

# WILL THE REAL NAZIS PLEASE STAND UP?!!

## (PART 1)

[October 22, 2015](#)



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### **PART 1: NAZI RELIGION - NATURE WORSHIP, WITH SUPERFICIAL APPEALS TO CHRISTIANITY**

Atheists often claim that the Nazis were a Christian movement because Hitler denounced Marxist materialism and made some public comments appealing to God and promising to promote “positive Christianity.”<sup>1</sup> You can trust a politician’s promises, can’t you? Nearly all politicians in the West give perfunctory honor to God. For some atheists, pointing to an instance where Hitler “named the name of Christ” is sufficient to prove that he was a Christian. But the logical fallacy of this argument is simple: Equivocation – using the same words as Christians but giving them a different meaning. That Hitler always spoke positively about Jesus Christ does not prove that he believed in Christianity or the Christian God because Hitler’s views of Jesus and God bear little resemblance to the traditional Christian views. Hitler spoke positively of Jesus Christ,

but he often denounced Christianity in his private conversations. Hitler rejected the Christian view of God, rejected the Old Testament because it was Jewish (even though Christ endorsed it - [Matt. 5:17](#), [Luke 16:17](#), [John 10:35](#)), rejected the scriptures from the Apostle Paul because his message was internationalist rather than racist and nationalist, rejected the resurrection of Christ, rejected the deity of Christ, and rejected Christ's Jewish lineage. Hitler's "Christ" was a product of his own imagination: a completely mortal, anti-capitalist, anti-Semite Aryan. Hitler's occasional pro-Christian rhetoric masked a secret plan by the Nazis to destroy the Christian Church. He wanted to return German religion to pre-Christian nature worship. The main source of Hitler's ideology was Friedrich Nietzsche, who declared that "God is dead," and Darwinian evolution in terms of races struggling against each other so that societal progress is achieved by the survival of the fittest race.

Although the Nazis made use of some statements of Luther's where he harshly denounced Jews, the ideology that propelled Hitler and German intellectuals to believe in racism and to perpetrate the Holocaust against the Jews and others deemed less fit was Darwin's evolutionary theory of survival of the fittest. Hitler considered the Christian ethic of charity to the poor and sick to be an ethic of weakness that ought to be rejected as contrary to the law of nature. Except for the overt-racism, Hitler's fascism was a carbon-copy of standard twentieth and twenty-first century liberal political thought: socialist, pro-gun control, pro-abortion, pro-animal rights, anti-smoking, environmentalist, and vegetarian. The superficially Christian laws that Hitler promoted were actually a product of his racist ideology: He was anti-prostitution because it mixed the races; he was anti-abortion only when it came to Aryans. Hitler's fascism, like fascism in general, was not right-wing political ideology but left-wing, as those terms are used in modern American political discourse. I will cover Hitler's social policy in part 3 of this essay. I will answer the question in more detail of whether Luther is to blame for Nazism in part 2. Here I will concentrate on Hitler's theology.

## **NAZI REJECTION OF THE CHRISTIAN GOD**

Hitler denounced the barren materialism that is usually equated with atheism in our day in favor of a more mystical view, but Hitler did not believe in God as traditionally understood by Christians. Martin Bormann, Adolf Hitler's private secretary who was faithful to Hitler to the end (after Hitler's suicide, he poured gasoline on the body), wrote that the Nazi "God" is an impersonal force of nature:

*When we [National Socialists] speak of belief in God, we do not mean, like the naive Christians and their spiritual exploiters, a man-like being sitting around somewhere in the universe. The force governed by natural law by which all these countless planets move in the universe, we call omnipotence or God. The assertion that this universal force can trouble itself about the destiny of each individual being, every smallest earthly bacillus, can be influenced by so-called prayers or other surprising things, depends upon a requisite dose of naivety or else upon shameless professional self-interest.<sup>ii</sup>*

"God" as an impersonal force of nature is atheism as far as the traditional Christian definition of God goes. Bormann's description of the Nazi God may seem to contradict this passage in *Mein Kampf*, where Hitler speaks of God as a creator and revealing his will to mankind, but that would be a superficial reading:

*The folkish-minded man, in particular, has the sacred duty, each in his own denomination, of making people stop just talking superficially of God's will, and actually fulfill God's will, and not let God's word be desecrated. For God's will gave men their form, their essence and their abilities. **Anyone who destroys His work is declaring war on the Lord's creation, the divine will.**"<sup>iii</sup>*

This all sounds very Christian until the terms are defined. Hitler does not define his terms here, but understanding this in context of other statements by Hitler and his close associates like Bormann, Hitler is using traditional language to talk about a pantheistic universal force. As Bormann's quote indicates, as do others from Hitler's close associates, Nazi leaders did not believe in a personal God; **and they** did not believe that Hitler did either. Although those trying to connect Hitler with Christianity have claimed that Hitler's associates have misquoted or fabricated statements from Hitler in which he rejects Christianity, even if the quotes are not word-for-word accurate, it would be odd if several of Hitler's close associates shared the same misunderstanding about the view of their ideological leader. Hitler's use of some traditional language concerning God and Christianity also has to be considered in the light of the secret Nazi plan to undermine Christian churches without alerting them to it. As discussed in more detail below, the Nazis wanted Christians to think that they were on their side until they were in a position to destroy Christianity. At any rate, Bormann's statement about the belief of National Socialists in general indicates that the personal nature of God was not an essential part of Nazi ideology. It was not a standard view among Nazis, and therefore cannot be said to be a driving force behind Nazi atrocities. Naturalistic evolution was the ideology that was the driving force behind the atrocities.



**Hitler at Nietzsche museum with Nietzsche's daughter, Elizabeth Forster Nietzsche**

Hitler was a big fan of Friedrich Nietzsche, a virulently anti-Christian philosopher. William Shirer writes: *"Hitler often visited the Nietzsche museum in Weimar and publicized his veneration for the philosopher by posing for photographs of himself staring in rapture at the bust of the great man."* <sup>iv</sup> The photo to the right documents Hitler visiting the Nietzsche museum and greeting Nietzsche's daughter. Writes Shirer again, *"That in the end Hitler considered himself the superman of Nietzsche's prophecy cannot be doubted."* <sup>v</sup> Hitler used some of Nietzsche's terms in *Mein Kampf*, and they

were integrated into other statements of Nazi ideology. Nietzsche's defenders point out that the philosopher rejected racism, but no one can deny Nietzsche's anti-Christian views. The alleged weakness of Christianity was the main foil for Nietzsche's view that exalted the "will to power" and the "will to war," which would produce the "superman." Even if Hitler was not well-read in Nietzsche's philosophy, he could not have missed the anti-Christian thrust of his thinking and had to find some agreement with it to be such a big fan.

The Hitler Youth marching song, written in 1935, shows how the ideology in which Nazi followers were immersed was forthrightly anti-Christian:

*We are the joyous Hitler youth.*

*We need no Christian virtue,*

*For our leader is Adolf Hitler.*

*He is our deliverer and intercessor.*

*No cleric, no evil-doer can hinder us,*

*For we consider ourselves Hitler-Children.*

*We follow not Christ, but Horst Wessel.*

*Away with incense and Holy Water,*

*The Church can go hang for all we care.*

*The Swastika brings salvation on Earth.<sup>vi</sup>*

Martin Bormann also said:

*National Socialism and Christian concepts are incompatible. The Christian Churches build upon the ignorance of men and strive to keep large portions of the people in ignorance because only in this way can the Christian Churches maintain their power. On the other hand, National Socialism is based on scientific foundations. Christianity's immutable principles, which were laid down almost two thousand years ago, have increasingly stiffened into life-alien dogmas. National Socialism, however, if it wants to fulfill its task further, must always guide itself according to the newest data of scientific researches.*

*The Christian Churches have long been aware that exact scientific knowledge poses a threat to their existence. Therefore, by means of such pseudo-sciences as theology, they take great pains to suppress or falsify scientific research. Our National Socialist world view stands on a much higher level than the concepts of Christianity, which in their essentials were taken over from Judaism. For this reason, too, we can do without Christianity.<sup>vii</sup>*

Of course, like many in the twentieth-century who professed to follow the newest data of science rather than the old dogmas of religion, Bormann believed in the guided

evolution of eugenics and state-directed economies as the way to shape the future of humanity.

Stewart W. Herman, Jr. was a pastor of the American Church in Berlin from 1936 to 1941, and he witnessed first-hand the Nazi campaign to uproot Christianity. Pastor Herman reports the following from a speech to a group of pastors to make sure they understood the Nazi doctrine of Race, Blood and Soil. It was given by Dr. Hans Kerrl, a Nazi lawyer friend of Hitler and appointed by Hitler as Minister for Church Affairs:

*No, Christianity is not dependent on the Apostle's Creed... True Christianity is represented by the party, and the German people are now called by the party and especially by the Fuehrer to a real Christianity... The Fuehrer is the herald of a new revelation.* [viii](#)

The Apostle's Creed is universally considered by Christian churches to be the bare minimum that one must believe in order to be called a Christian, if more is not required. But the Nazis rejected even that bare minimum. They wanted to use the name "Christian," but fill it with alien doctrines. William Shirer writes in *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*:

*What the Hitler government envisioned for Germany was clearly set out in a thirty-point program for the 'National Reich Church' drawn up during the war by Rosenberg, an outspoken pagan, who among his other offices, held that of "the Fuehrer's Delegate for the Entire Intellectual and Philosophical Education and Instruction for the National Socialist Party." A few of the thirty articles convey the essentials:*

*1. The National Reich Church of Germany categorically claims the exclusive right and the exclusive power to control all churches within the borders of the Reich: it declares these to be the national churches of the German Reich.*

*5. The National Church is determined to exterminate irrevocably... the strange and foreign Christian faiths imported into Germany in the ill-omened year 800.*

*7. The National Church has no scribes, pastors, chaplains, or priests, but National Reich orators are to speak in them.*

*13. The National Church demands immediate cessation of the publishing and dissemination of the Bible in Germany...*

*14. The National Church declares that to it, and therefore to the German nation, it has been decided that the Fuehrer's Mein Kampf is the greatest of all documents. It... not only contains the greatest but it embodies the purest and truest ethics for the present and future life of our nation.*

*18. The National Church will clear away from its altars all crucifixes, Bibles, and pictures of saints.*

*19. On the altars there must be nothing but Mein Kampf (to the German nation and therefore to God the most sacred book) and to the left of the altar a sword.*

30. On the day of its foundation, the Christian Cross must be removed from all churches, cathedrals, and chapels... and it must be superseded by the only unconquerable symbol, the swastika." ix

Goebbels statement in his diary reinforces Hitler's anti-Christian beliefs:

*We come back to religious questions again. The Fuhrer is deeply religious, though completely anti-Christian. He views Christianity as a symptom of decay. Rightly so. It is a branch of the Jewish race. This can be seen in the similarity of religious rites. Both (Judaism and Christianity) have no point of contact to the animal element, and thus, in the end, they will be destroyed. x*

Hitler says that he would have preferred that Germany had adopted a more nationalistic and militaristic religion than Christianity. He expressed admiration for the Muslim military tradition and directed Himmler to initiate Muslim SS Divisions as a matter of policy. The Bosnian Muslim division proved to be one of his most dedicated and hard-fighting. xi According to Albert Speer, Hitler's Armaments Minister, Hitler stated in private:

*You see, it's been our misfortune to have the wrong religion. Why didn't we have the religion of the Japanese, who regard sacrifice for the Fatherland as the highest good? The Mohammedan religion too would have been much more compatible to us than Christianity. Why did it have to be Christianity with its meekness and flabbiness... xii*

The name of the country of Iran, known as Persia until 1935, is derived from the word Aryan. While the term Aryan is used a few times in ancient Persian writings, there is no clear basis for it being used as a racial designation. The name Iran for the county was deliberately chosen as a show of ideological support for the Nazi concept of the Aryan race. German Nazis tried to gain support in the country by flooding it with Aryan racist propaganda, and that has played into the hatred of Jews in modern Islam. xiii

## **NAZI REJECTION OF THE RESURRECTED CHRIST**

Hitler's views of Christ were decidedly heretical. Hitler spoke of Christ as an historical person, but Hitler's "Christ" was not the Christ of Christianity, but a mere man with anti-Semitic, anti-capitalist, mystic beliefs. Hitler denied the fundamental Christian doctrine of the resurrection of Christ:

*Immediately after the death of Christ, whom the reactionaries crucified, they set about exterminating, at least imprisoning and depriving of their rights, all those who had accepted Christ before his death. Christ's body was removed from the tomb, to keep it from becoming an object of veneration and a tangible relic of the great new founder of a religion! xiv*

Denying the divinity of Christ and His resurrection, Hitler cannot be called a Christian. (This may seem obvious, but some internet "experts" on Hitler and Christianity think that it's no big deal if a Christian denies Christ's resurrection.)

## **NAZI REJECTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Of course, Hitler also had to disconnect Christ from the Jews and **the Old Testament — the Book of the Jews**. In a speech on April 26, 1922 Hitler calls Christ “our greatest Aryan leader.” <sup>xv</sup> **Christ, who was born to two Jewish parents that had descended from King David according to the Bible** ([Matt. 1:1-17](#)<sup>L</sup>; [Luke 3:23-37](#)<sup>L</sup>), somehow becomes the member of another race in Hitler’s mind. Christ specifically endorsed the Old Testament as the basis of His ministry: [Matthew 5:17](#)<sup>L</sup>, [John 5:46](#)<sup>L</sup>, [Luke 24:27](#)<sup>L</sup>. Once again Hitler’s Christ is not Christianity’s Christ. Dietrich Eckart, Hitler’s ideological mentor. Hitler ends *Mein Kampf* with a tribute to Eckart: “And among [our heroes] I want to count that man, one of the best, who devoted himself to the awakening of his – our – people, in his writings and his thoughts and finally in his deeds: Deitrich Eckart.” Eckart wrote:

**The New Testament broke away from the Old**

*as you once released yourself from the world*

*And as you are freed from your past delusions*

**so did Jesus Christ reject his Jewishness.** <sup>xvi</sup>

Hitler believed that the Bible should be “purified” by removing the Jewish part, the Old Testament, from it, just as he wanted Germany purified of the Jews. **This is not a view of traditional Christians.** It is in fact, similar to the heresy called Marcionism, the belief that the Old Testament God was a different God than the one in the New Testament. Yet this heresy promoted by liberal German theologians at the time of the formation of the Nazi movement. Richard Steigmann-Gall writes:

**As early as 1919 Hitler sketched out his basic worldview in an unpublished manuscript.** The first section was on the Bible, under which heading Hilter noted: “Monumental History of Mankind—Idealism—Materialism: Nothing without a cause — history makes men... the children of God and men.” He concluded from these ruminations the first result: “Purification of the Bible — **that which is consistent with our spirit.** Second result: critical examination of the remainder.” This “purification” is almost certainly an allusion to the Old Testament, which both Eckart and Dinter claimed has to be removed from the Christian canon owing to its origins in Judaism. Although such a position brings into question the theological soundness of Hitler’s religious views, the idea of expunging the Old Testament from Christianity was not simply a nazification of Christianity. No one less than Adolf von Harnack, one of the leading Protestant theologians of the twentieth century, had conceived such an idea when the Nazi movement was still to be born. <sup>xvii</sup>

Liberal Protestant theologians like Adolf von Harnack influenced the early pro-Nazi movement by defending the Marcionite heresy. Steigmann-Gall writes that Adolf von Harnack’s book *Marcion* “influenced the growing pro-Nazi thrust of *Kulturprotestantismus* after 1918; more importantly, it predated and overlapped completely with Nazi attitudes toward the Old Testament.” <sup>xviii</sup> Adolf von Harnack wrote that “Luther’s concept of faith actually is the one that stands nearest to the Marcionite concept.” <sup>xix</sup> Luther made sharper distinctions between the Old and New Testament than the Calvinists, but he was no Marcionite (see more on Luther below). Yet Hitler’s

ideology required adoption of the Marcionite heresy in order to promote racist hatred of Jews while still claiming that Christ was on his side.

## NAZI REJECTION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

Not only was Hitler's Christ disconnected from the Old Testament, he was also disconnected from the Apostle Paul, whom Hitler denounced as a "proto-Bolshevist," presumably for being internationalist in his promotion of Christianity to the gentile nations rather than racially and nationally oriented:

*The decisive falsification of Jesus's doctrine was the work of St Paul... For the Galilean's object was to liberate His country from Jewish oppression. He set Himself against Jewish capitalism, and that's why the Jews liquidated Him... The Jews, by the way, regarded Him as the son of a whore and a Roman soldier... Christ was an Aryan and St. Paul used his doctrine to mobilize the criminal underworld and organize a proto-Bolshevism... Christianity is an invention of sick brains... The war will be over one day. I shall then consider that my life's final task will be to solve the religious problem. <sup>xx</sup>*

Hitler expressed his disgust for the Apostle Paul and the Christian doctrines he spread through the ancient world:

*The reason why the ancient world was so pure, light and serene was that it knew nothing of the two great scourges: the pox and Christianity... The Jew who fraudulently introduced Christianity into the ancient world—in order to ruin it—re-opened the same breach in modern times, taking as his pretext the social question. Just as Saul became St. Paul, Mardochai has become Karl Marx. <sup>xxi</sup>*

## NAZI RELIGION OF NATURE AND RACE

The Apostle Paul taught that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, Slave nor Free, for you are all are one in Christ" ([Gal. 3:28](#)<sup>L</sup>; cf. [Rom. 1:14](#)<sup>L</sup>; [1 Cor. 1:24](#)<sup>L</sup>, [10:32](#)<sup>L</sup>, [12:13](#)<sup>L</sup>; [Rev. 7:9](#)<sup>L</sup>). All people on earth are one family ([Acts 17:26](#)<sup>L</sup>). The only use of the word "race" in the Bible is in terms of a foot race. **It teaches that there is only one race, the human race.** Not surprisingly, given his racist views, and reflected in Hitler's rejection of Paul, Hitler believed in a race-based religion. **This meant a preference for the nature worship of pre-Christian Germanic tribes over Christianity.** Hitler did not believe in the Old Testament or most of the New Testament, so **his "divine" revelation and authority was natural revelation and natural law**, not Biblical revelation and Biblical law, as he expresses in these two quotes:

*The peasant will be told what the Church has destroyed for him: **the whole secret knowledge of nature**, of the divine, the shapeless, the daemonic. The peasant shall learn to hate the Church on that basis. Gradually he will be taught by what wiles the soul of the German has been raped. We shall wash off the Christian veneer and bring out a religion peculiar to our race... But it is through the peasantry that we shall really be able to destroy Christianity because there is in them a true religion rooted in nature and blood. <sup>xxii</sup>*

*Christianity is a rebellion against natural law, a protest against nature. Taken to its logical extreme, Christianity would mean the systematic cultivation of the human failure.* [xxiii](#)

In his book *Dawn And Resurrection*, Joseph Hromadka writes:

*The liberal theology in Germany and in her orbit utterly failed. It was willing to compromise on the essential points of divine law... to dispose of the Old Testament... to replace the 'Jewish' law of the Old Testament by the autonomous law of each race and nation respectively. Liberal theology had made all the necessary preparation for the 'Germanization of Christianity' and for a racial Church.* [xxiv](#)

Adolf Eichmann, one of the principle architects of the Nazi Holocaust, professed many of the same anti-Christian beliefs that Hitler has been shown to have. As told to Rev. William L. Hull, the minister assigned to him before his execution in 1962 for his war crimes, and in the presence of other prison officials, he said that he found God through nature, Buddhism, and philosophers like Kant, Nietzsche, and Spinoza. [xxv](#) He didn't believe that Jesus died for sinners or believe in the New Testament. [xxvi](#) He believed that the Old Testament was "nothing but Jewish stories and fables." [xxvii](#) He wrote to Hull, "I am not prepared to accept anything that disagrees with my naturalistic conceptions." [xxviii](#) He was an ardent evolutionist: "But I do not believe that man was created by God. My belief is that man evolved from a protoplasm." [xxix](#)

## **THE NAZI PLAN TO DESTROY THE CHURCH**

As I have demonstrated in this essay, Hitler rejected orthodox Christianity and wanted to **a more nature-based religion**. He planned to use his power through the State to accomplish this:

*[The] organized lie must be smashed. The State must remain the absolute master. When I was younger, I thought it was necessary to set about [destroying religion]... with dynamite. I've since realized there's room for a little subtlety... The final state must be... in St. Peter's Chair, a senile officiant; facing him a few sinister old women... The young and healthy are on our side... it's impossible to eternally hold humanity in bondage and lies... [It] was only between the sixth and eighth centuries that Christianity was imposed upon our peoples... Our peoples had previously succeeded in living all right without this religion. I have six divisions of SS men absolutely indifferent in matters of religion. It doesn't prevent them from going to their death with serenity in their souls.* [xxx](#)

But Hitler realized that he could not make open war with Christianity, at least until he was in a better position. He and others in the Nazi Party planned to undermine the Church secretly until it was too weak to resist open opposition from the Nazi State.

Hitler created the "Protestant Reich Church" in 1933, requiring the Church to promote Aryan racial superiority and expelling Jewish Christian pastors. In opposition, the Confessing Church arose and issued the *Barmen Declaration* in 1934, which denounced Hitler's totalitarian rule and imposition of Aryan doctrine on the Church as contrary to historic Christian doctrine. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** is a famous member of the Confessing

Church for having been executed for plotting to assassinate Hitler and aiding the escape of Jews to Switzerland.

Hitler's plan to destroy the Church was further brought to light by the discovery in 1998 of the *Donovan collection of documents*, used to support the prosecution of Nazis at the Nuremberg Trial, particularly the document titled, "*The Nazi Master Plan: The Persecution of the Christian Churches.*" <sup>xxxi</sup> The Nuremberg investigators concluded that influential Nazi leaders sought "*a complete extirpation of Christianity and the substitution of a purely racial religion tailored to fit the needs of the National Socialist policy.*" <sup>xxxii</sup> But because of popular support for Christianity among the German people, this goal could not be openly pursued:

*Considerations of expediency made it impossible, however, for the National Socialist government to adopt this radical anti-Christian policy officially. Thus the policy actually adopted was to reduce the influence of the Christian Churches as far as possible through the use of every available means, without provoking the difficulties of an open war of extermination.* <sup>xxxiii</sup>

On more than one occasion, Hitler made remarks consistent with his plot to undermine the Church while publicly supporting it. For example, he said:

*If it's possible to buy the high dignitaries of the Church with money, let's do it. And if one of them wanted to enjoy his life, and for this purpose put his hand into the till, for the love of Heaven let him be left in peace. The ones we have to fear are the ascetics, with rings under their eyes, and the fanatics... I'll make these damned parsons feel the power of the state in a way they would never have believed possible. For the moment I am just keeping my eye upon them: if I ever have the slightest suspicion that they are getting dangerous, I will shoot the lot of them. This filthy reptile raises its head whenever there is a sign of weakness in the State, and therefore it must be stamped on. **We have no sort of use for a fairy story invented by the Jews.** The fate of a few filthy lousy Jews and epileptics is not worth bothering about.* <sup>xxxiv</sup>

Likewise, Goebbels reports:

*I put forward my complaints about the church. **The Fuhrer shares them completely,** but does not believe that the churches will try anything in the middle of a war. But he knows that he will have to get around to dealing with the conflict between church and state. At the moment, however, our own extremists are making things too easy for the churches. They are presenting them with cheap ammunition. **The Fuhrer passionately rejects any thought of founding a religion.** He has no intention of becoming a priest. His sole, exclusive role is that of a politician. The best way to deal with the churches is to claim to be a 'positive Christian'. So far as these questions are concerned, therefore, the technique must be to hold back for the present and coolly strangle any attempts at impudence or interference in the affairs of the state. And this we shall endeavor to ensure to the best of our ability.* <sup>xxxv</sup>

The Nazi platform promoted "positive Christianity," but, as this I have shown, an investigation into Hitler's beliefs reveals that "positive Christianity" is not Christianity in

the traditional sense at all — it's a Christianity without a personal God, without the Christ of the Bible, and without the Bible itself except for some passages in the Gospels distorted to fit a racist, nature-worshiping idolatry. "Positive Christianity" amounted to a few elements that the Nazis liked, according to their twisted interpretation of the Bible, and their rejection of the bulk of basic Christian doctrine. Bill Clinton, at a February 4, 1999 prayer breakfast, expressed the liberal "Hitler was a Christian" view, saying, "I do believe that even though Adolf Hitler preached a perverted form of Christianity, God did not want him to prevail." Hitler's worldview was not Christianity with some unorthodox elements, as Clinton implies. Hitler wanted to destroy Christianity and replace it with a completely different religion.

Hitler expressed some admiration for some aspects of Christianity, but even atheists do that. Practically every atheist can name his favorite verse in the Bible: Jesus' statement that "Judge not lest you be judged" ([Matthew 7:1](#)).<sup>xxxvi</sup> The important question is what ideology drove the Nazi movement. We've just seen that Hitler thoroughly rejected orthodox Christianity. The *rationale* for Nazi atrocities was a belief held in common by Nazis and modern liberals: Evolution. I will cover that in more detail in part 3 of this essay.

Dinesh D'Souza rightly points out that Hitler's holocaust was not the culmination of Christian history and ideology, but a break from it:

*Dawkins and Harris cannot explain why, if Nazism was directly descended from medieval Christianity, medieval Christianity did not produce a Hitler. How can a self-proclaimed atheist ideology, advanced by Hitler as a repudiation of Christianity, be a "culmination" of 2,000 years of Christianity? Dawkins and Harris are employing a transparent sleight of hand that holds Christianity responsible for the crimes committed in its name, while exonerating secularism and atheism for the greater crimes committed in their name.* <sup>xxxvii</sup>

The uninformed atheist will probably retort that the Crusades and the witch trials were comparable to Hitler's holocaust. That's a gross exaggeration and distortion of the truth. I have collected the facts about those issues in another post. <sup>xxxviii</sup> Another popular retort is that Martin Luther's harsh denunciation of Jews laid the foundations of Hitler's antisemitism, but as I'll argue in the next post, Luther's opposition to the Jews was ideological and not racist.

<sup>i</sup> <http://atheismsucks-sucks.blogspot.com/2007/04/was-hitler-atheist-nope.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Martin Bormann, quoted in Joachim C. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich: Portraits of Nazi Leadership* (Da Capo Press, 1999), p.132-33.

<sup>iii</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, p.562, emphasis in original.

<sup>iv</sup> William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, p. 100.

<sup>v</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

[vi](#) Richard Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich*, Penguin, 1991; and Gilmer W. Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich: A Study of Race and History in Nazi Textbooks* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1985), p. 85.

[vii](#) Quoted in George Lachmann Mosse, *Nazi Culture* (Univ of Wisconsin Press, 2003), p. 244. Other translations read: "National Socialism and Christianity are irreconcilable."

[viii](#) William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, p. 239, quoting Stewart W. Herman, Jr., *It's Your Souls We Want*, (Harper, 1943), pp.157-58.

[ix](#) William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, p. 240.

[x](#) "The Goebbels Diaries" Translated and Edited by Fred Taylor (December 29, 1939), p. 77.

[xi](#) See video from The History Channel: [History of the Bosnian Muslim Nazi 13th SS Handzar Division](#), at AOL News.

[xii](#) Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, (Orion Publishing Group, Limited, 2003), p. 96ff.

[xiii](#) Gherardo Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran: An Essay on Its Origin* (Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989). Also see Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, "<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2010/08/post-2.html>."

[xiv](#) Quoted in Otto Wegener, *Hitler — Memoirs of a Confidant*, (1985) p. 316.

[xv](#) Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945*(Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 27.

[xvi](#) Quoted in Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 30.

[xvii](#) *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[xviii](#) *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[xix](#) Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God*, trans John Steely and Lyle Bierma (Durham, 1990 [orig. 1920], 135, 139; quoted in Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 41.

[xx](#) *Hitler's Table Talk*, trans. Norman Cameron and R.H. Stevens (New York City: Enigma Books, 2000), p. 76, 142-44, from Martin Bormann's stenographic record of Hitler's conversations; from Kevin Davidson's webpage "Was Hitler a Christian?" at <http://www.davnet.org/kevin/essays/hitler.html>

[xxi](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 314.

[xxii](#) Adolf Hitler, in Hermann Rauschning, *The Voice of Destruction: Conversations with Hitler 1940* (Kessinger Publishing, 2004), p. 56 at <http://books.google.com/books?id=PndurCstDZMC> (Some have dismissed Rauschning's book as fraudulent. Although it can't be considered a verbatim transcript of Hitler's words, it is probably a fairly

accurate description of Hitler's views. See David Redles, *Hitler's Millennial Reich: Apocalyptic Belief and the Search for Salvation* (NYU Press, 2005), pp. 194-96, at <http://books.google.com/books?id=WNC29FrtTq4C>.)

[xxiii](#) Adolf Hitler, 10th October 1941, midday: *Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944: Secret Conversations*, ed. H. R. Trevor-Roper (Enigma Books, 2013), p. 41.

[xxiv](#) Madrus House, 1945.

[xxv](#) William L. Hull, *The Struggle for a Soul* (Doubleday, New York, USA, 1963), pp. 35, 83; quoted in Russell Grigg, "The Struggle for the Soul of Adolf Eichmann," at <http://creation.com/adolf-eichmann> (accessed, January 1, 2011).

[xxvi](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 37.

[xxvii](#) *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[xxviii](#) *Ibid.*, p.77.

[xxix](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

[xxx](#) Adolf Hitler, *Hitler's Secret Conversations 1941-1944, With an introductory essay on The Mind of Adolf Hitler by H.R. Trevor-Roper* (Farrar, Straus and Young, New York, 1953), p. 117.

[xxxi](#) "The Nazi Master Plan: The Persecution of the Christian Churches." See news article [here](#).

[xxxii](#) *Ibid.*, p.6.

[xxxiii](#) *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[xxxiv](#) *Table Talk*, pp. 411, 625.

[xxxv](#) Joseph Goebbels, "The Goebbels Diaries," Translated and Edited by Fred Taylor (December 28, 1939), p.76.

[xxxvi](#) See my essay, "Judge Others. Jesus Said To." at <http://christianciv.com/blog/index.php/2015/09/08/judge-others-jesus-said-to/>.

[xxxvii](#) Dinesh D'Souza, "Atheism, not religion, is the real force behind the mass murders of history," (11/16/2006), <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/controversy/answering-atheists/atheism-not-religion-is-the-real-force-behind-the-mass-murders-of-history.html>. Also see his article, "Was Hitler a Christian?," <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/controversy/common-misconceptions/was-hitler-a-christian.html>.

[xxxviii](#) Michael H. Warren, "Myths About Past (Quasi-)Christian Civilization," <http://www.christianciv.com/MythsPastChristianCiv.htm>.

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# WILL THE REAL NAZIS PLEASE STAND UP?!!

## (PART 2)

[October 22, 2015](#)

### PART 2: IS LUTHER TO BLAME FOR NAZISM?

#### LUTHER AND RACISM

“Anti-Semitism” often carries two different meanings, and unfortunately people often equivocate between the two. “Anti-Semitism” can refer to being against the *race* of the Jews. The genetic inheritance of the Jews is blamed for somehow causing the alleged moral failings of Jews. However, “anti-Semitism” is also used against those who reject the Jewish religion, a belief system. But this is no more racist than Aristotle’s rejection of Platonism was racist. That is, it’s not racist. Luther’s opposition to the Jews was because of their beliefs, not their race. He had hoped that, with the burden of Roman Catholic theology and history having been thrown off, Jews would embrace the Protestant beliefs in large numbers. Luther wrote:

*I would request and advise that one deal gently with the Jews...If we really want to help them, we must be guided in our dealings with them, not by Papal Law, but by the Law of Christian love. We must receive them cordially, and permit them to trade and work with us, hear our Christian teaching and witness our Christian life. If some of them should prove stiff-necked, what of it? After all, we ourselves are not all good Christians either.<sup>1</sup>*

Fifteen years later, after his hopes of wide-spread conversions among the Jews were not realized, Luther wrote *On the Jews and their Lies* in which he makes vitriolic demands for the State to persecute Jews as he thinks idolaters were in the Old Testament - by burning down Jewish synagogues and homes, forbidding rabbinic teaching, and forcing them into manual labor. It should be noted that these demands had nothing to do with race and nationality but with belief systems. He was reacting to *Rabbinic writings that called Jesus Christ “the bastard Son” of “that whore, Mary” and worse.* Luther was as equally vitriolic toward the Roman Catholic Church, which had nothing to do with race.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Hitler’s beliefs were more pagan than any Jew at Luther’s time ever was,<sup>3</sup> so Luther would have been a stronger opponent to Hitler than he was to the Jews. Hitler misrepresented Luther by taking advantage of the equivocal use of “anti-Semitism” to promote his own diabolical purposes.

## LUTHER'S TWO KINGDOM THEOLOGY

Lutheranism did not so much contribute to Nazi ideology as it did allow Nazism to gain power without significant resistance because of Luther's view of God's kingdom, law and the State, namely that the Church did not have a significant role in providing instructive guidance to the State.<sup>4</sup> Paul Banwell Means lists the following as among the reasons why the Church was so weak in its fight against Hitler:

1. It never seriously shouldered the task of building the Kingdom of God on earth, tending instead toward a static rather than a dogmatic conception of society.
2. It had a strong tradition of Pietism which theologian Ernest Troeltsch says 'supplies the State with loyal servants, who practice submission as a part of the ascetism of their calling; the only obligation it lays on government is that of patriarchal kindness and care of the commonweal....'
3. It was heavily influenced by modern positivistic thought which 'too optimistically accepted bourgeois culture as the expression of a rational universe' and 'too naively accepted the idea of progress and failed to develop any radical criticism of modern cultural trends.'
4. The German Church was preponderantly influenced 'by Lutheranism rather than Calvinism which challenged the absolutist claims of the State and the right of the State to govern the church, and emphasized the independent and self-governing nature of the church.'<sup>5</sup>

Means summarized his findings:

*A religious institution sows the seeds of its own destruction when it becomes so wrapped up in its own forms and doctrines of worship that it becomes insulated from the real social needs of the people which it is to serve... The National Socialist revolution in the church was a tragic witness of the failure of the church to apply its message to modern life and play a role in the nation vital and significant enough to challenge the claims of conflicting loyalties. The church was not able to offer more effective resistance to the inroads of pagan religious movements because its own life and message had become corrupt and complacent. The fate of German Protestantism may well serve as a warning to the Protestant churches of other countries.*<sup>6</sup>

The two kingdom theology was very popular in Germany in the generation leading up to Hitler's rule. Richard V. Pierard, in his essay "Why Did Protestants Welcome Hitler?," explains the historical build up:

*In the nineteenth century, however, German Lutherans made a strong bifurcation between the realm of public and private concerns... Religion was the domain of the inner personal life, while the institutional and external, the public, so to speak, belonged to the worldly power. Redemption was exclusively the province of the church, while the law, determinative for the external conduct of human affairs, was solely the province of the state. Although Luther had taught that both realms served one another and were under the same God, the*

*practical effect was that law and gospel were divided and the outer and inner lives of the faithful followed different directives...*

*The Erlangen church historian Hermann Jordan declared in 1917 that the state, the natural order of God, followed its own autonomous laws while the Kingdom of God was concerned with the soul and operated solely on the basis of the morality of the gospel.<sup>7</sup>*

Pierard writes that the two kingdom theology continued to be promoted immediately prior to Hitler's rule, resulting in God's law being separated from its biblical content and redefined nationally and racially:

*These ideas were developed further by a group of theologians in the 1920s and 1930s... men who became identified with the pro-Nazi "German Christian" faction in 1932-33. They argued that there is a two-fold revelation of God, law and gospel. Law is God's original revelation in creation, and it suffices to teach man to serve God and order his life morally...*

*[B]y cutting law loose from its traditional biblical and Christian moorings, it opens the way for God's law to be redefined along nationalistic and racial lines. What happens is that the Volk becomes the ultimate source of law and the church simply shares the ethos of the Volk. The Nazis could be welcomed as a manifestation of God's law at work...<sup>8</sup>*

Hitler made explicit use of Luther's two kingdom theology in order to deflect moral criticism from the Bible. In response to Nazi racial laws and Hitler's demand that churches support these laws or leave the country, the Vatican issued a Papal Encyclical, "With Burning Concern," which condemned the racial policies of the Nazis and Nazi rejection of God's law in the Old Testament. The Encyclical was read in Catholic Churches on March 21, 1937. Hitler responded in a speech on May 1 with a demand for churches to comply with two kingdom theology:

*Bend or Break! We cannot permit that this authority, which is the authority of the German people, shall be attacked by any other power whatever. That applies also for all Churches. So long as they concern themselves with their religious problems the State does not concern itself with them. But so soon as the attempt by any means whatsoever—by letters, Encyclicals, or otherwise—to arrogate themselves rights which belong to the state alone we shall force them back into their proper spiritual, pastoral activity. They have no title to criticize the morals of a State when they have more than enough reason to concern themselves with their own morals. For the morals of the German State and the German people the leaders of the German State will be responsible—of that we can assure all anxious folk both within and without Germany.<sup>9</sup>*

Pierard concludes with this solemn warning:

*Christians in the United States particularly need to take to heart the historical experience of their brethren in pre-1933 Germany... Just as the horrors of World War II constituted a judgment upon the German church, so Christians in other*

*lands that do not maintain a prophetic stance toward their respective secular states are served notice that they, too, will be judged.*<sup>10</sup>

Whereas Calvinists would say that “the Law is King,”<sup>11</sup> with absolute authority over the ruler, Luther says that *reason* is “the head of all things.”<sup>12</sup> Reason can justify the ruler in setting aside the law, even God’s law in the Bible. Luther says, “reason remains the ruler at all times, the supreme law and master of all the laws.”<sup>13</sup> Luther appeals to the wisdom of Solomon to prove that reason rules even over the law of Moses: “*And because Solomon knew it, he despaired of all the laws, even though God had laid them down for him through Moses, and of all his princes and counsellors [sic], and turned to God himself, asking him for a wise heart to rule the people.*”<sup>14</sup> Uwe Siemon-Netto says that, although Luther taught that rulers were ordained by God in accordance with [Romans 13:1](#)<sup>15</sup>, Luther “*said over and over again that [the State] is not the realm of God, Christ or the Gospel, and secular rulers need not be saints. ‘It is sufficient for the emperor to possess reason,’ Luther writes.*”<sup>15</sup> Luther is said to have remarked that he would rather have a “*competent Turk rule than an incompetent Christian.*”<sup>16</sup> This quote may be bogus, but it does reflect the thinking of Luther and Lutheranism. Siemon-Netto quotes Luther as saying, “*We have to... learn that the spiritual and the secular governments are as far apart as heaven and earth.*”<sup>17</sup> Because the ruler has reason to guide him in the affairs of State, he does not need grace, God’s written word, or the advice of bishops to guide him in how to rule: “*In short, I know nothing about what laws to recommend to a prince; I want only to instruct him how to dispose his heart with regard to whatever laws, counsels, verdicts and cases he has to deal with.*” This lack of a concrete conception of political justice in Luther’s theology is one element in the criticism that Lutheranism allowed the rise of the Nazi totalitarian regime.

Despite explicit appeals to princes to enforce the letter of the law of Moses against heretics later in his life, in earlier years Luther denied the continuing authority of the law of Moses: “*Therefore let Moses be to the Jews what the Saxon Mirror is to us; we of the Gentiles have nothing to do with it any longer. By the same token the French pay no heed to our Saxon Mirror, yet in matters of natural law they do agree with us.*”<sup>18</sup> Luther was adamant that the two kingdoms – church and state – should be kept completely separate:

*Constantly I must pound in and squeeze in and drive in and wedge in this difference between the two kingdoms, even though it is written and said so often that it becomes tedious. The devil never stops cooking and brewing these two kingdoms into each other. In the devil’s name the secular leaders always want to be Christ’s masters and teach Him how He should run His church and spiritual government. Similarly, the false governments and schismatic spirits always want to be masters, though not in God’s name, and to teach people how to organize the secular government. Thus the devil is indeed very busy on both sides, and he has much to do. May God hinder him, amen, if we deserve it!*<sup>19</sup>

Luther said that the secular realm of the State is the realm of the “*Deus absconditus,*” the hidden God. In the State God never reveals Himself.<sup>20</sup> Franz Lau writes: “*It is obvious that God conducts a curious masquerade in one of these two worlds [the secular one]; but that is a genuinely Lutheran thought. Luther has made it clear enough to us that*

*God knows and uses ample means to make sure that his rule in the earthly world does not slip away from him.*"<sup>21</sup> God controls the earthly world by hidden means not only in the sense that a ruler can properly exercise reason without knowing God, but also in the sense that God is hidden by the hierarchy of authority that rules the masses. Natural reason, informed by wisdom and equity, directs the ruler, who in turn enforces laws that will control the unruly masses. In the Church, God is not hidden behind natural reason, hierarchal authority and laws in his control over people. Rather, God rules believers directly by His Spirit; there is a "priesthood of all believers."<sup>22</sup>

Harold J. Berman observes how the willingness of Lutherans to allow the law to be secularized while maintaining that the law still had hidden godly character was made plausible by the previous centuries in which Biblical law had directly shaped the law of the State:

*Therefore it is not true to say that Lutheranism placed no limits on the political power of the absolute monarchs who ruled Europe in the sixteenth century. The development of positive law was conceived to rest ultimately on the prince alone, but it was presupposed that in exercising his will he would respect the individual consciousness of his subjects, and that meant respecting also their property rights. This presupposition rested – precariously, to be sure – upon four centuries of history in which the church had succeeded in Christianizing law to a remarkable extent, given the level of cultural life of the Germanic peoples in the beginning. Thus a Lutheran positivism which separates law from morals, denies the lawmaking role of the church, and finds the ultimate sanction of law in political coercion nevertheless assumes the existence of a Christian conscience among the people and a state governed by Christian rulers.*<sup>23</sup>

But, of course, into the first decades of the twentieth century, Christian consciousness in the state had all but disappeared. Trust in the Bible had been destroyed by a long history of German higher criticism. The existence of God himself, especially one who acted in the "secular" area of the state, had been rejected by German philosophy and made irrelevant by Darwinian evolution. By the time of Hitler's rise to power, much of the Christian character of the law had been self-consciously reformed according to anti-Christian philosophies, leaving the will of the ruler with little of the previous divine restraint.

What Lutherans referred to as "natural law" was really to a great extent an inheritance of positive revelation, the Bible, influencing the law. There is divine natural law to which those who have never been confronted with Biblical revelation sometimes conform: "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts..." ([Romans 2:14-15](#)<sup>L</sup>). But as Calvinists have emphasized, because these people are sinners, they also suppress God's revelation through nature. As the Apostle Paul puts it, they "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" ([Romans 1:18](#)<sup>L</sup>). And as sinners persist in their rebellion against God, God gives them up to practice and approve further lawless behavior ([Romans 1:24-32](#)<sup>L</sup>). Therefore a non-Christian ruler cannot be trusted to rule according to godly reason to any significant degree when God's positive law is removed as an influence. Since God rules over every area of life, rebellion against God manifests in every area

life, so redemption must involve every area of life. God's written, redemptive revelation in the Bible presents more clearly the law of God that sinners suppress in nature.

## **LUTHER ON THE HIERARCHY OF CHURCH AND STATE**

Despite Luther's insistence on many occasions that Church and State not be joined, from the beginning as a reformer he also insisted that the prince of the territory establish the Lutheran Church so as to provide it protection and aid.<sup>24</sup> In *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* Luther argued that the princes as individual Christians had a duty to aid the Church in whatever manner was under their power, although in matters of doctrine they were to act as a humble Church member. Nevertheless, Luther also said that Christian princes were to act as bishops when the need arose, and the need Luther perceived at the time was the convening of a council to inaugurate reforms that the Church would subsequently carry out. Luther emphasized that they were to be mere "emergency bishops," but inevitably the spiritual affairs were ultimately left to the princes' care, and the distinction between the princes' role as a Christian and his role as a civil ruler was dissolved. The territorial princes came to control not only Church administration, but also doctrine. This dependence on the State severely dampened the energies of the Lutheran Reformation.<sup>25</sup>

Luther's advocacy of a territorial Church, or people's Church (*Volkskirche*), was used to further Hitler's regime in the 1930's as a rationale for racist nationalism. But like other accusations that Luther's teachings lead to Nazism, it may be true that Luther's teachings here lead Lutherans too far in acquiescing to Nazism before they were stirred to protest, but Luther cannot be fairly charged with the extremes that German Nazis took his ideas.<sup>26</sup> The modern concept of a nation did not exist in Luther's time. Luther loved the German culture, but that extended beyond the political boundaries of the princes. Luther had misgivings about the extent that the Lutheran Church became dependent on the State in his own day, and even advocated a completely voluntary Church model at times.<sup>27</sup>

## **CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE**

Some have believed that Luther required complete silence and obedience of citizens regarding any actions that the State might take, because the State had nothing to do with the Church, and that this led to acquiescence of the German people to Hitler's totalitarian regime. That a number of German Lutherans during the Nazi era did in fact hold this view is testified to by the well-known German Lutheran theologian of that era, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who said, "*On the Protestant side, Luther's doctrine of the Two Kingdoms was misinterpreted as implying the emancipation and sanctification of the world and of the natural. Government, reason, economics, and culture arrogate to themselves a right of autonomy, but do not in any way understand this autonomy as bringing them into opposition to Christianity.*"<sup>28</sup>

Although Luther could be said to allow a repressive regime to gain great power before significant protest is made, it is incorrect to say that Luther prohibited all resistance to unjust rulers. In his earlier years, Luther advocated verbal rebuke in opposition to political injustice. In his later years he supported armed resistance when oppression became destructive of human life and true religion.

In these earlier years Luther taught that people are not obligated to follow rulers in their unjust actions. They can only resist passively. Insurrection is not an option. He allowed for the removal of a ruler only when the ruler had lost his mind, because, he said, one without reason is no longer human.<sup>29</sup> In 1520 he said, *"I will side always with him, however unjust, who endures rebellion and against him who rebels, however justly."*<sup>30</sup>

Luther based his teaching that resistance to the State could take the form of verbal rebuke but not physical resistance on Christ's words to the officer in [John 18:23](#)<sup>L</sup>: *"If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong' must be understood this way: There is a great difference between offering the other cheek, and punishing with words the one who hit us. Christ must suffer. But the word has been put into his mouth so that he may speak and punish what is unjust."*<sup>31</sup> In the same vein he also said, *"Let your mouth be the mouth of Christ's Spirit."*<sup>32</sup> Preachers who fail to serve God by telling rulers their sins are, says Luther, "lazy," "worthless" and "swine."<sup>33</sup>

But what exactly are the sins that rulers should be rebuked for? After all, he has said, *"I know nothing about what laws to recommend to a prince."*<sup>34</sup> He did endorse a few laws from the Bible as the source of State authority, like the authority to use the sword against murderers.<sup>35</sup> But since he did not recognize the need for the civil ruler to consciously follow God, he offered little else. One must conclude that the sins the ruler would be rebuked for would mainly be of a personal nature rather than sins related to State actions. Since Luther wanted to keep religion and civil government separate, about the only political sin the ruler could be rebuked for is violating that separation and encroaching on the Church's preaching of the Gospel. Helmut Thielicke affirms this, saying of Luther's secular conception of the State, *"The totalitarian state alone departs from this pattern, and in so doing shows that theologically it is no longer a state but a pseudo church."*<sup>36</sup> Likewise Kenneth Barnes says even of those Christians who openly opposed Hitler, *"most of the rebel Confessing Christians opposed totalitarianism only when total control extend to the church."*<sup>37</sup> Therefore, while it is incorrect to say that Luther taught quiet obedience to a totalitarian regime, Luther's view of the State means that the Church should say very little about how the State operates until it becomes totalitarian. At that stage, any resistance, either by word or by sword, will most likely prove futile, as Bonhoeffer and other Confessing Christians discovered. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was an inspiring Christian martyr, but his Lutheran theology led him and others to oppose the direction of the state only when it was far too late.

Luther's understanding of "the theology of the cross" requires that the Christian resistance to State oppression go no further than verbal rebuke. The Christian is to follow his Lord and accept suffering, and only in heaven will he receive glory and be triumphant over the ungodly. Based on Christ's example and His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, Luther taught that the Christian should not be his own judge and jury. If everyone took the law into his own hands, society would crumble.<sup>38</sup> While one could fight on behalf of his neighbor so as to *"act in accordance with the [command to] love and... tolerate no injustice against him,"* he could not fight for his own cause.<sup>39</sup> Fighting against injustice requires a concept of political justice, which Luther's political philosophy could not provide in any well-developed form. Therefore, in

practice, a Lutheran is much more likely to silently suffer injustice than try to end injustice by reforming the legal system.

### **LUTHER'S DEFEATIST ESCHATOLOGY**

Luther's theology of the cross is also said to be a factor in allowing the rise of Nazism in terms of eschatology. Luther's eschatology was amillennial, meaning there will be no earthly triumph of righteousness in society before the Last Judgment. The Church will always suffer and be persecuted by those in established authority in the world, always a voice crying in the wilderness, even as Christ was while He was on the earth. Since God ordains this, efforts to transform the State into a Christian institution will be futile. As modern Dispensationalists have said, "*You don't polish brass on a sinking ship.*" Lutherans criticize Calvinists, who are often postmillennial, for having "an undo hope for history."<sup>40</sup> This they say confuses law and gospel by teaching a salvation (of society) by law.<sup>41</sup>

Barnes writes that among Lutherans in the 1930's both for and against Hitler, amillennialism was a prominent influence in their political philosophy: "*Even the more outspoken Confessing Christian circle around Bonhoeffer agreed that the community of true Christians would not be able to 'restore this fallen and destroyed creation' but only bear witness to the will of God.*"<sup>42</sup> Bonhoeffer's circle showed that they recognized that eschatology and ethics are logically distinct; it is logically possible for one's efforts to establish justice in the world to be doomed to failure while still having a duty to proclaim a just standard to the world. However, Luther's lack of a standard of social justice and his eschatological pessimism combined to incapacitate the Lutheran Church in the face of encroaching Nazi totalitarianism.

As Luther's frustration with disruptive heretics led him to change his position on civil sanctions against them, in a similar way Luther's frustration with disruptive rulers led him to change his position on the morality of armed resistance against them. In October 1530 Luther signed, with other Wittenberg theologians and jurists, the Torgau Disputation. This document justified resistance to tyrannical rulers in self-defense on legal grounds. Based on a review of feudal, Roman, canon, and Germanic laws, Luther and the others concluded that the authority they are required to obey itself allows for a right of resistance. This was what could be characterized as a contractual right to armed resistance.

Luther's views of changed in favor of civil disobedience in June 1530 when the Roman Catholic Church ordered Lutherans to submit within six months to its demands, which included a ban on proselytizing and religious publishing in Lutheran domains. In response Luther issued the *Warning to His Dear German People*, which warned people that they must obey God rather than men when the Gospel is at stake. In the *Warning* Luther says that if war breaks out, those who defend themselves will be justified in terms of self-defense. Luther described the individual as a magistrate when family and neighbors are attacked without constitutional authority.<sup>43</sup>

In 1538 Luther, with other reformers, Jonas, Bucer, and Melancthon, went even further and justified armed resistance against civil rulers regardless of the existence of a positive legal contract. They argued that the Bible and natural law teach that when a public officer commits violent injustice he should no more be obeyed than a common

murderer. The Biblical support they cited was [1 Tim. 1:9](#): "... the law is not laid down for the just." Natural law, they said, contains the principle that "official violence dissolves all obligations between subjects and rulers."<sup>44</sup>

In 1549 those who called themselves the *gnesio* (true) Lutherans at Magdeburg defended themselves in a war that threatened to defeat Protestantism in Germany. In 1550 Magdeburg theologians, led by Matthias Flacius, signed the *Magdeburg Confession*. This document outlined the four degrees of injustice and the correct responses to each. It says that a lesser magistrate who is innocent of violations against his duties and the law can resist the violent attacks of another ruler to defend the life and property of him and the inhabitants. The lesser magistrate also can forcibly resist a higher authority if the higher authority forces him to commit certain intolerable sins. All Christians can resist by force a superior authority that is so mad so as to attack the most fundamental rights of man and of God himself.

This last provision was based on an earlier experience. In 1538 Lutherans at Wittenberg had agreed to a truce with Catholics in which the Lutherans agreed to return to Catholic liturgical practices. They claimed these were matters of indifference. Flacius had condemned the Wittenberg Lutherans, saying that when the confession is at stake, nothing is indifferent. Dietrich Bonhoeffer later adopted this view from Flacius when the Nazis ordered all Jews removed from clergy positions in the Lutheran church.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "That Jesus Was Born a Jew," 1532. WA 11, 336:30-34; quoted in Eric W. Gritsch, *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism: Against His Better Judgment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> See Peter Hammond, "Libel Against Luther," <http://www.reformation.org/index.php/reformation/141-libel-against-luther>.

<sup>3</sup> See Robert Pois, *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature* (1986).

<sup>4</sup> See John Lofton, "Martin Luther's 'Two Kingdom' Philosophy Not Biblical, Gives Us Godless Government, Greased The Skids For Hitler's Rise To Power" at <http://www.theamericanview.com/index.php?id=1145>.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Banwell Means, *"Things That Are Caesar's: The Genesis Of The Church Conflict"* (Round Table Press, 1935).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Richard V. Pierard, "Why Did Protestants Welcome Hitler?" in *Fides et Historia* 10/2 (Spring 1978), pp. 13-14; quoted in Joel McDurmon, "Horton's Inglorious 'Two Kingdoms' Theology (Jan. 11, 2013) at <http://americanvision.org/6882/ho-two-kingdoms-always-turns-out-radical/>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16.

9 *Hitler's Speeches: April 1922–August 1939*, ed. and trans. by Norman H. Baynes (London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1942), 1: 389–90; quoted in Joel McDurmon, “Horton’s Inglorious ‘Two Kingdoms’ Theology (Jan. 11, 2013) at <http://americanvision.org/6882/ho-two-kingdoms-always-turns-out-radical/>.

10 Pierard, 25.

11 The Presbyterian minister Samuel Rutherford wrote *Lex Rex* (1644) in defense of this thesis.

12 Martin Luther, Weimar Ausgabe 39 I:175, 9-10 (n.d.), *quoted in* Uwe Siemon-Netto, *The Fabricated Luther* 80 (1995).

13 Luther, *supra* note 8, at 35.

14 *Id.*

15 Siemon-Netto, *supra* note 13, at 71. (Emphasis added).

16 David Hall, *From Reformation to Revolution: 1500-1650*, 3 Premise 3, ([Mar. 29](http://capo.org/premise/96/mar/p960304.html), 1996) <<http://capo.org/premise/96/mar/p960304.html>>.

17 Siemon-Netto, *supra* note 13, at 72.

18 Mueller, *supra* note 5, at 47.

19 *Quoted in* Siemon-Netto, *supra* note 13, at 72.

20 *Id.* at 70.

21 Franz Lau, *Luthers Lehre von den beiden Reichen* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1952), 95. *Quoted in* Siemon-Netto, *supra* note 13, at 70.

22 Mueller, *supra* note 5, at 28. Not that obedience to the clergy is not usually required, but in terms of human hierarchy the Church members remain the source of Church authority, and they can remove clergy who fail their duties.

23 Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 30.

24 See Allen, *supra* note 1, at 23.

25 Mueller, *supra* note 5, at 26, 30-34.

26 Mueller, *supra* note 5, at 15.

27 *Id.* at 23.

28 *Quoted in* Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Bonhoeffer and the Sovereign State* 65 *First Things* 27, 27-30 (1996).

[29](#) Luther, *supra* note 8, at 19:634, 18-20. Although Luther makes no reference to Aristotle, this is completely consistent with Aristotle view that man is defined by possessing reason.

[30](#) Quoted in Allen, *supra* note 1, at 19.

[31](#) Quoted in Siemon-Netto, *supra* note 13, at 79.

[32](#) *Id.* at 78.

[33](#) *Id.* at 78-79.

[34](#) Luther, *supra* note 8, at 35.

[35](#) *Id.* at 6-7.

[36](#) Helmut Thielicke, *Theological Ethics: Politics* 21 (1979), *quoted in* Hall, *supra* at note 14.

[37](#) Kenneth C. Barnes, *Nazism, Liberalism, & Christianity* 122 (1991).

[38](#) See Siemon-Netto, *supra* note 13, at 79.

[39](#) Luther, *supra* note 7, at 15.

[40](#) Robert Benne, *The Paradoxical Vision* 91 (1995).

[41](#) For more on different Christian views of end times, see Mike Warren, "The Coming of Christ's Kingdom: The End Times and the Triumph of the Gospel" at [http://www.christianciv.com/eschatology\\_bs\\_TOC.htm](http://www.christianciv.com/eschatology_bs_TOC.htm).

[42](#) Barnes, *supra* at note 33.

[43](#) Siemon-Netto, *supra* note 13, at 86.

[44](#) *Id.* at 87.

[45](#) *Id.* at 86.

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## **WILL THE REAL NAZIS PLEASE STAND UP?!! (PART 3a)**

[October 22, 2015](#)

### **PART 3A: NAZI AND LIBERAL COMMON GROUND ON SOCIAL POLICY: GUN CONTROL LAWS**

[This is the third installment on a series on Nazism. This is the first on social policy.]



Stephen P. Halbrook provides the most in-depth study to date of Nazi uses of gun control laws in his recent book *Gun Control in the Third Reich*.<sup>[1]</sup> Halbrook documents that the Nazis made use of **gun registration laws from the Weimar Republic** to oppress Jews and other enemies of the state, and they also passed legislation that allowed confiscation of guns from anyone known to be a Jew. Although it is common among gun rights advocates to raise the example of Nazi use of gun registration laws to oppress the Jews, gun control advocates often counter that the Nazis did not pass gun control legislation except to liberalize gun control laws. Halbrook demonstrates that the gun control advocates are using half-truths to present the situation as the reverse of what really happened under the Third Reich.

**The Weimar Republic passed gun registration laws a few years before the Nazis took power in 1933.** A prescient conference of state interior ministers meeting in September 1931 noted that not requiring a permit to own firearms *“avoids the danger that, in chaotic times, the list of firearms owners would fall into the wrong hands, allowing unauthorized persons to seize power and use them to commit unlawful acts.”*<sup>[2]</sup> Exactly what they feared happened soon after when the Nazis took over. The Nazis made extensive use of the gun registration law that was already on the books, such as the 1928 Law on Firearms and Ammunition and the 1931 decree made pursuant to the 1928 law. Nazi courts cited the Weimar-era laws and the various local enabling regulations to uphold convictions for unregistered firearms.<sup>[3]</sup> “Emergency situations,” like alleged Jewish attacks against Nazis, were used to confiscate the guns of Jews in various cities, and the officials knew who had the guns because they had the gun registration lists.<sup>[4]</sup> The 1931 amendment to the 1928 Law on Firearms and Ammunition allowed the state to confiscate weapons and ammunition *“if the maintenance of public security and order so require.”*<sup>[5]</sup> As interpreted during the Nazi era, the Weimar-era law allowed the police the discretion to determine who was “reliable” or not, which allowed them to confiscate weapons from those who were not. A leading legal journal noted in November 1934: *“If the police consider a person dangerous and if such person, because of concerns about his reliability under §16(1), should not have received a firearm or ammunition acquisition license, then the police*

may prohibit such person from possession of arms and ammunition.”[6] Dr. Werner Best, a top Gestapo official, issued a directive to the Gestapo on December 16, 1935 that said, “As a rule, we have to assume that firearms in the hands of the Jews represent a considerable danger to the German people.”[7] Arms searches became an everyday occurrence soon after the Nazis took power.[8] The Nazis even searched the home of Albert Einstein for weapons in 1933, but they only found a bread knife.[9]

In addition to allowing the later confiscation of weapons under Nazi rule, the Weimar Republic’s gun registration law promoted the rise of the Nazis to power by making life difficult for average-citizen gun owners and thereby discouraged their ownership of weapons. Halbrook writes, “The effect of its laws was to limit and discourage arms possession by average citizens – the very people most likely to support democratic government against communism or National Socialism – while at the same time failing to control the destabilizing in-country conflict.”[10] The people most likely to have their guns confiscated under the gun registration laws were those who were law-abiding enough to register the guns in the first place.[11] The bumper sticker slogan proved true, that when guns are outlawed, only the outlaws will have guns. The danger of Germany’s history of gun regulation was not lost on Supreme Court Justice Frankfurter, writing shortly after the end of World War II:

*We are in the danger of forgetting that the Bill of Rights reflects experience with police excesses. It is not only under Nazi rule that police excesses are inimical; to freedom. It is easy to make light of insistence on scrupulous regard for the safeguards of civil liberties when invoked on behalf of the unworthy. It is too easy. History bears testimony that by such disregard are the rights of liberty extinguished, heedlessly at first, then stealthily, and brazenly in the end. – Davis v United States, 328 U.S. 582, 597 (1946) (Frankfurter, J., Dissenting)*

Despite the example of Nazi Germany, liberals still clamor to pass gun control legislation under the delusion that it will stop the criminals from using guns against innocent people.

The Enabling Law passed on March 24, 1933 allowed the cabinet to decree laws and Hitler, as Chancellor, to draft laws that could violate the Constitution. [12] On March 28, 1933 there was a Decree for the Surrender of Military Weapons, which included bolt action military rifles and revolvers.[13] A few days later Nazis raided homes in Jewish homes in Berlin. Halbrook writes that, “Apparently hoping to depict Jews as subversive by proving them to be in possession of firearms, search-and-seizure operations were executed on April 4, 1933.”[14] The New York Times reported,

*A large force of police assisted by Nazi auxiliaries raided a Jewish quarter in Eastern Berlin, searching everywhere for weapons and papers. Streets were closed and pedestrians were halted. Worshippers leaving synagogues were searched and those not carrying double identification cards were arrested. Even flower boxes were overturned in the search through houses and some printed matter and a few weapons were seized.[15]*

The Hitler-Fricke Weapons Law, published on March 13, 1938, amended the 1928 Weimar firearms law. Under the 1938 law Jews were specifically prohibited from working in the firearms industry, but it did not specifically forbid Jews from owning

firearms. Nevertheless, it continued the criterion of the “reliability” of a person in the issuance of a firearms license.<sup>[16]</sup> The 1938 law is cited by modern gun-control advocates as a liberalization of gun laws because **the law no longer required a license for rifles and shotguns**, only handguns.<sup>[17]</sup> However, Halbrook notes that “Although this description makes the new law sound as if it is deregulatory, the Nazis were masters of propaganda.”<sup>[18]</sup> The gun-control advocates are falling for this propaganda. Halbrook cites the following commentary on the law from a German newspaper on March 22, 1938 that reveals the truth of the law’s “liberalization”: “The prerequisite for the easing of the applicable weapons law had to be that the police authorities would remain able ruthlessly to prevent any unreliable persons from acquiring or possessing any weapons.”<sup>[19]</sup> Pursuant to the 1938 Weapons Law, on November 11, 1938, Interior Minister Frick promulgated the Regulation Against Jews’ Possession of Weapons. It provided that “Jews... are prohibited from acquiring, possession, and carrying firearms and ammunition, as well as cutting and stabbing weapons. Those now having in their possession weapons and ammunition must at once surrender them to the local police authority.”<sup>[20]</sup> Furthermore, the official laws of Germany did not prevent the Nazi regime from doing whatever they wanted to do. Hitler declared on October 22, 1938 that “[E]very means of adopted for carrying out the will of the Leader is considered legal, even though it may conflict with existing statutes and precedents.”<sup>[21]</sup> The Nazi regime made use of this power to confiscate weapons from political enemies in addition to the legislation that was passed.



### **Detroit News article on Kristalnacht and Polish Jew**

On November 7, 1938 a seventeen-year old Polish Jew shot and killed a German official at the German embassy in France. He was despondent because his parents were stranded at the border of Poland along with thousands of other German Jews who had been deported from Germany but were not allowed to reenter Poland. This event served as the Nazi's excuse to regard all Jews as untrustworthy with firearms. Given that designation, the Nazis were able to invoke the 1931 Weimar firearm law to deprive Jews of their firearms. They could confiscate registered weapons and ammunition "*if the maintenance of public security and order so requires.*"[\[22\]](#) The Nazis used gun registration records, informants, interrogation, and house searches to search for firearms. On November 9 the Berlin police announced (possibly exaggerating) that they had confiscated from Jews in their jurisdiction 1,702 firearms, 20,000 rounds of ammunition, and 2,569 stabbing and cutting weapons.[\[23\]](#)



### **The Night of Broken Glass: Nazis terrorizing Jews to find their guns.**

The Night of Broken Glass (Kristallnacht) followed on the night of November 9-10, 1938. Jews throughout Germany and Austria were terrorized in their homes and synagogues by Nazi sympathizers while authorities looked on without intervening. Of course, it was all orchestrated by the Nazi officials, from Hitler on down. What was the purpose of night of terror? Looking for firearms was a main one. The gun registrations records begun under the Weimar Republic were available to identify Jewish firearm owners before the Night of Broken Glass.[\[24\]](#) And the fact that Jews had already been almost completely disarmed allowed the terrorists to invade homes and synagogues without fear of the owners using deadly force in self-defense.

An order issued by SS leader Heinrich Himmler on November 10, 1938 read: "*Persons who, according to the Nurnberg law, are regarded as Jews, are forbidden to possess any weapon. Violators will be condemned to a concentration camp and imprisoned for a period of up to 20 years.*"[\[25\]](#) Off to the concentration camps they went - because of weapons violations - although the "final solution" was still four years away. No judicial

review of Gestapo decisions were permitted, whether for firearms or anything else.[26] On top of Himmler's decree, the very next day Interior Minister Frick promulgated the aforementioned Regulation Against Jews' Possession of Weapons pursuant to the 1938 Weapons Law. At least under this law, an accused had a right to trial.

As Justice Frankfurter noted, the contrasts between gun rights in the United States and such rights in Germany are instructive. A war for independence by the American colonies was started on April 19, 1775 when British military troops attempted to confiscate the Americans' firearms at Lexington and Concord. They passed the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to secure the right of individuals to be armed as the ultimate basis for the security of the nation.[27] Citizens continued to rely on firearms to settle its frontier, for both protection and hunting.

In Germany, their tradition was Hegelian statism, where the State is God walking on earth. Hegel said that history is ruled by great men, not the will of the people living freely to pursue their own happiness. Individuals serve the state, not the state serving to secure the rights of individuals. Nietzsche took a similar view when he extolled the superman, a man like Napoleon (also admired by Hegel) who creates new order and values for society. Hitler greatly admired Nietzsche. William Shirer writes, "*That in the end Hitler considered himself the superman of Nietzsche's prophecy cannot be doubted.*"[28] On top of that, Hitler and the German scientific establishment enthusiastically applied Darwin's idea of survival of the fittest to society.[29] On this view, the weak have no rights. Societal progress requires exterminating the weak.[30]

Germany had a "right to bear arms" in sense, but Halbrook points out that it was in the sense of "*the Hegelian statist tradition, meaning compulsory military service rather than individual liberty.*" He continues that "*German military leaders rejected the Swiss militia system of "a people in arms" in which the citizen soldier kept his arms in his home.*"[31] He also notes that "*The working class had few firearms and no tradition of keeping and using them.*"[32] This meant that even when they did have weapons, they did not have much knowledge on how to use them. The Prussian Administrative Appeals Court ruled on July 9, 1931 that an individual does not have a need for a weapons license just because he has political adversaries given that "*the police are responsible for the protection of the public.*"[33] (As the saying goes, when seconds count, the police are minutes away.) And Hitler often emphasized, as reported by the U.S. Ambassador to Germany from 1933 to 1937, William Dodd, that the state armed services were "*the sole bearer of arms in the Nation.*"[34] Hitler, of course, was hardly a Thomas Jefferson-type democracy-promoter. He wanted to control the masses (inferior races), which required keeping them disarmed. Not surprisingly, that especially applied in recently conquered territory. Hitler said:

*The most foolish mistake we could possibly make would be to allow the subject races to possess arms. History shows that all conquerors who have allowed their subject races to carry arms have prepared their own downfall by so doing. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that the supply of arms to the underdogs is a sine qua non for the overthrow of any sovereignty. So let's not have any native militia or native police. German troops alone will bear the sole responsibility for the maintenance of law and order throughout the occupied*

*Russian territories, and a system of military strong-points must be evolved to cover the entire occupied country.*[\[35\]](#)

Anyone found with a firearms in occupied territories received the death penalty.[\[36\]](#)

Even hunting licenses and shooting clubs were targeted by the Nazis. In March 1937, the Gestapo revoked all hunting permits held by Jews.[\[37\]](#) Target matches were placed under the German Defense Association by Gestapo decree, and hence any actions against a shooting club for violations of the decree were ineligible for judicial review. On December 21, 1938 Hitler mandated that all sports associations were under the Nazi Party. All leaders of the sport associations had to be approved by the Nazi Party.[\[38\]](#) Hitler himself was a vegetarian and was sensitive to the feelings of animals (but not humans!). He said, "Personally, I cannot see what possible pleasure can be derived from shooting," and "The Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would do well to turn its attention to the sportsmen themselves."[\[39\]](#)

### *Is Resistance Always Futile?*

Gun-control advocates claim that the gun rights would have done nothing to help the Jews against the Nazis. Jews in the Warsaw ghetto were able to obtain some guns and temporarily drove off the Nazis. But Nazi troops soon returned and crushed the rebellion. Liberals say that this proves that it was futile for Jews to try to resist. This is wrong for a number of reasons. If a person is going to be killed, is it compassionate or reasonable to forbid him from at least trying to save his life? Nobody with any human sensibility in them should deny innocent people being led away to their death a chance to try to save their lives. Second, the rebellion at Warsaw and other places were so unsuccessful because the Nazis had already confiscated so many guns from Jews. If the registration laws under the Weimar Republic and the Nazi regime had never been enacted, then the Jews would have had a much better chance at fighting back in the home country of Germany, which would have made conquest of other nations for difficult. That is a good reason to fight such legislation from ever being enacted. Third, there were benefits that resulted from the Jewish uprising against the Nazis. The Warsaw rebellion inspired other rebellions, and some of those permanently escaped, and one concentration camp was torn down by the Nazis after the rebellion.[\[40\]](#) *Lives were saved by fighting back with firearms!* Another benefit was that rebellions like the one at Warsaw required the Nazis to divert resources away from fighting the professional armies of the Allies, giving them a better advantage over the Nazi military. Fourth, while gun-control advocates paint a futile picture of a small number of armed Jews mounting an assault on trained Nazi troops, more guns in the hands of Jews could have been very effective in asymmetrical warfare. There were several assassination attempts on Hitler's life, and they were very close to being successful. If one had been successful, it would have been a drastic blow to Nazi Germany, probably leading to a fight for power and rebellion against the regime from groups within the Nazi ranks. One assassination attempt was by Swiss theology student Maurice Bavaud, who stalked Hitler for months before he was caught. He decided not to take a shot on one occasion because he might injure others, and he barely missed other opportunities. Hitler later remarked about him that "The confessions of this Swiss interested me insofar as they confirmed by conviction that no a soul could cope with an assassin who, for idealistic reasons, was prepared quire ruthlessly to hazard his own life in the

execution of his subject.” [41] Fifth, the Nazis themselves did not believe that guns in the hands of Jews and other political opponents would be ineffective. Halbrook comments:

*A skeptic might surmise that a better-armed populace might have made no difference, but the Nazi regime certainly did not act on that premise. While many historically unique factors ultimately led to the Holocaust, Nazi policies prohibiting possession of firearms helped consolidate Hitler’s power at home, exacerbated persecution of the Jews, aiding their arrest and deportation, and foreshadowed some of the more severe policies undertaken during the war.*[42]

Last, I should point out that the use deadly force in self-defense is a right given by God’s law. A homeowner is held guiltless for killing a thief who breaks in at night ([Exodus 22:2](#)<sup>L</sup>). And Jesus tells His disciples that, while He protected them while He was on earth, He was about to leave them, and they needed to each buy a sword: “let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one” ([Luke 22:36](#)<sup>L</sup>). Peter misused his sword to cut off a soldier’s ear ([John 18:10](#)<sup>L</sup>), but that demonstrates that Jesus had allowed Peter to carry a sword for self-defense prior to the misuse incident.[43]

The Bible demands a limited government that follows the rule of law, rather than a totalitarian regime like Hitler promoted. The king of Israel was forbidden from multiplying horses, which prevented him from launching offensive wars to other lands, and forbidden from multiplying wives, which prevented him from making foreign alliances that could draw the nation into war, and he was required to follow God’s law rather than his own will “that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment” ([Deuteronomy 17:14-20](#)<sup>L</sup>). A tyrannical regime is described as one that forces citizens into government service and that taxes as high as a ten percent of income ([1 Samuel 8:10-18](#)<sup>L</sup>). Successful wars require troops and money, and the possession of both resources in large amounts by the government is condemned by the God of the Bible.

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[1] Stephen P. Halbrook, *Gun Control in the Third Reich: Disarming the Jews and “Enemies of the State”* (Oakland, CA: The Independent Institute, 2013). Also see his essay, “Nazi Firearms Law and the Disarming of the German Jews,” *17 Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law*, No. 3, 483-535 (2000), <http://www.stephenhalbrook.com/article-nazilaw.pdf>.

[2] Quoted in Halbrook, *Gun Control in the Third Reich*, p. 29.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 69.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[6] Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 103.

[7] Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 111.

[8] Ibid., p. 113.

[9] Ibid., pp. 58-59.

[10] Ibid., p. 23.

[11] Ibid., p. 33.

[12] Ibid., p. 60.

[13] Ibid., p. 62.

[14] Ibid., p. 64.

[15] "Raid on Jewish Quarter," New York Times, April 5, 1933, p. 10; quoted by Halbrook, *Gun Control in the Third Reich*, p. 64.

[16] Halbrook, *Gun Control in the Third Reich*, p. 132.

[17] Ibid., p. 134.

[18] Ibid., p. 136.

[19] Ibid., p. 136.

[20] Ibid., pp. 173-74.

[21] Ibid., p. 141.

[22] Ibid., p. 157.

[23] Ibid., p. 158.

[24] Ibid., p. 35.

[25] Ibid., p. 169.

[26] Ibid., p. 170.

[27] *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 US 570 (2008).

[28] William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London: Mandarin Paperback, 1991), p. 101.

[29] See Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); and *Hitler's Ethic: The Nazi Pursuit of Evolutionary Progress* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). Jerry Bergman, *Hitler and the Nazi Darwinian Worldview: How the Nazi Eugenic Crusade for a Superior Race Caused the Greatest Holocaust in World History* (Joshua Press, 2012).

[30] Darwin apologist Richard Dawkins admits as much: "[N]atural selection is a good object lesson in how NOT to organize a society. As I have often said before, as a scientist I am a passionate Darwinian. But as a citizen and a human being, I want to construct a society which is about as un-Darwinian as we can make it. I approve of

looking after the poor (very un-Darwinian). I approve of universal medical care (very un-Darwinian). It is one of the classic philosophical fallacies to derive an 'ought' from an 'is'." Richard Dawkins, "Lying for Jesus?," March 23, 2008 at <http://old.richarddawkins.net/articles/2394-lying-for-jesus>.

[31] Halbrook, *Gun Control in the Third Reich*, p. 44.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

[35] Adolf Hitler, dinner talk on April 11, 1942, quoted in *Hitler's Table Talk 1941-44: His Private Conversations*, Second Edition, Trans. by Norman Cameron and R. H. Stevens (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), pp. 425-426.

[36] Halbrook, *Gun Control in the Third Reich*, pp. 112-13, 206-07.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 125-26.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 204-05 (quoting *Hitler's Secret Conversations: 1941-45*, trans. Norman Cameron and R.H. Stevens (New York: Signet Books, 1961), pp. 114, 633.)

[40] "Treblinka Death Camp Revolt," <http://www.ushmm.org/research/the-center-for-advanced-holocaust-studies/miles-lerman-center-for-the-study-of-jewish-resistance/medals-of-resistance-award/treblinka-death-camp-revolt>; "Sobibór Uprising," <http://www.ushmm.org/research/the-center-for-advanced-holocaust-studies/miles-lerman-center-for-the-study-of-jewish-resistance/medals-of-resistance-award/sobibor-uprising>.

[41] Halbrook, *Gun Control in the Third Reich*, p. 206.

[42] *Ibid.*, pp. xv-xvi.

[43] See P. Andrew Sandlin, "Pistol Packin' Jesus?," <http://docsandlin.com/2015/12/14/pistol-packin-jesus/#comment-8043>; Larry Pratt, "What Does the Bible Say About Gun Control?," <https://www.gunowners.org/fs9902.htm>.

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**Fuente:**

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