Hitlerian Esotericism & the Tradition

Savitri Devi

Illustration: A propaganda double entendre: Thomas Hart Benton’s “The Year of Peril. Again” (1941)

10,279 words

Translated by R. G. Fowler

Chapter 10 of Souvenirs et réflexions d’une Aryenne (Memories and Reflections of an Aryan Woman)

“The fools scorn Me when I take on human form;

My essence, supreme source of beings, escapes them.”

—Bhagavad-Gita, 9, verse 2

There were, naturally, levels among the elect. (Curiously, the name of this élite of physical health and beauty, warlike courage and, more or less, secret knowledge, which the broad public knows only by its initials [SS], means, as I mentioned above, “protection levels”). I have, I believe, also mentioned these levels in alluding to the Ordensburgen [Order Castles], in which took place the military training, the political and, to a certain extent, metaphysical education, of the SS, and especially of their cadres—because the Hitlerian Weltanschauung is inseparable from the metaphysics that underlies it. That is so true that a critic of National Socialism and the work of René Guénon could say that the latter was “Hitlerism minus the armored divisions,”[2] without the initiate of Cairo ever writing one single word on “politics.”

All the candidates—I should say “the novices”—of the SS, were not trained and educated in the same Ordensburg. And all those of the same Ordensburg did not receive—especially at the higher levels—the same teaching. That depended on the tasks for which they were judged apt, even within the élite. Because it comprised several organizations, from the most visible, the Waffen [Armed] SS—the most famous also, because of the superhuman heroism of which it gave proof so many times during the Second World War—up to the most secret, the Ahnenerbe (Ancestral Heritage), founded in 1935, and all the more difficult to know since many documents that referred to it (also secret, which goes without saying) were destroyed, “before the arrival of the Allies in Germany,” and that “the members of this organization who survived the collapse of Third Reich” . . . “concealed with a strange resolution.”[2]

It is at least logical to think that it was probably the Ahnenerbe which, in “the Black Order” of Adolf Hitler, was the agent of the Tradition—and more specifically, certain sections of the Ahnenerbe, because it comprised many of them, including “fifty-two scientific [sections],”[3] i.e., dealing with objective research, though not necessarily in the spirit and employing the methods used in the applied sciences. According to the declarations of Wolfram Sievers before the tribunal of the victors in Nuremberg, to whom one owes this detail, the same Institute “carried out or tried to carry out more than one hundred missions of research of great extent.”[4] The nature of some of this research reveals a very clear interest in esoteric questions. Thus they studied the symbolism of the harp in Ireland; also, the question of the survival of the true Rosicrucian brotherhood—in other words, of initiatory groups still having the complete tradition of the Templars (of which the first Rosicrucian brotherhood would have received the heritage). Thus they reconsidered the Bible and the Kabbalah, while trying to draw the hidden meaning from them—wondering, in particular what role the symbolism of numbers plays in one and the other. Thus they further studied the physical and mental structure of human specimens of various races—that of the Nordic with the very special care that one can guess—in order to ensure the value the concepts of heredity and race, so fundamental in Hitlerism. Thus they devoted systematic and sustained efforts to all research aimed at revealing to the Germans the glory of their own Antiquity, historic or prehistoric—and of their Middle Ages—and to highlight the importance of the corresponding sites.

Without denying that there is, in Christianity as in Judaism itself, and all the associated religions or philosophies close to or even far from the Tradition, a share of esoteric truth, they put the emphasis on the traditional form specific to the Germanic people. The traces of this one are found in the symbols, engraved on rock, of most remote prehistory, and, after the bloody eradication of the worship of Wotan by Charlemagne and his immediate successors, in certain rites practiced in the Middle Ages in the Chivalric Orders or the Holy Vehm. It would be interesting to know if the latter, which did not cease to exist as a secret organization, has, or had at a given time, some relationship with the Thule Society.

Heinrich Himmler—the Head of the SS, and the man whose career, so much decried outside Hitlerian circles, is (besides that of the Führer itself) stamped more than any other with the detached violence that signifies a higher quality of being—insists on the above, albeit in “a veiled expression,” “intentionally vague”[5] in his speech of January 1937, which contains the sole public or semi-public reference to the Ahnenerbe. There is high ideological importance to archaeological discoveries made by the Institute of this name in Altchristenburg, in East Prussia: as of this day, several layers of Germanic fortifications, increasingly old, refute the opinion that East Prussia was a Slavic land. But there is more: the “reorganization” and “maintenance” of cultural centers consecrated “to the greatness of Germany and the German past”. . . “in each area where an SS company is found” is recommended.[6] And he gives examples of such centers. One is Sachsenhain, close to Verden, where 4,500 rough blocks, each transported from a Saxon village, had been set up one after another on both sides of a road in the middle of a forest, in memory of 4,500 Saxons decapitated there, on the banks of the Aller, in 782, by order of Charlemagne, because they persisted in refusing a foreign God whom he wanted to impose to them. The other is the site of the Externsteine, impressive vertical rocks marking, close to Horn, one of the great spiritual centers of the world of all time, and the sacrosanct place of worship of the ancient Germans. At the top of the highest of the rocks, in the place of the ancient Irminsul of gold torn off in 772 by the soldiers of the same Christian conqueror, floated henceforth—the victorious, liberating symbol of the reconciliation of all the opposite aspects of German history in the knowledge of its deep unity—the red, white, and black flag with the Swastika of the Third Reich.

And the examples show sufficiently that it was not only about “culture,” but about secret knowledge, or, about the national culture of the Germans in general, and, for the initiates of Order of the SS and in particular of Ahnenerbe, of secret knowledge of the great cosmic truths, apprehended through traditional symbolism such as the Germanic people knew it, and such as a quiet minority preserved it.

For—and it is here a point to be noted—in spite of the very strong “pagan” current that underlies Hitlerism, and which appears especially in the unreserved rejection of any anthropocentrism, such as the whole personal God, it was never a question of rejecting or even under-appreciating anything that in the German—and European—ancestral heritage gives honor to the Aryan genius.

The Führer had, says André Brissaud, “the feeling”—I myself would say the certainty—that “all that which in recent Western history had taken the form of a religion, and the Christian religion particularly” . . . “pertains to the ‘too human’,” and therefore did not have a great deal to do with really transcendent values, and, moreover, “offers a general climate or an inner order scarcely compatible with its own provisions and its vocation, set alongside the truths and the dogmas of the faith suggested to the ordinary man.”[7] However, the whole of Western civilization is at the same time “recent” and “Christian.” It never should be forgotten.

That did not, however, prevent Adolf Hitler, who was impartial, as is necessary for any sage (and even more so for any human expression of the Divine), from admiring Charlemagne—the Sachsenschlächter or “exterminator of the Saxons,” as he was called by Alfred Rosenberg, Johann von Leers, Heinrich Himmler, and a good number of other high-ranking dignitaries, thinkers, and men of action of the Third Reich. He saw in him a conqueror with an immense will to power, and above all the first unifier of the Germans; he who, alone in his time, had had the idea of the Reich, even if it had been useful to impose on it the artificial unity of “faith,” and if this “faith” was the Christian faith, i.e. a foreign faith. One remembers that Adolf Hitler insisted on the corrosive action of Christianity on the Greco-Roman world, and that he described it as “pre-Bolshevism.” But it does not matter what this faith was (and still is), if it were the cement of a conquering Germanic Empire and, later, the occasion for all the flowering of art that one knows. Insofar as this art is beautiful, it presupposes, in any event, a certain knowledge of that which is eternal. The Führer thus accepted with respect, as a German heirloom, a replica of the sword of the Emperor of West.

He also admired the great Hohenstaufen Emperors—especially Frederic Barbarossa, he-who-must return—and who had returned, in him (for only a little while, alas!); and Frederick II, Stupor Mundi [Wonder of the World], in whom so many of his contemporaries believed they saw the Antichrist—as men nowadays, deceived by propaganda, were to see in him, the Founder of Third Reich, the incarnation of Evil. He admired Frederick II of Prussia, Bismarck, all those in whom the conquering force of the German people had been expressed, of whose cultural—and much more than cultural—mission he did not have the slightest doubt.

And Heinrich Himmler himself, while paying a brilliant homage to the Saxon warriors, martyrs of the ancient national faith in Verden, in the year 782 of the foreign God, professed a veritable adoration of the Emperor Henry I and exalted the Knights of the Teutonic Order—certainly not because the latter had, with great reinforcement of brutality, forced the Slavs (and finally the Prussians[8]) to accept Christianity, but because they had, by the sword, “prepared the way for the German plow”: made possible the German colonization of vast territories in the east.

What there was, moreover, of the eternal in the warlike religion of Wotan and Thor—and, before that in the immemorial Nordic religion of the Sky, the Earth, and “Son” of the one and the other, which Dr. Hermann Wirth studied—was to survive in Christian esotericism, and in esotericism as such. This has, parallel to the teaching of the Churches, continued throughout history to have its initiates, less and less numerous, undoubtedly, but always present, and sometimes very active. (One counts, indeed, among them immortal creators such as the great Dürer and later Goethe, Wagner, and to a certain extent, Nietzsche. And it is known that Frederick II, “the Great,” King of Prussia—the hero par excellence of the Führer—was Grand Master of the Old Prussian Lodges). The deep significance of the ancient Irminsul, Axis of the world, is not, at the bottom, different from that of the Cross, detached of all Christian mythology, i.e., of the story of the execution of Jesus considered as a fact in time. The point of the venerable Germanic symbol indeed aims at the Pole star, which appears as the “One” or supreme Principle; and its curved branches are supposed to support the circle of the Zodiac, symbol of the Cycle of manifestation, being driven around its motionless center. There are in certain very old churches of Germany today “crucifixions” in which the cross itself has the curved branches of the “pagan” Irminsul—the ensemble suggesting the fusion of the two religions in their most elevated and most universal symbolism. In addition—according to Professor von Moth, of Detmold—the Fleur de Lys, connected, as everyone knows, with the idea of royal or imperial power, is, in its form, a somewhat stylized Irminsul, or “Pillar of All,” having like it a polar and axial significance. Any legitimate power comes indeed from On-high. And the Swastika, also “essentially the sign of the Pole”[9] thus of the “rotational movement that is achieved around a center of an immutable axis” and—the movement representing life—of “the vivifying role of the Principle in relation to the cosmic order”[10] is connected thereby to the Irminsul and the cross.

What, therefore, was important, what was exalted, was all that had contributed, or could contribute, to reinforce the Germanic will to power—condition of the universal “rectification,” which only regenerated Germany could begin. It was, in addition, to keep alive the deposit of traditional truth, i.e., of more than human—cosmic—truth transmitted down through the ages. The expression of this heritage, the form in which it was presented, could certainly vary from one time to another thanks to the political fluctuations of the visible world, but at bottom remained one, and is explicated as well in the supreme beauty of the old Scandinavian sagas as in the music, eminently Christian in inspiration, of Johann Sebastian Bach, and, this goes without saying, in complete artwork [Gesamtkunstwerk] (musical and literary), also initiatory, of Richard Wagner.

This deposit, more invaluable than anything, came from mysterious Hyperborea, original homeland of the “transparent men,” sons of the “Intelligences of Beyond”; of the Hyperborea whose center—the “capital”—was Thule.

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It is undoubtedly unnecessary to point out that the “transparency” in question here is not anything material and consequently visible. It seems to be a state of being more subtle than that which we know, more open to direct contact with the intangible and even the formless. In other words, the Hyperboreans, guardians of the primordial Tradition, would have been capable of intellectual intuition to a degree that we cannot conceive.

Who were they? And—if they really existed—where did their territory extend? The more or less evocative allusions made by the ancients—by Seneca in his Medea; by Pliny the Elder, Virgil, Diodorus of Sicily, Herodotus, Homer (in the Odyssey) and the author or the authors of Genesis, and especially the enigmatic Book of Enoch—are rather vague, though all refer to the “Far North.” And the evocation of the extreme “whiteness” of the Hyperboreans, of the inexpressible beauty of their wives and the “extraordinary gifts of perspicacity”[11] of some of them, would make one think of an Aryan race immensely higher than the average Nordic of today, which is not astonishing since they belong to a past that is lost in the mists of time. But there is more: the scholar Bal Gangadhar Tilak,[12] better known under the name of Lokomanya Tilak, a learned and wise Hindu, has, in his work The Arctic Home in the Vedas, very clearly connected the oldest tradition of India to an area located in the high latitudes, an area of the long polar night and Midnight Sun and . . . the aurora borealis; an area where the stars do not rise nor set, but move, or seem to move, circularly along the horizon.

The Rig-Veda, which he studied in particular and from which he draws the majority of the quotations in support of his thesis, would have been, as well as the whole of the Vedas—or knowledge “seen,” i.e., direct—revealed to these “Aryas,” i.e., “Lords” of the extreme North, and preciously preserved by them during the migrations that have, over centuries, brought them little by little into India.

Tilak places the abandonment of the Arctic fatherland at the time when it lost its moderate climate and its green vegetation to become “icy,” i.e., at the time when the axis of the Earth shifted more than twenty-three degrees some eight thousand years ago. He does not specify if the island or the portion of the continent thus struck with sudden barrenness was swallowed up, as in the Legend of Thule, or continues to exist somewhere in the vicinity of or inside the Arctic Circle. He does not mention, either, the stages that the trustees of the eternal Vedas—Wisdom hidden in the sacred texts of this name—had to traverse between their Arctic fatherland and the first colonies they founded in the Northwest of India. And, his work not being addressed to initiates—who would have no need for it anyway—but only to oriental scholars of good faith, whom he knows are insensitive to any argument not supported by proof, he does not evidently say anything of the “underground” initiatory centers, Agartha and Shambhala, which are so often an issue in the secret teaching that the “Thule Society” gave its members—a teaching that was thus received by, inter alia, Alfred Rosenberg, Rudolf Hess, Dietrich Eckart and, probably via the latter, Adolf Hitler himself. (Agartha, or Agarthi, is the center placed “under the wheel of the Golden Sun,” that is to say, that to which are attached the contemplatives who refuse in advance to take part in the businesses of this world: that of sages whom I called “men above Time.” Shambhala is, by contrast, the spiritual center of the men “against Time”: initiates who, while living in the eternal, agree to act in this world “in the interest of the Universe” according to immutable values, or, to employ the equivalent words of the Führer, according to the “original sense of things.” It was, naturally, to this second center of the Masters of Action that Adolf Hitler was attached.)

It is remarkable that the names of Agartha and Shambhala “appear several times on the lips of more than one head of the SS during the Nuremberg tribunals, and, more particularly, of the SS who were among the persons in charge of the Ahnenerbe.”[13] This organization has, inter alia, it is known, sent to Tibet “an expedition directed by the ethnologist, Standartenführer SS Doctor Scheffer.”[14] The fragments of his reports, which exist on microfilms in the “National Archives in Washington, D.C.,” appeared “extraordinary” to André Brissaud, who read them. Why such an expedition? Admittedly not to try to find in Central Asia, “the origins of the Nordic race,” as Brissaud seems to believe. Under the Third Reich, even school children knew from reading it in their textbooks—some of which, such as that of Klagges and Blume, So ward das Reich, were remarkable—that this race had migrated from the North towards the South and the East, and not conversely.[15] No. What was wanted, undoubtedly, by Doctor Scheffer and his collaborators, was rather to try to penetrate the mystery of Agartha and Shambhala, perhaps to test, with the assistance of the heads of a spiritual center where it appears, to come into contact with the principle (because it is a principle, not a character) that René Guénon calls the “King of the World.”[16] That seems all the more plausible as, among the sections of the Ahnenerbe whose work was classified “secret business of Reich” and “of which one was entirely unaware,” “one included, in addition to the study of old languages, of cosmology and archaeology, that of ‘Yoga and Zen’,” and another was interested “in esoteric doctrines and magic influences on human behavior.”[17]

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Moreover, it is not only with the initiates of the Forbidden City of Lhasa (and perhaps with the Dalai Lama himself) which the spiritual élite of the Order of the SS—which was that of a new Traditional civilization in potentiality, if not currently in gestation—sought to make contact. In my humble knowledge, there were also similar encounters in India—meetings that people hardly suspect in the West—and completely apart from the political conversations that took place with certain Hindu leaders, such as Subhas Chandra Bose, in India and in Germany, before and during the Second World War.

There appeared in Calcutta, beginning in 1935, a “cultural” review, The New Mercury, very skillfully published by Sri Asit Krishna Mukherji in collaboration with Sri Vinaya Datta and some others. The speeches of the Führer, of which the official press in English as well as in Bengali reported only extracts, were printed there in extenso, especially if they presented, as was often the case, an interest beyond “politics.” One of them, which had then particularly drawn my attention, related to the subject of “Architecture and Nation.” But the aforementioned review also published studies on anything that could illuminate a profound non-political connection, going back very far and very deep, between traditional Hindu civilization, which had never ceased to exist, and traditional Germanic civilization, as it had existed long before Christianity, and aspired to rebirth in what was essential. These studies revealed in their authors, beyond indispensable archaeological scholarship, a serious knowledge of cosmic symbolism. Several were, it goes without saying, centered on the Swastika. They seemed to want to show—indirectly—the exceptional character of a great modern State that recognized for “its own” a Sign of such a universal range, which engraved it on all its public monuments, stamped it on all its standards. It suggested at the same time the aspiration of this great State to renew contact with the primordial Tradition—from which Europe had been detached for centuries, but which India had kept as a priceless deposit.

I do not have any evidence that the services of the Ahnenerbe played any role whatsoever in the publication of The New Mercury. That appears to me, in fact, as very improbable since this special section of the SS was itself founded only in 1935—the same year as the review. But I know that the latter was at least partly supported financially by the government of the Third Reich. Germans, and the representatives—German or not—of German firms in India, were supposed to subscribe to it. And one of them at least, to my knowledge, was recalled to Germany, having being dismissed from the direction of the branch which he governed for years, for having refused to do so and declaring that “this propaganda in a new style” (sic) did not interest him.

The founder and editor of the periodical, Sri A. K. Mukherji, remained in close contact with Herr von Selzam, Consul General of Germany in Calcutta, as long as he remained in this station. And this official representative of Adolf Hitler, the day before his departure, gave to Mukherji a document addressed to the German authorities in which it was specified in all letters that, “no person in Asia has rendered services comparable to his.” I saw this document. I read it and read it again, with joy, with pride—as Aryan and as Hitlerian, and as wife of Sri A. K. Mukherji. I already mentioned this in these discussions.

It is not possible for me to say if the “services” in question had or had not gone beyond the rather narrow limits of the activities of Sri A. K. Mukherji as an editor of a semi-monthly review that was Traditionalist and at the same time Hindu and pro-German. It would indeed seem that they went beyond them—because the review lasted only two years, the English authorities having prohibited it towards the end of 1937, shortly after the definitive “turning” in the evolution of the British policy vis-à-vis the Reich. In any event, I did not yet personally know Sri A. K. Mukherji at that time: his name evoked for me only the existence of the sole review of clearly Hitlerian tendencies that I knew in India. But something leads me to believe that the knowledge that he had subsequently, and even before, of esoteric Hitlerism, i.e., of the profound connection of the secret doctrines of the Führer to the eternal Tradition, did not have any common measure with the vague impressions that I myself could have had on the same subject. During the very first conversation that I had with him, after having had the honor of being introduced—on 9 January 1938—to him who, less than two years later, was destined to give me his name and his protection, asked me incidentally what I thought of . . . Dietrich Eckart.

I knew that he was the author of the famous poem “Deutschland Erwache,” a combatant of the very first days of the Kampfzeit, dead a few weeks after the failed “Putsch” of 9 November 1923 at the age of fifty-five years, the comrade to whom Adolf Hitler had dedicated the second part of Mein Kampf. I was still unaware of the existence of the Thulegesellschaft and was consequently far from suspecting the role that the poet of the national revolution had been able to play for the Führer.

I displayed with enthusiasm my pitifully small scholarship. My interlocutor who had rendered—and was soon going to render—to the Third Reich (and later to its Japanese allies) “services comparable to those of no one other,” smiled and passed on to another subject.

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The opinion that Adolf Hitler was an agent of diabolic Forces, that his initiation was only a monstrous counter-initiation, and that his Order of the SS was a sinister brotherhood of black magicians could not—without a doubt!—be any more widespread among anti-Hitlerians with more or less a smattering of occultism. (And they are not lacking.)

The most convincing counter-argument seems to come from India. In the West, indeed, the confusion in the field of knowledge of principles is today such as it is difficult to say if there is there still a group that legitimately can pride itself on a true affiliation with the Tradition. There is not, therefore, a point of comparison between the attitude of true initiates and that of charlatans. According to René Guénon, practically all the societies of Europe that claim nowadays to be “initiatory” would be classified under the latter heading. However, it is their members who make themselves heard, who are agitated, who take a position against Hitlerism—as Louis Pauwels and the Jew Bergier did every time they could in the review Planet. In fact, I do not know of even one European group interested in esoteric doctrines that is not definitely anti-Hitlerian. (I may be deceived, certainly. I would like, on this point, to be deceived.)

But it is not the same in India.

Initially, one faces there a completely different “spiritual landscape.” Instead of dealing with groups with more or less “initiatory” pretensions moving in the midst of an immense secular society infatuated with applied sciences and “progress,” and especially worried about its material well-being, we are in the presence of a traditional civilization, quite alive in spite of the increasing influence of technology. The man of the masses, not-poisoned by propaganda since he still enjoys the “blessing of illiteracy” (to use again a favorite expression in the Führer), thinks more than an individual of the same social standing in the West—which among us is not an achievement! He thinks, especially, in the spirit of the Tradition; witness the Sudra youth whose story I recalled at the beginning of these Memories and Reflections.

The Hindu who has attended school and even studied in Europe or in the USA is not therefore hostile to the Tradition. The idea of natural hierarchy, of biological—thus racial— heredity, closely related to the Karma of each person, is familiar to him. And in the immense majority of cases, he sees according to immemorial rules of his caste—even though the “progressive” government of so called “free” India (in reality a grotesque copy of the Democracies of the West) has proclaimed the suppression of the castes and imposed universal suffrage. In certain cases, of course, he brings subversive ideas or shocking practices back from his contacts with foreigners. But then he is scorned by his own, and orthodox society turns away from him—no government having the power to force matters, he has to accept it whether he likes it or not. As for the traditional initiatory groups and the isolated Masters of true secret science, they continue to exist as in the past—in silence, unperceived by the general public. They are held, in theory, out of the swirl of politics and do not give press conferences. At most a word, a remark made near a visitor respectful of the Tradition although himself uninitiated, can sometimes allow one to divine the terrestrial sympathies of this or that sage.

There are also, as one has to expect in a time of universal decline, people who make a profession of “spirituality” and groups that claim transcendent Masters and claim to transmit a so-called “initiation” without having a shadow of a right. The charlatans in orange tunics—or naked, their bodies covered with ashes—who trail around the temples, especially in the places of pilgrimage, living by begging or swindling, posing as “gurus” to credulous widows, are not lacking. They are rascals, but of small scale and limited noxiousness. Infinitely more dangerous are the individuals or the groups who work to inject into India—as much as possible—the anthropocentrism inherent in the religious or political doctrines influenced more or less directly by Judaism or the Jews. I mean by this all the individuals or groups who, under cover of a false fidelity to the Tradition which they twist and disfigure as they please, preach egalitarian principles, democracy, horror of any violence, even detached violence, when this is exerted against “men,” whoever they may be—whereas the monstrous exploitation of animals (and trees) by man hardly disturbs them (if they are not completely indifferent there, and even if they do not justify it!). I think of all those who claim to pay homage to “true ancient wisdom” by obstinately denying any natural racial hierarchy, by condemning the caste system in principle, by preaching the “right” of people of different races to marry if they believe they are finding “their happiness.” I think of those who would like to replace, among Hindus, the old privileges of caste with privileges based on “education” (in the Western sense of the word), and replace the concern with metaphysical orthodoxy with an increasingly more intense preoccupation with the “social,” the “economic,” “the improvement of the living conditions for the masses.” I think of the organizers of “Parliaments of Religions,” of advocates of a fusion between “East and West” at the expense of the spirit of the Tradition common, in the beginning, to both, and that Hinduism alone preserved as the basis of civilization; with missionaries of a morality centered on “man,” as conceived in the Christian West and the rationalist West.

The “Mission” that claims that name of divine Ramakrishna—a true initiate who lived in the last century—seems more and more to tend in this direction, under the influence of Western benefactors, especially Americans. But this tendency does not date to today. It has been more than one hundred and fifty years since the foundation of the Brahmo Samaj Society of deists profoundly marked by their English university education and the “Protestant” form of Christianity. This sect, under pretext of bringing Hinduism back to a so-called “original purity,” interpreted it according to the “modern spirit,” that René Guénon so correctly deplored as the influence of Europe. But, as Guénon goes on to say, in spite of the social position of its members and, what is more, the high the caste of the best known of them, they are rejected by orthodox Hindus. They refuse to give them their daughters in marriage—or to accept theirs for their sons. And in the villages, they would not accept from them a glass of water—and, I repeat, no government has the power to force them. This attitude comes from what the followers of Brahmo Samaj reject as the principle of the caste system: the unequal “dignity” of men according to their heredity. It comes from the fact that Brahmo Samaj is not Indian—no more than are the other sects of the same spirit, whatever they are.[18]

I do not want to go into detail on those. That would carry the reader too far. But it is not possible for me to overlook two organizations that were founded in South India: one, the Theosophical Society in Adyar close to Madras; the other, the community that was formed in Pondicherry around wise the Bengali Aurobindo Ghosh, now deceased.

The first is a vast international institution of subversion in the deep sense of the word, as Guénon has shown extremely well in his book Theosophy, a False Religion.[19] What they would like to pass off as “doctrines” is a farrago of arbitrary constructions of the intellect and various notions and beliefs of which the names—karma; transmigration of souls, etc.—are drawn from the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. These notions and beliefs are quite as arbitrary, and scarcely as orthodox, as the theories they go into—such as, for example, the idea of the “group soul” of animals dear to Leadbeater; such as, also, everything the Theosophists teach about their various “Masters”: Koot Hoomi, Rajkoski, and others. The illustrious Lokornanya Tilak, whose work I quoted above, compared Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society until her death in 1933—and for a time President of the Indian National Congress—with the she-devil Putna, sent to nurse the Child-God, Krishna, in order to kill him with her poisonous milk. Tilak hoped that, like the young God who, while assimilating the poison with impunity, finally killed Putna by emptying her of all her substance, Hindu society could be defended and confound those who try to seduce it with skillfully disguised untruths.

The other institution developed around an apparently genuine sage. However it tended, already during his life, to descend to the level of an enterprise of very skilful and very lucrative exploitation. Indeed, it bought one after the other all the houses of Pondicherry that were for sale, so that it included in 1960, apart from the center where some disciples dedicated themselves to meditation, many workshops for pottery, joinery, weaving, etc, etc. . . . whose products were—and are still today—sold for profit; co-educational schools, with sports classes; a university, provided with richly equipped laboratories.

This prosperity is, I am told, due mainly to the business genius of the “Mother” of the ashram—a woman of Jewish origin, the widow of a Jew, then of a Frenchman[20]—and the son that she had with her first husband. Members of the organization, full at the same time with zeal and practical direction and enjoying the confidence of these two people, are also, perhaps, persons in charge, each one following his talents. In any event, in the reception hall, where there are many photographs of the late guru and the “Mother” for sale—large and small, for all budgets—one is impressed by the business-like atmosphere of the place, an impression that is specified and intensified during a visit of the workshops. And one recalls, by contrast, the spiritual energy that emerges from certain writings of Aurobindo Ghosh: his Essays on the Bhagavad-Gita, his The Life Divine or his Synthesis of Yogas. There is the feeling of a deep rift between this more than flourishing organization, which covers two thirds of a city of more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, and the wise one who lived there in the most complete isolation—invisible to the crowd and even to his disciples, except for a few hours a year.

However, there is a fact that seems to me eloquent, and it is this: in the midst of this traditional civilization that is still that of India, it is precisely from these organizations—the most secular, the most “modern,” in a word the most anti-traditionalist—that the gestures, writings, and declarations hostile to Hitlerism came.

Aurobindo Ghosh himself did not, to my knowledge, ever express a judgment “pro” or “contra” any of the great figures or the great political (or more-than-political) faiths of our time. He had definitively left action—and what action![21]—for contemplation, and it was confined to the spiritual domain. But at the end of 1939—or was it 1940?—the newspapers of Calcutta published that the “Ashram of Pondicherry” had made the colonial Government of India a gift of ten million pounds sterling “to help the British war effort.” Mr. de Saint-Hilaire, known as Pavitra, secretary of the Ashram, whom I questioned on this point in 1960, answered me that he “could not say to me” if information collected and published twenty years earlier in the press of Calcutta was exact. But he told me that “that could well be,” considering that Hitlerism went, according to him (and undoubtedly also according to more than one person having some influence in the ashram), “against the direction of human evolution.” (Against evolution? And how! Nothing could be truer! But far from being a reason to fight it, it would be, on the contrary, a reason to support it. Universal decline is a sign, more and more visible, that our cycle advances rapidly towards its end. Any combat against it, all “return to the eternal principles,” necessarily goes “against the direction of human evolution.” It is a phase of the perpetual fight against the current of Time. But this is, I repeat it, I insist on it, a reason—the imperative reason—to exalt rather than to condemn it.)

In addition, the heads of the Theosophical Society—according to René Guénon, Masters of counter-initiation, in spite of their claims to the contrary—proved, during and after the Second World War, how much they hated (and hate still) the doctrines of Adolf Hitler. Arundale, then President of the Society, traversed India in search of compliant, i.e., purchasable, priests and ordered prayers for the victory of the “Crusade” against National Socialism.[22] And one only has to open any issue of Conscience, the official organ of Theosophy, to see displayed in black and white anti-Hitlerian propaganda that has nothing to envy in the contemporary newspapers of England or the USA, and even the press of the Soviet Union (after they heard of the rupture of the Germano-Russian Pact of 23 August 1939). It is not only to the supposed invisible “Masters” of the Theosophists, Koot Hoomi, Rajkoski, and others—that one attributed “secret missions” for the success of the United Nations.[23]

Apart from the Theosophical Society—even it in close connection with certain Western Masonic Lodges—it is among the Hindus of the dissident sects, such as Brahmo Samaj, where I met the only anti-Hitlerians who crossed my path in India—apart from, of course, the great majority of non-German Europeans and all the Communists without exception. I will cite, for example, only the open air University of Shantinikétan that represents then and always the Brahma Samajist milieu par excellence. The poet Rabindranath Tagore, its founder, was still living when, in 1935, I spent six months at this university in order to improve my knowledge of the Bengali language and to learn Hindi there. I noticed there nothing special except the presence, as “a German professor,” of a Jewess of Berlin, Margaret Spiegel, known as Amala Bhen, who had come, after two years of staying in the ashram of Gandhi, to spread her hatred of the Third Reich to the pupils who were entrusted to her and the Hindu colleagues whom she could indoctrinate. I soon knew that “Govinda,” the Buddhist monk whose saffron-colored robe and beautiful Burmese parasol added a picturesque note to the landscape, was also a Jew from Germany. I was also told of the profound friendship that bound the poet to Andrews, a British former Christian missionary. But nobody expressed to me hostility towards my Hitlerian faith—except Amala Bhen.

This one, to whom somebody thought it good to introduce to me “as European” on my arrival in Shantiniketan, was, at the end of hardly half an hour of conversation, extremely well versed on the “pan-Aryan” nature of Hitlerism such as I conceived it and always conceive it. She hastened to tell me—she who had come to the end of the Earth “not to see the shadow of a Nazi anymore”—that I was “worse than the whole pack rolled in one”—of those whom she wanted to avoid so much. Indeed, she told me, they marched in the streets of the cities of the Reich singing: “Today Germany belongs to us; tomorrow, the whole world!” but they thought especially of Germany, in spite of the words of their song. While I, while insisting on the deep identity of the Hitlerian spirit and of that of orthodox Hinduism, prepared the way for future military and moral conquest and the unlimited influence of the German Reich which would extend throughout Asia.

These remarks flattered me well beyond my merits. But the hostility of Margaret Spiegel, known as Amala Bhen—and undoubtedly that of “Govinda,” which he took good care not to present to me—appeared to me still confined to the non-Hindu element of the University of Shantinikétan.

It was surprised to learn a few months before the Second World War that the poet Rabindranath Tagore himself had sent to the Führer a telegram of protest against the invasion of “poor Czechoslovakia.” Why did he interfere?—he whom I could not help but exalt for his work as an artist. Didn’t he realize that it was especially the poor Germans of the Sudetenland who had the right to be protected? Didn’t he know that Czechoslovakia had never been anything but an artificial State, an assembly of elements that could not be more disparate, built of all parts to be used as permanent thorn in the side of German Reich? But what could I say? Would he have even been able to trace the map of it? Then why this indiscreet intervention? Had it been suggested to him—or inspired—by the foreigners, Christians or Jews, whom I have just named, and by others, all humanitarians and antiracists—at least anti-Aryans—who haunted Shantiniketan occasionally, or who lived there?

Or wasn’t I rather to admit that such an artist—who could reveal, under his pen of genius, something luminous and musical in a neo-Sanskrit language such as Bengali—a Brahmin who rejected en bloc the caste system, could only be anti-Hitlerian? The standpoint of the poet against the Defender of the Aryan élite of Europe, in a European conflict, shocked me even more as Rabindranath Tagore had a complexion of ivory and the most traditional features of the White race—physical signs of a relationship without mixture with those Aryan conquerors who transmitted to old India the Tradition of Hyperborea. But I could—I would—have thought that, if these same visible signs of Aryan nobility had not been able to prevent him from joining his voice to that of the despisers of the “Law of color and social function”—varnashramdharma—in India, it was not very probable that they had been able to become in him the occasion of an awakening of ancestral conscience, bound as it must with an unspecified sympathy to this European and modern form of “the Brahminic spirit” that is Hitlerism.

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On the other hand, I was always agreeably struck by the comprehension that I met, as a Hitlerist, from orthodox Hindus of all castes.

I have, at the beginning of these discussions, related the episode of the Sudra youth with the beautiful historical name of Khudiram[24] who showed more understanding of true values—and a more exact appreciation of the role of Adolf Hitler—than all Democrats of Europe and America put together.[25] I also quoted Satyananda Swami, the founder of the Hindu Mission, for whom, however, the creation of a Hindu front united against the influence of Islam, Christian missionaries, and Communism, counted much more even than the strict observance of orthodoxy. This one held our Führer to be an “incarnation of Vishnu—the only one in the West”[26]

I could, on this subject, multiply my recollections and recall, for example, the admirable Brahmin of Poona, Pandit Rajwadé, so versed in knowledge of the works of Nietzsche as if they were sacred texts (which he commented on, twice per week, in front of a narrow circle of disciples) and who professed deepest admiration for the “king chakravartin of Europe” come “to restore the true order” in a world adrift. I could also tell of another hardly ordinary man—less well-read perhaps, but gifted with a strange power of clairvoyance—whom I met at the beginning of the war in a friendly family, of which he was the guru or spiritual master. This sage said to me: “Your Führer can only be victorious because it is the Gods themselves who dictate his strategy to him. Every evening, he doubles himself and comes here to the Himalayas to receive their instructions.”

I wondered what Adolf Hitler would have thought of this unexpected explanation of the victories of the German army. I said to the holy man then: “It is, in this case, unquestionable that he will gain the war.”

“No,” he responded, “because there will come a time when his generals will reject his divine inspiration and will disobey him—will betray him.”

And he added: “It cannot be otherwise; if he is an Incarnation, he is not the supreme Incarnation—the last of this cycle”—Alas!

But that is not all. How could I forget the atmosphere of the orthodox Hindu families that I know best? That, for example, of the house of one of my brothers-in-law, then still alive, a doctor in Medinipur,[27] where I was at the time of the Norway campaign and the beginning of the France campaign? All agreed with enthusiasm with my suggestion to go to the temple of the Goddess Kali—to the “House of Kali,” as one says in Bengali—to return thanks to She who at the same time blesses and kills for the triumphal advance of the soldiers of great German Reich. We went there in a procession, carrying offerings of rice, sugar, flour, fruits, scarlet garlands of flowers—in the absence of the blood sacrifice the idea of which the family rejected as much as me. I still recall accompanying a youth also proud of his Aryan descent, standing in front of the terrible Image with the curved saber. Inhaling the incense fumes, soothed by the enchanting musicality of the Sanskrit liturgical formulas, I sometimes closed my eyes to see better in spirit the imposing fresco of the procession of the German armored tanks along the roads of Europe. I intensely lived my role of unifier between the oldest living Aryan civilization of the East and this Aryan West that Adolf Hitler was in the process of conquering in order to return it to itself and to regenerate it. Then I looked over my nephews and nieces, and the young Brahmins, their neighbors and fellow students, who had accompanied me. And I dreamed of the day when I would finally see the new Emperor—the eternal Emperor—of the Twilight Lands [Abendland = West], awakened and emerged from his mysterious cave, and when, greeting him with my extended arm, I would say to him: “Mein Führer, I bring to you the allegiance of the élite of India!”

That did not appear an impossible dream then.

How could I forget the general joy in Calcutta—and undoubtedly also in the rest of the peninsula—at the news of the entry of the troops of Adolf Hitler into Paris, or, some twenty month later, with the news of the stunning advance of our Japanese allies to the border of Assam and beyond? The children themselves, newsvendors, their faces radiant, triumphantly threw to the public the names of the cities taken—every day the news: Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Rangoon, Mandalay, Akyab . . . Imphal, in Indian territory—one after the other. The colonial government had prohibited listening to German radio. People who understood German listened to it clandestinely. I know Hindus who lent their ears without comprehending a word of it—simply to hear the voice of the Führer. They felt that He who spoke to the Aryan world in an “Indo-European” language that was unknown to them was also addressing them—at least the racial élite of their continent.

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But still that is nothing. What is even more extraordinary is that this worship of the Führer has survived in this country after the downfall of Third Reich. I found it alive at the time of my stay in India from 1957 to 1960, and I find it again, to my joy and in spite of intensified Communist propaganda, in 1971, and that, I repeat, especially in the milieus most faithful to the Tradition.

In the book devoted to India in the “Small Planet” collection, the orientalist Madeleine Biardeau, herself definitely hostile to our Weltanschauung, is obliged to note it—with regret, not to say with bitterness. “In no country,” she writes, “did I hear more praise of Hitler. Germans are congratulated for the sole reason that they are his compatriots.”[28] And she is as obliged to admit that the resentment of the Hindus towards British domination—now finished anyway—does not suffice to explain this worship. The scholar has, underhandedly as one would expect it, an explanation that is suitable for her. The Hindu, she says, feels and honors the presence of the Divine in all that is “great”—even the “great in the evil.” In other words he is free of the moral dualism that still underlies, almost always, the value judgments supported by the man of West.

That is certainly true. But that is not a sufficient explanation. The only justification for this praise addressed to a foreign Aryan leader in India resides, not in the fact that the Hindu easily transcends moral dualism, but in the reason that explains this fact. This reason is to be sought in the attachment of the Hindu to the Tradition, in addition, in his acceptance of the sacred knowledge with complete confidence, even if he himself did not acquire it. It is in the name of this more than human science that he finds natural that, in certain circumstances, that which, on an average human scale, would seem “evil,” is not. It is in the light of the doctrines of necessary violence, exercised without passion “in the interest of the Universe”—i.e., of Life, not of “man”—it is in the light of the venerable Bhagavad-Gita, which proclaims the innocence of violence of this nature, that the orthodox Hindu can precisely see in the Master of the Third Reich—despite all the propaganda about concentration camps that has saturated all the rest of the men on this Earth for several decades—something other than “the incarnation of Evil.”

Moreover, it is impossible for him not to be struck by the similarity of spirit that exists between Hitlerism and, not, certainly, philosophies of non-violence, which were detached from the Brahminic trunk, or the sects of Hindu dissidents, but the most rigorous and oldest Brahminism. One and the other are centered on the idea of purity of blood and the unlimited transmission of healthy life—above all of the life of the racial élite; the life that allows the man who controls himself to rise to the level of a god. One and the other exalt war fought with an attitude of detachment—“war without hatred”[29]—because “nothing can be better to the Kshatriya”—or the perfect SS warrior—“than just combat.”[30] One and the other establish on the Earth—as do all the “traditional” doctrines as well—a visible order modelled on cosmic realities and cosmic Laws of life.

This worship of the Führer, surviving in India in spite of so much enemy propaganda well beyond the disaster of 1945, is, moreover, a proof—if one were in need of one—that Hitlerism, stripped of its contingent German expression, is also indeed attached to the primordial—Hyperborean—Tradition of which Brahminism seems to be the most ancient living form. It is undoubtedly attached to it by what has, in spite of the imposition of Christianity, survived in Germany of a very old and properly Germanic traditional form, rising from a common Source: the holy “Arctic fatherland” of the Vedas . . . and the Edda.

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It is impossible to say to what extent the Thulegesellschaft was in possession of this priceless heritage from the depths of the ages. No doubt some of its members—Dietrich Eckart, Rudolf Hess, and, of course, the Führer himself—were. One of the features specific to the initiate would be the capacity to simulate—at all times he considered it suitable to his designs—anger, madness, imbecility, or every another human state.[31] Now the Führer compelled himself—he says so himself—“to appear hard.” And his too famous paroxysms of rage—on which the enemy pounced with delight as a source of ridicule exploitable ad infinitum—was, according to Rauschning, “carefully premeditated” and “was intended to disconcert his entourage and to force them to capitulate.”[32] Hermann Rauschning, who at the time he wrote his book apparently hated his former Master, did not have any reason to destroy, as he does with the stroke of a pen, the legend that aimed at discrediting him in the eyes of more than one level-headed man. Or rather, if he had a reason, this could be, despite everything, a remnant of intellectual honesty.

As for Rudolf Hess, the comedy of “amnesia” that he so masterfully played during the Nuremberg Tribunal misled the most informed psychiatrists. And the “normal” tone, sometimes even playful, of his letters to his wife and his son[33]—which disconcerts the reader from a man more than thirty years a prisoner—suffices to prove his super-humanity. Indeed, only an initiate can write, after three decades in a cell, in the light and detached manner of a husband and father traveling far from his family for three weeks.

The Führer, according to all appearances, exceeded his Masters of the Thule Society (or anywhere else), and escaped the influence that some of them—one will never truly know which—would have liked to have on him. He had to do it, being sovereign, being one of the visages of He-who-returns.

And if abruptly the war took a bad course; if—what is at the very least disconcerting—the point of no return was Stalingrad, which, according to some, was even the site even of ancient Asgard, fortress of the Germanic Gods, it is undoubtedly because, for some hidden reason, it had to be so. And hadn’t the young Adolf Hitler had that revelation under the night sky, at the top of Freienberg, at the gates of his beloved town of Linz, at sixteen years of age?

The immediate material cause, or rather the occasion of the fatal turning, had to be not a fault of strategy on behalf of the Führer—it is recognized that he was never mistaken in this field—but some stiffening, as sudden as it was unfortunate, in his attitude vis-à-vis the adversary. Siegfried, the superman, once showed such pride fraught with consequences by refusing—so as not to seem to yield to a threat and therefore to fear—to return to the Rhine maidens the Ring that belonged to them by right. This gesture would have saved Asgard and the Gods. The refusal of the hero precipitated its downfall. The new Siegfried, undoubtedly, also not to appear “weak,” although no challenge had been launched against him, refused to exploit, as he certainly could, the goodwill of the people of the Ukraine—anti-communists, aspiring to their autonomy—who had initially received his soldiers as liberators.

Did he do it knowingly, realizing that the loss of the war, written in the stars from all eternity, was a catastrophe necessary for Germany and the entire Aryan world that only the test of fire could one day purify? It is something only the gods know. The speed with which Germany has, since the first years of the post-war period, taken the bait of material prosperity without any ideals, shows how much, in spite of the enthusiasm of the large National Socialist gatherings, it was only incompletely freed from its comfortable humanitarian moralism and superficially armed against Jewish influence, as well as profound “politics,” i.e., exerted in the field of the values.

It remains true that, in his famous Testament, the Führer calls upon the Aryans—all the Aryans, including the non-German ones—“of centuries to come,” exhorting them “to keep their blood pure,” to fight the doctrines of subversion, in particular Communism, and to remain confident of themselves and invincibly attached to the aristocratic ideal for which he himself fought. The National Socialist party can be dissolved; the name of the Führer can be proscribed, the faithful hunted down, forced into silence, dispersed. But Hitlerism, nourished from the Source of super-human knowledge, cannot die.

It also remains true that the men of the Ahnenerbe were not all, after 1945, hung as “war criminals” or killed with a bullet in the dungeons or the concentration camps of the victors. Some even seem to have enjoyed a strange immunity, as if a magic circle had surrounded them and protected them before the “judges” of the Nuremberg Tribunals.

The section of the Ahnenerbe that dealt in particular with esoteric doctrines had, according to André Brissaud, “eminent collaborators in the persons of Friedrich Hielscher, Wolfram Sievers, Ernst Jünger, and even of . . . Martin Buber, the Jewish philosopher.”[34] (Why not, indeed, if this Jew had reached a high degree of knowledge in “pure metaphysics,” and was not politically active? Doesn’t D. H. Lawrence write somewhere that “the flowers meet and mix their colors at the top”?[35]) André Brissaud “does not know” if Friedrich Hielscher was a member of the Thulegesellschaft. He presumes it. But he knows that this senior SS officer “certainly played a great role in the secret, esoteric activity of the Ahnenerbe, and had a great influence on his disciple, Doctor Wolfram Sievers,[36] Standartenführer SS and secretary-general of this Institute.” “At the time of the last trial in Nuremberg,” continues the historian of The Black Order, “Friedrich Hielscher, who was not prosecuted, testified in a curious manner: he made political diversions ‘to drown fish’ [to waste time] and made intentionally absurd racist remarks, but did not say anything of the Ahnenerbe. Sievers too did not speak. He listened to the evocation of his ‘crimes’ with an apparent detachment and heard himself condemned to death with total indifference. Hielscher obtained the Allies’ authorization to accompany Sievers to the gallows, and it was with him that the condemned said the prayers particular to a cult about which he never spoke, neither during interrogations, nor during his trial.”[37]

One cannot but wonder how many old SS members like Hielscher of some section of the Ahnenerbe—this guardian of the profound orthodoxy of Hitlerism, i.e., of the esotericknowledge that constitutes the base of it—escaped the revenge of the victors and live still today on the surface of our Earth, it does not matter where. There is perhaps in Germany even that one circle that one does not know because they carry the Tarnhelm of divine Siegfried: the helmet that allows the warrior to appear in whatever form he pleases and even to make himself invisible. It would be even more interesting to know how many young men less than twenty-five years old are already affiliated, in absolute secrecy, with the fraternity of the knights of the Black Order, whose “honor is loyalty,” and are preparing, under the direction of the elders, to climb the levels of initiation—or are, perhaps, the first climbers of it.

No book like that of André Brissaud, or René Allau, or anyone, will ever provide, on this point, the curious with information which they only have to find and which, once in their possession, would risk being spread sooner or later through irresponsible chattering. For true disciples of the Führer, who did or did not meet him in the visible world, the existence of such a top secret, pan-European, even pan-Aryan network, is not in doubt anymore. The raison d’être of this invisible and quiet fraternity is precisely to preserve the core of more than human traditional knowledge—on which Hitlerism is centered, and which ensures its perenniality. Sincere Hitlerists, but still without experience of initiation, will come there if the Masters, guardians of the faith, judge them worthy. But then they will not speak any more than Friedrich Hielscher or Wolfram Sievers, or so many others. “He who speaks does not know; he who knows does not speak,” said Lao-Tsu, whose wisdom remains intangible and whole, even if his country—most ancient China—rejects it today.