Brudno's presentation of the case against Rosenberg is found in Volume 5 (TWNC 5, 41-66); Rosenberg's testimony in his own defense, in Volume 11 (PHKV 11, 444-589); the defense of his counsel Dr. Alfred Thoma, in Volume 18 (PHKV 18, 81-143); and his own final statement to the tribunal, in Volume 22 (PHKV 22, 434-437).

In addition there are records of official interrogations and private conversations. Several summaries and transcripts of interrogations from 14 August to 10 November 1945, some 600 pages in all, are located at the National Archives, Washington. This collection also contains several handwritten depositions by Rosenberg. An example of one of these interrogations, the one on 14 August 1945, may be consulted in Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression,

Vol. B., 1326-1356. The transcripts of a number of interrogations in 1946 are located at the Staatsarchiv, Nuremberg (R 135). The best available source for the Nazi ideologist's conversations at Nuremberg is that provided by prison psychologist G.M. Gilbert in his Nuremberg Diary (1947), containing his account of several interesting discussions in Rosenberg's cell. Gilbert's predecessor's analysis of the defendants, D.M. Kelley's 22 Cells in Nuremberg (1947), includes a chapter on the philosopher of National Socialism. The memoirs of others at Nuremberg include some significant references to Rosenberg: for instance, fellow defendant Hans Fritzsche, Sword in the Scales (1953); and Burton C. Andrus, I Was the Nuremberg Jailer (1970). There are also significant references to Rosenberg in the brief account of US Army and Protestant prison chaplain Henry F. Gerecke: 'I Walked to the Gallows with the Nazi Chiefs', Saturday Evening Post, 1 September 1951.

The most significant source for Rosenberg's thinking at Nuremberg is of course his own memoirs. Unfortunately there is no unbiased critical edition of this interesting and revealing document. It has, however, been published in three different versions, none of which is very satisfactory. Due to an indiscretion S. Lang and E. von Schenck got hold of a copy of the original shortly after the War and published it with much editing and a very unsympathetic commentary under the title Portrait eines Menschheitsverbrechers (1947). The original was later obtained from Rosenberg's widow by his former subordinate Heinrich Hürtle, who edited a sympathetic version entitled Letzte Aufzeichnungen--Ideale und Idole der nationalsozialistischen Revolution (1955). The propriety of this edition was challenged in the German courts which eventually decided in Hürtle's favor. Recently the latter has published still a third version entitled Grossdeutschland: Traum und Tragödie--Rosenbergs Kritik am Hitlerismus (1970). This edition inexplicably omits Rosenberg's account of his early life, as well as some sentences included in Letzte Aufzeichnungen, and contains some material not

included in the former edition. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt as to the memoir's basic authenticity. The present study cites the LA version since it is fuller and better organized than the others.

Finally there is the Nachlass of Rosenberg's counsel Dr. Alfred Thoma located at the Bundesarchiv. But unfortunately this is still unavailable for research. According to the BA this material embraces the following: Thoma's notes relating to his defense of Rosenberg, depositions on Rosenberg's character provided by Hans Frank and Alfred Baumler among others, Rosenberg's own handwritten notes on individual accusations of the prosecution, his handwritten notes on the Trial in general, and lastly handwritten memoirs containing a few items hitherto unpublished. All of these sources are legally available to scholars as of October 1976—provided, one, that the BA has them cataloged by then; and, two, that one obtains the permission of Rosenberg's heirs (that is, his wife and daughter, both still alive) to examine the handwritten general notes on the Trial and the memoirs.

All in all, there is certainly no dearth of sources for Rosenberg's thought. The wealth of published and archival material exhibits a fascinating variety of form and content. Rosenberg expressed his mind in almost every conceivable circumstance and on almost every conceivable subject. His mind is reflected, for example, in all of the following forms of recorded expression: observations, critiques, essays, articles, editorials, reviews, obituaries; tracts, monographs, commentaries, satires, biographies, histories, political treatises, philosophical studies, polemical works, forewards and introductions to books; public and private addresses of all sorts: for instance, political speeches, ideological sermons, academic lectures, radio addresses, funeral orations, talks to subordinates and troops; correspondence with people from all walks of life; records of official conferences and unofficial talks, of formal interviews and informal conversations; notes, rough drafts, memoranda, positional papers, recommendations,

reports; circulars, communiques, press releases, guidelines, syllabi; decrees, proclamations, appeals; finally, unfinished manuscripts, diaries, reminiscences, memoirs, interrogations and testimonies under oath.

The literature on National Socialism and the Third Reich is vast indeed, but the following are helpful introductions to the subject. Karl Dietrich Bracher, Die deutsche Diktatur--Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus (1969) is a good, recent treatment. Joachim C. Fest, Das Gesicht des dritten Reiches (1963), contains interesting portraits of all the leading personalities of Nazi Germany, including a chapter on Rosenberg vitiated somewhat by its condescending character. Perhaps the most readable introduction to Nazi Germany is journalist William L. Shirer's popular The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (1960), which like all popular treatments naturally suffers from lack of depth. One should consult also the large and uneven volume of essays by Edmond Vermeil and others entitled The Third Reich (1955), which includes some able articles on subjects relevant to the present study.

For the history of National Socialism, especially the early years, the works of Konrad Heiden, though unfortunately undocumented, are still worth consulting for helpful information and insights: Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus (1932), A History of National Socialism (1935), Adolf Hitler (2 vols., 1936/1937), Der Fuehrer (1944). Werner Maser's Die Frühgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus (1965) covers the period 1919-1923. Walter Laqueur's Russia and Germany (1965) includes interesting chapters stressing the influence of Baltic Germans in the early history of the NSDAP, especially the role of Rosenberg in the development of Hitler's attitude toward Russia and the Jews. Joseph Nyomarkay, Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party (1967), is a significant contribution for understanding the various factions in the Party from 1925 to 1934. The standard work on the organizational history of the NSDAP from 1919 to 1945 is Dietrich Orlow's The History of the Nazi Party (2 vols., 1969/1973), based primarily on the NSDAP Hauptarchiv. Of

the numerous collections of documents on the Nazi period, perhaps the most accessible are: Albrecht Tyrell (ed.), Führer Befehl (1960) for the period 1919-1932; and Walter Hofer (ed.), Der Nationalsozialismus--Dokumente 1933-1945 (1957).

There is no very satisfactory work on the difficult subject of the intellectual background and origins of National Socialism. Of the various attempts to grapple with the issue, the following deserve at least to be mentioned: Edmond Vermeil, Doctrinaires de la Révolution Allemande 1918-1938 (1938); Peter Viereck, Metapolitics--From the Romantics to Hitler (1941); Rohan D'O. Butler, The Roots of National Socialism 1783-1933 (1941); Georg Lukács, Die Zerstörung der Vernunft--Der Weg des Irrationalismus von Schelling zu Hitler (1954); Jean Neurohr, Der Mythos vom Dritten Reich--Zur Geistesgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus (1957); Dietrich Bröndel, Bevor Hitler kam--Eine historische Studie (1964). Several of these studies have sections on Rosenberg's thought as expressed in the Mythus.

Perhaps the most helpful introduction to the subject of Nazi intellectual origins is George L. Mosse's study of völkisch thought, The Crisis of the German Ideology--Intellectual Origins of National Socialism (1964). Also significant in this connection is Fritz Stern's study on the rise of the Germanic ideology, The Politics of Cultural Despair (1961). Daniel Gasman makes a significant contribution in his study of the thought of Ernst Haeckel and the German Monist League entitled The Scientific Origins of National Socialism (1971).

The thought of Paul de Lagarde is contained in his influential Deutsche Schriften, as well as his Ausgewählte Schriften, both included in Schriften für das deutsche Volk (2 vols., 1924). Able summaries of Lagarde's ideas are contained in Stern's study and Jean-Jacque Anstett's essay in The Third Reich, both mentioned above. The best source for the thought of Houston Stewart Chamberlain taken as a whole is his chief work, Die Grundlagen des XIX. Jahrhunderts (2 vols., 1899). Especially significant for his philosophical orientation is his Immanuel Kant (1904). A masterful

summary of Chamberlain's thought is to be found in Jean Réal's study 'The Religious Conception of Race--Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Germanic Christianity' in The Third Reich. F. Grégoire's 'The Use and Misuse of Philosophy and Philosophers', also in The Third Reich, summarizes and analyzes various Nazi authors of a philosophical bent including Rosenberg.

The most exhaustive and sympathetic treatment of racial thought is to be found in the works of Ludwig Schemann, especially Die Rasse in den Geisteswissenschaften--Studien zur Geschichte des Rassengedankens (3 vols., 1928/1930/1931). Of special relevance in this connection is Léon Poliakov's unsympathetic study of the ideological sources of racism and nationalism, Le mythe aryen (1971). Poliakov is also the author of the yet unfinished, multivolume, standard work Histoire de l'antisémitisme (1955ff), of which the third volume, entitled De Voltaire à Wagner (1968), deals with the development of early modern anti-Semitism. Poliakov may be supplemented by P.G.J. Pulzer, The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria (1964) covering the period 1867-1914. Almost all aspects of the subject of anti-Semitism in Germany from 1914-1933 are discussed in depth in the two volumes of essays edited by Werner E. Mosse: Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923 (1971) and Entscheidungsjahr 1932--Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik (rev. ed. 1966). The definitive study of the origins, history, and effects of the so-called Protocols of the Elders of Zion and the myth of a Jewish world conspiracy is Norman Cohn, Warrant for Genocide (1967). The definitive account of the Nazi attempt to exterminate European Jewry is Gerald Reitlinger, The Final Solution (rev. ed. 1961). For a revealing collection of documents on the persecution of the Jews, see Léon Poliakov and Josef Wulf (ed.), Das Dritte Reich und die Juden (2nd ed., 1955). The racial ideas of the Nazi regime are discussed from the point of view of a professional anthropologist in Karl Saller, Die Rassenlehre des Nationalsozialismus in Wissenschaft und Propaganda (1961); its racial policies in general, in

Joseph Tenenbaum, Race and Reich (1956).

An able account of the political history of the Third Reich is Martin Broszat, Der Staat Hitlers (1969). Robert Koehl's essay on the 'Feudal Aspects of National Socialism', The American Political Science Review 54 (1960) 921-933, is an interesting and significant contribution to the political history of the Third Reich. An interesting attempt to grapple with the problem of its social history is found in David Schoenbaum's ambiguous Hitler's Social Revolution (1966). A description of almost every area of life is contained in Richard Grunberger, The 12-Year Reich-- A Social History of Nazi Germany (1971).

Abundant documentation relating to cultural life under the Nazi regime is presented in Josef Wulf (ed.), Kunst und Kultur im Dritten Reich (5 vols., 1963/1964). Hildegard Brenner, Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus (1963) is the standard work on art in the Third Reich and contains much on Rosenberg's (and Hitler's) views on the subject. Rosenberg's views also play a role in Robert A. Pois' essay on 'German Expressionism in the Plastic Arts and Nazism: A Confrontation of Ideals', German Life and Letters 21 (1967), 204-214. Oren J. Hale, The Captive Press in the Third Reich (1964) is a good example of an excellent specialized study on one particular area of Nazi cultural policy.

There is an enormous literature on the Nazi struggle with the Churches. Otto Diehn's Bibliographie zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes (1957) covers the primary works and the secondary literature to 1957, including various items pertaining to Rosenberg and his role in the church struggle. A list of works on his Mythus arising out of the controversy over the book is found in the Wiener Library Bulletin article mentioned above as well as in BA: NS 8/17. Perhaps the best treatment of the church struggle as a whole is Friedrich Zipfel, Kirchenkampf in Deutschland 1933-1945 (1965), which has a section on the controversy over the Mythus. The standard work on the Roman Catholic Church in the Kirchenkampf is Günther Lewy, The Catholic

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There is no one book covering the complex subject of Nazi ideology as a whole. Some relevant articles are: Martin Broszat, 'Die völkische Ideologie und der Nationalsozialismus', Deutsche Rundschau 84 (1955), 53-68; and Hajo

Holborn, 'Origins and Political Character of Nazi Ideology', Germany and Europe—Historical Essays (1971), 213-224. The only full-scale up-to-date study of the thought of any of the Nazi leaders other than Hitler is Joseph Ackermann, Himmler als Ideologe (1970). An interesting study of the practical side of Nazi ideology is Volker Berghahn's essay 'NSDAP und "geistige Führung" der Wehrmacht 1939-1943', VJHZG 17 (1969), 17-71.

The standard biography of Hitler is still Alan Bullock, Hitler—A Study in Tyranny (rev. ed. 1962). It should, however, be supplemented by the recent biographies of Werner Maser (rev. ed. 1973) and Joachim Fest (1973). The most significant book-length attempts to penetrate Hitler's world of thought are that of Austria's noted Catholic historian of ideas, Friedrich Heer: Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler (1968); and Eberhard Jäckel's Hitlers Weltanschauung (1969). Other significant contributions are H.R. Trevor-Roper's introduction to the English, and P.E. Schramm's introduction to the German version of Hitler's war-time conversations (see below), and especially the numerous articles on Hitler in the VJHZG (1953ff).

The primary sources for Hitler's mind are, first of all, his own writings, chief of which is, of course, Mein Kampf (2 vols. orig. ed. 1925/1927). The origin, sources, style, and content of this work are analyzed by Werner Maser, Hitlers Mein Kampf (1966); the changes in the various editions by Hermann Hammer, 'Die deutschen Ausgaben von Hitlers Mein Kampf', VJHZG 4 (1956), 161-178. There is also Hitler's book on foreign policy issues dictated in 1928 but never published in his lifetime: Gerhard L. Weinberg (ed.), Hitlers Zweites Buch (1961). The content of this work is analyzed by Martin Broszat in 'Betrachtungen zu "Hitlers Zweitem Buch"', VJHZG 9 (1961), 417-429. Then there are a few published articles appearing for the most part in the early years of the VB. Finally, there are unpublished letters and notes, some of which have been recently annotated and published by Maser (ed.): Hitlers Briefe und Notizen (1973).

The best, but unfortunately most inaccessible, source for Hitler's public speeches is the Völkischer Beobachter. Of the various published

collections, the most significant is Max Domarus (ed.): Hitler—Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945 (2 vols., 1965), arranged chronologically with a helpful commentary by the editor. But this massive work does not contain the full text of many of the speeches and nothing before 1932. Very helpful for English readers is the collection of excerpts arranged according to topic by Norman H. Baynes: The Speeches of Adolf Hitler April 1922—August 1939 (2 vols., 1942). The only extant record of his earliest speeches in 1919 and 1920 is contained in the documentation supplied by Ernst Deuerlein and Reginald H. Phelps in the VJHZG: Deuerlein, 'Hitlers Eintritt in die Politik und die Reichswehr', VJHZG 7 (1959), 177-227; Phelps, 'Hitler als Parteiredner im Jahre 1920', VJHZG 11 (1963), 274-330, and 'Hitlers "grundlegende" Rede über den Antisemitismus', VJHZG 16 (1968), 390-420. The major speeches from the years 1922-1924 are contained in Ernst Boepfle (ed.), Adolf Hitlers Reden (1925). Hitler's important 1926 speech before the Hamburg National Club of 1919 is edited and analyzed by Werner Jochmann (ed.), Im Kampf um die Macht (1960). The speeches at the Nuremberg Party Congresses from 1933-1938 are contained in the above-mentioned volumes commemorating these gatherings. Finally, the major war-time speeches are to be found in Philipp Bouhler (ed.), Der grossdeutsche Freiheitskampf (3 vols., 1942).

Perhaps the most significant (and, in terms of authenticity, most problematic) sources for Hitler's mind, are his private conversations. The earliest ones of which we have a significant record are those recorded in Dietrich Eckart's unfinished work, Der Bolschewismus von Moses bis Lenin—Zwiesgespräch zwischen Adolf Hitler und mir (1924), analyzed by Ernst Nolte in 'Eine frühe Quelle zu Hitlers Antisemitismus', Historische Zeitschrift 192 (1961), 584-606. The two significant conversations with Otto Strasser in May 1930 are recorded by the latter in Ministersessel oder Revolution? (1930); those with correspondent Richard Breiting in May and June of 1931, may be found in Edouard Calic (ed.): Ohne Maske, Hitler—

Breiting Geheimgespräche 1931 (1968). One wonders whether Hitler really said some of the things attributed to him in Calic, but most of it seems genuine. Conversations from the years 1932-1934 are recorded by Hermann Rauschning, Gespräche mit Hitler (2nd ed. 1940), a source to be treated circumspectly but nevertheless accepted by most historians as basically genuine.

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There have been various attempts to face the challenge of interpreting National Socialism in broad historical perspective. For a survey of these to 1957 see Andrew C. Whiteside, 'The Nature and Origins of National Socialism', Journal of Central European History 17 (1957), 48-73. One of ~~the most interesting~~ attempts is that of noted historian Friedrich Meinecke, Die deutsche Katastrophe (1946). An early conservative attempt, which has exerted wide influence, is Herman Rauschning, Die Revolution des Nihilismus (1938). Rauschning is followed, in general, by Martin Broszat, Der Nationalsozialismus (1960). Franz Neumann, Behemoth--The Structure and Practice of National Socialism (1942), is the most noted attempt from a Marxist viewpoint. Hannah Arendt endeavors to interpret National Socialism as totali-

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| <u>NSDAP/143</u> | <u>Miscellaneous Rosenberg Correspondence</u>
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 - a. 1920-1924
 - 1920 Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten
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Unmoral im Talmud
 - 1921 Das Verbrechen der Freimaurerei
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Der staatsfeindliche Zionismus
 - 1923 Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion und die jüdische Weltpolitik
Wesen, Grundsätze und Ziele der NSDAP
 - 1924 Börse und Marxismus oder der Herr und der Knecht
Der völkische Staatsgedanke—Untergang und Neugeburt

¹Full titles are given in the alphabetical list below. Within each year the titles are listed alphabetically, not chronologically. Separately-published excerpts (e.g., Flugschriften) from Rosenberg's works are not included.

b. 1925-1929

1925 Die internationale Hochfinanz als Herrin der Arbeiterbewegung in allen Ländern

Der Fall Bettauer

1927 Dreissig Novemberköpfe

Houston Stewart Chamberlain als Verkünder und Begründer einer deutschen Zukunft

Nationalsozialismus und Jungdeutscher Orden

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Der Zukunftsweg der deutschen Aussenpolitik

1928 Dietrich Eckart—Ein Vermächtnis

Freimaurerische Weltpolitik im Lichte der kritischen Forschung

c. 1930-1932

1930 Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts

Der Sumpf—Querschnitte durch das "Geistes"-Leben der Novemberdemokratie

1932 Das Wesensgefüge des Nationalsozialismus

d. 1933-1939

1933 Die Entwicklung der deutschen Freiheitsbewegung

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

G.P. Hutchinson: The Nazi Ideology of Alfred Rosenberg, A Study of His Thought 1917-1946

The historiography of the Third Reich has tended, on the whole, to treat Alfred Rosenberg, and his Nazi ideology and religion, in a rather condescending manner, more or less as a joke. Moreover, despite evidence to the contrary, there has been a similar tendency to play down the significance of ideology in the Nazi Movement as a whole. Furthermore, the religious dimension of Nazism, the role of religion in the Nazi Movement, and the religious significance of the Nazi phenomenon have been likewise underestimated. Even where the significance of ideology and religion for understanding Nazism has been recognized, there has been little attempt to understand the religious aspect of Nazi ideology and the distinctive character, origin, and appeal of Nazi religion.

The probable explanation for these tendencies is as follows: On the one hand Rosenberg, the character of Nazi ideology, and the religious side of Nazism are rather embarrassing to German historians proud of the intellectual tradition of German scholarship. On the other hand, non-German historians, for instance in the Anglo-American world, have had real difficulty appreciating and understanding the peculiar mentality of Rosenberg, the appeal of Nazi ideology, and the religious side of Nazism. Since the tendency is to make light of what is not understood, the incomprehensible becomes the object of derision and depreciation. Moreover, most contemporary historians of Nazism, whether German or non-German, do not have the interest or background in religion necessary for comprehending the religious dimension of the Nazi Movement. Hence the general tendency is to relegate the incomprehensible to the realm of the insignificant.

In contrast to this general outlook, the present monograph, by one interested in theology as well as history, tries to take Rosenberg, Nazi ideology, and the religious aspect of Nazism seriously with a view to shedding light on the

Nazi enigma. The study is based on the conviction that historical understanding must begin with the self-image and self-understanding of the human beings involved. However difficult, the historian must start by trying to escape his own mentality in order to enter into that of the human participants in the history under investigation. It is also based on the conviction that the only way to get at this self-understanding is through the extant contemporary documents. Hence the study utilizes not only Rosenberg's published writings but also his voluminous files and correspondence captured at the end of the War and preserved, for the most part, at the Bundesarchiv in Coblenz.

This study of Rosenberg has a three-fold purpose. First, there is the attempt to understand Rosenberg's thought, as related to Nazi ideology, in its own terms. The aim is to comprehend Rosenberg's Nazi mentality on the basis of all the relevant archival and published sources, and to represent it as accurately and as lucidly as possible—something no one has ever done before. Second there is the attempt to show that Rosenberg, his ideology, and his religious mentality, were not on the fringes of the Nazi Movement but at its heart. His outlook was an integral part of National Socialism. His ideology was seen by the hard core of the Nazi Movement, including Hitler himself, as the hard core of Nazism. Third, there is the attempt to come to grips with the general historical problem of explaining National Socialism on the basis of the perspective gained from understanding Rosenberg, his role in the Nazi Movement, and his place in the mind of Hitler. The tentative hypothesis is that Nazism was at bottom ultimately the outgrowth of a distinctively German religious mentality with historical roots in the peculiar religious and intellectual history of Germany and with a religious appeal to those facing the crisis of the German ideology in the wake of the First World War.

Hence this monograph is not simply an exposition of Rosenberg's thought

(only a little over one-half of it is devoted to this purpose), but an attempt to grapple with the issue of his influence in the Nazi Party and the Third Reich, with the question of the relationship between Rosenberg and Hitler's ideology, and with the problem of interpreting and explaining the Nazi phenomenon in general. There is also the additional historical motive of recording the tragedy of Rosenberg's Nazi ideology for its own sake.

Chapter 1 introduces the study with a brief statement of the general problem of National Socialism in terms of questions related to its essential nature, historical origin, and practical appeal. Then there is a brief biographical sketch of Rosenberg, stressing his integral involvement in the Nazi Movement from beginning to end. This is followed by a justification of the study and summary of its purpose and content.

Chapter 2 is crucial to the overall thesis in that it adduces contemporary evidence for Rosenberg's influence and importance as the ideologist of Nazism. The chapter argues on the basis of this evidence that he was taken seriously by many in the Nazi Party and the Third Reich, seriously enough to warrant the attempt to illuminate the Nazi enigma by means of understanding his ideology. The chapter refers, for instance, to Rosenberg's public image and his esteem among the Party's hard core to show that he had a certain following.

Chapters 3-7 are an historical presentation of Rosenberg's ideology in the framework of the Nazi Movement. There is an account of his sources and philosophy (Chapter 3), his racial ideology of history (Chapter 4), his distinctively political thought (Chapter 5), his conception of the Nazi cultural and religious revolution (Chapter 6), and his viewpoint on German foreign policy and world affairs including the Jewish Question (Chapter 7). The primary aim of these chapters is to understand Rosenberg's mind. But there is also an attempt to show that his ideology is not unrelated or irrelevant to the Nazi political movement as an empirical reality. For instance:

Chapter 3 argues that Rosenberg's concept of myth provides insight into the Nazi mind and the peculiar psychological and theatrical atmosphere of the Third Reich. Chapter 4 contends that his racial ideology of history helps to explain the mentality behind the fanatical Nazi Rassenpolitik. Chapter 5 indicates that Rosenberg's conception of the Nazi political revolution corresponded to the feudal character of Nazi politics. Chapter 6 shows that there was during the Third Reich a very real interest, both positive and negative, in Rosenberg's Nazi religious revolution. Chapter 7 maintains that Rosenberg's ideological conception of Nazi foreign policy was not very far removed from the foreign policy of the Third Reich.

Chapters 8 and 9 deal with the relationship between Rosenberg and Hitler and their respective ideologies. After examining Rosenberg's version of the Hitler myth, Chapter 8 discusses the question of Hitler's attitude to Rosenberg and his ideology. It argues on the basis of the evidence, including that of Hitler's attitude to ideology, that the Fuehrer himself considered Rosenberg's religious ideology theoretically and practically essential to the Nazi Movement. Chapter 9 discusses the most important features of Hitler's ideology vis-à-vis Rosenberg's with a view to showing that despite minor differences Hitler's ideology, including the idea of a religious revolution, basically corresponded to Rosenberg's. Nevertheless Hitler did not get his ideology from Rosenberg, although the latter strengthened Hitler's ideological convictions and probably helped him synthesize his ideology at one crucial point. This chapter also has the function of providing a basis for generalizing about Nazism not only in the light of Rosenberg's ideology but also on the basis of Hitler's.

Finally, Chapter 10 concludes the study by suggesting, in the light of Chapters 2-9, a somewhat new approach to answering the questions raised in Chapter 1 regarding Nazism's nature, origin, and appeal—especially to educated Germans. The chapter suggests a religious interpretation of Nazism. In brief, the hypothesis is that Nazism was at bottom ultimately a religious mentality and ideology, a secularized substitute for Christianity. Insofar

as this surrogate religion had its roots in Protestantism, it was a secularized German Pietism. The fideistic Pietist mentality experienced a process of secularization in 18th and 19th century Germany, eventually producing, in interaction with other important historical developments, the German or völkisch ideology. This German faith functioned practically as a religious substitute for a Christian faith, whether traditional or liberal, lost to modern science and philosophy. The shock of the German defeat in 1918, together with subsequent political and economic instability, added to the crisis of the Christian faith a crisis of the German or völkisch faith. This twofold religious crisis helped prepare the minds of many educated Germans for Hitler's messianic appeal—if not to put their personal faith in him, at least to accept him as the Savior of Germany.

This tentative hypothesis, like all general theories of historical interpretation, will have to be tested and modified by further research. The hope, however, is that it will prove to be a stimulus to further research and a significant contribution to the historiography of the Third Reich.