

THOMAS CARLYLE AND GERMAN NATIONAL SOCIALISM:  
A STUDY OF THE NAZI INTERPRETATION OF CARLYLE'S THOUGHT

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## INTRODUCTION

"Our wills and fates do so contrary run  
That our devices still are overthrown,  
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of  
our own."

- - Shakespeare

Much has been written about the influence of Thomas Carlyle's philosophy. Each world crisis brings him back into the news. He is undoubtedly good world copy. In 1924, John Kelman wrote:

It has been said of late years that this [Carlyle's dominating influence] is on the wane, and those who love him not have shown signs of preparing baked meats for his funeral. To them I would say one word quoting it from the excellent advice of The Letters of a Merchant to His Son: 'The first requisite for a successful funeral is a willing corpse.' Now Carlyle is anything but willing. The message which he preached with such persistency in his lifetime may indeed have its ebb and flow of public interest, like all other messages. Yet it has so great and vital a hold upon the essential things, that it bears all the appearance of making itself inevitable as an integral part of the world's future thought.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Kelman is justified in making such a statement, for with the rise of Fascism and Nazism Thomas Carlyle's philosophy once more became a subject for controversy.

The Nazis, recognizing Carlyle as a kindred spirit whose ideas had antedated theirs, used selections from his writings to authenticate their doctrine. Zeitschrift fur Franzosischen und Englischen (1934) carried an article, "Carlyle und der Fuhrergedanke" by W. Keller, in

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<sup>1</sup> John Kelman, Prophets of Yesterday and Their Message for To-day, pp. 39-40.

which he praised Carlyle and Hitler. In 1935, more Nazi commendation was accorded Carlyle by W. Vollrath in his Thomas Carlyle und H. St. Chamberlain, Zwei Freunde Deutschlands. A Nazi party-line book, Carlyle und der Nationalsozialismus by Theodor Deimel, was published in 1936. Deimel lauded Carlyle as a great prophet of national socialism although Carlyle lived too early to understand racial science. Dr. Joseph Goebbels held Carlyle up for universal adoration emblematic of the Nazi soul and the Nazi state.<sup>2</sup>

Not only were the Germans applauding Carlyle for the social and political doctrine he preached, but the English-speaking people were also noticing him again and assailing him with mighty accusations.

William Lyon Phelps declared:

Carlyle had always exalted Germany and the Strong Man; so much so that one book, which I reviewed recently in these columns held Carlyle responsible for the war!<sup>3</sup>

Joseph Ellis Baker in his article, "Carlyle Rules the Reich" (1933), advanced the idea that comprehension of the Hitler philosophy by the Anglo-Saxon mind lies through Carlyle's essays. He claimed that Hitler's Mein Kampf "might be treated in a footnote to our reading of one of the best-known writers of English prose,"<sup>4</sup> Thomas Carlyle. Baker likened every point of Hitler's doctrine to Carlyle's and stated that only in his hostility to the Jews did Hitler go far beyond Carlyle. Cuthbert Wright

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<sup>2</sup> Cuthbert Wright, "Carlyle and the Present Crisis," The Commonweal, Vol. 38, (June 18, 1943), p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> William Lyon Phelps, "As I Like It," Scribner, Vol. 93, (January, 1933), p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Ellis Baker, "Carlyle Rules the Reich," Saturday Review of Literature, Vol. 10, (November 25, 1933), p. 291.

forcefully criticized Thomas Carlyle's philosophy:

After the personally charming and apparently blameless philosopher comes the man of action, the war-lord perhaps the Führer who translates the philosophy into terms of blood and iron and fire and sword. After Robespierre came Bonaparte. After Nietzsche and Gobineau and Houston Chamberlain and, last but not least, Carlyle has come that to which their whole creation moved — the Nazi State.<sup>5</sup>

Wright classified Carlyle as a radical who wrote about a pagan deity, Odin, and a great heresiarch, Mohammed, and who caused the readers to rub their eyes upon finding that the ideal priest as Carlyle saw him was not Saint Leo, who turned back the Huns; nor Becket, who died for the church; but Luther, who tore down the church in Germany, and Knox, who did the same in Scotland. He showed that Carlyle preached might makes right and ended his article by stating that Carlyle's "favorite doctrine of the Strong Man, the hero as natural king because he can and must act in a sphere far removed from soft effusive teaching, ought to enthrone him forever among the contemporary German gods."<sup>6</sup> Eric Russell Bentley declared, "Carlyle's prescription of silence, prayer, obedience, and emigration sounds like the program for the Gestapo."<sup>7</sup>

It is readily admitted that Carlyle's philosophy does emerge as rather startling in significance when viewed in the light of these Nazi acclamations and English attacks. The fact that this nineteenth-century Scotchman apparently came so near in his social-political views to the twentieth-century national socialism of Germany seems to have blinded

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<sup>5</sup> Wright, op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>7</sup> Eric Russell Bentley, "The Premature Death of Thomas Carlyle," American Scholar, Vol. 15, (January, 1946), p. 69.



the modern reader to his moral and religious appeal. Such a separation was of definite advantage for the propaganda agents in the totalitarian state of Germany. There seems, however, to be no advantage in the English-speaking people's branding one of their most effective and intellectually vigorous essayists as a Nazi before re-evaluating his writings in the light of the Nazi interpretation. Perhaps the thoughts of Nazism are Carlyle's, but the ends are none of his own.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to determine in how far the Nazis either used Carlyle fairly or misinterpreted him. This involves three major problems: (1) to discover what selections from Carlyle's writings were printed and sold in Germany since 1934; (2) to discover what interpretation was made of these selections; and (3) to determine whether the interpretation made by the Nazis was truly representative of Carlyle's philosophy.

## SELECTIONS PRINTED AND SOLD IN GERMANY SINCE 1934

Thomas Mann states that "long before the Nazi regime, Carlyle enjoyed great popularity among educated German circles."<sup>1</sup> This popularity sprang from the fact that his philosophy in general was "so closely related to a certain type of German mentality."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Mann writes:

In my youth already, there existed numerous and popular German editions of his works. I name in particular his book about the French revolution, his biography of Frederick the Great, and his work on heroes and hero-worship.<sup>3</sup>

Thus at the beginning of the Nazi rise to power, Carlyle held a place of importance as an essayist in Germany, a fortunate one for propaganda purposes, since one of the techniques used by the Nazi propagandists was to search out reputable authorities, statistics, and mouthpieces to give respectability to their doctrine.<sup>4</sup> It follows naturally that they would make much of the possibilities in the writings of a man already loved and revered by the German public; and the great Victorian, Thomas Carlyle, seems on first consideration to be ready made for their purposes.

His French Revolution, Frederick the Great, and On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, popular on the Nazi reading list,

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Mann, Letter to the writer, (August 2, 1948).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> J. T. Gullahorn, "Propaganda Techniques on German Documents during World War II," Sociology and Social Research, Vol. 30 (March, 1946), 292.

were reprinted and sold in Germany since 1934. Special attention, however, was given by the Nazis to particular selections from his works, because many of his political and social points of view when divested of their moral appeal and isolated from the whole of his writings appear as stabilizing forerunners of Nazism. Such selections from his works were published under the title of Heldentum und Macht, at Leipzig, in 1941. This publication is a translation of selections from Thomas Carlyle's Past and Present, Chartism, Latter-Day Pamphlets, Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, and a translation in full of his Shooting Niagara: and After.

The selections are not printed as a whole in the order in which Carlyle arranged them for publication but are rearranged according to the methods used by the Nazi Propaganda Agency in its battle of indoctrination. The first selection used is Chapter XVII, Book II from Past and Present, "The Beginnings," which advocates man's throwing off dead formulas. It is given under the same title in the German version. Following this is a second selection from Past and Present, Chapter I, Book I -- Proem, "Midas," under the double title of "Seeming Power and Anarchy" and "The Power of Money: Midas."

The next section, "The Revolt of the Laborer," embraces nine of the ten chapters from Chartism: "Condition of England," "New Poor-Law," "Finest Peasantry in the World," "Right and Might," "Laissez-Faire," "Not Laissez-Faire," "New Eras," "Parliamentary Radicalism," and "Impossible."

The next selection is the first of the Latter-Day Pamphlets. In the English, the title is "The Present Time," but in the German it is

divided into two parts. The first part is published under the title "The Democracy: The Present Time." The second part is called "Speech of the Prime Minister."

"The New Formation of Might" is used as an over-all title for the next three selections. The first of the three is from Past and Present, "The One Institution," Book IV, Chapter III, and is published in the German as "Soldierism—The One Institution." The second selection in this group is "The New Downing-Street," from Letter-Day Pamphlets, called in the German "The State--The New Downing-Street." The third German title is "Nobility and Guidance: The Niagara Down and Afterwards" and is a translation in full of Shooting Niagara: and After.

Two selections are published under the title "Fire under the Ashes: The Heroism." They are "The Sphinx," Chapter II, Book I, from Past and Present and "Morrison's Pill," Chapter IV, Book I, also from Past and Present. In the German translation "Morrison's Pill" is given the title "The Universalmedicine."

Under the last section entitled "Hero and Leadership" another selection from Past and Present, "Hero-Worship," Chapter VI, Book I, and "The Hero as King—Cromwell and Napoleon" from Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History are found.

# INTERPRETATION MADE OF SELECTIONS

To gain a full understanding of the interpretation placed on Thomas Carlyle's philosophy it is necessary to note briefly that as propaganda minister, Dr. Goebbels, in 1934, seized all copies of Nazi-disapproved books and burned them. Translations of Thomas Carlyle's works in publication at that time were not on that list. Under the control of Dr. Goebbels the Reich Chamber of Culture was set up by the Nazis to develop all literature, art, and music for the glorification of national socialism. Literature came directly under the Reich Literary Chamber. One of the striking features of its plan was, after the destruction of all works not complimentary to the Nazi doctrine, to encourage the vogue for translating foreign literature which might be interpreted in such a manner that it would strenghten the national socialistic idea.<sup>1</sup> The selections from Carlyle printed and sold in Germany since 1934 must, therefore, have received the complete approbation of the Reich Literary Chamber as a confirmation of the Nazi doctrine.

Theodor Deimel in his Carlyle und der Nationalsozialismus writes that Carlyle and national socialism show

the strong as bringing forth the fullness of mankind. Both desire to restore the life to right living of which the intellect had robbed it. They want once more to restore to the soul its strong germinating powers which were surpressed by the ruling power or 'the Reason.' The stability of society Carlyle saw, just as national socialism, not through forced constitution and laws but only by a strong band of united thought. Both know that the inclination toward a leader devotion and the true sacrifice toward a leader cast deeper roots

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen H. Roberts, The House That Hitler Built, pp. 244-245.

in man than that required by a theoretical right to freedom. In the field of economy, Carlyle won over in union with national socialism the lamented theory of the eternity of economy brought about by the belief in the full strength of the will of man. The system of undiminished wage is put forth as a measure of orderly living. To them the worth of man is more than the accomplishment of the machine and higher than the worth of money stands the welfare of the people. Instead of doubtful worth of civilization they bring forth the consideration of the natural strength of blood and soil.<sup>2</sup>

This statement makes clear the fact that the Nazis used Carlyle's writing to substantiate the idea that a few persons were superior, that such persons should be designated as the leaders, and that the rights of freedom should be replaced by leader devotion and sacrifice. These ideas all found expression in The French Revolution, Frederick the Great, and Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History.

In Heldentum und Macht, which was published five years after Deimel's Carlyle und der Nationalsozialismus, the Nazis had a collection of ideas much more emphatic than any expressed in the earlier Nazi publications. Michael Freund in his foreword to Heldentum und Macht states that "people talked about the return of Carlyle in the mental revolution of the post-war time. What good is said about him is still true. He is a moral power in Europe."<sup>3</sup>

Each selection used in this book lends itself readily to an interpretation complimentary to the Nazi doctrine. This doctrine may be summarized in the following manner: national socialism emphasizes nationalism, socialism, Germanism, and the working class; it combines an appeal to extreme and exclusive nationalism and chauvinistic expansionism with a revolutionary call to the masses; it proclaims itself an implacable

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<sup>2</sup> Theodor Deimel, Carlyle und der Nationalsozialismus, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Carlyle, Heldentum und Macht, Michael Freund, foreword, p. VII.

enemy of liberalism and democracy, of individual rights, and of all movements of international co-operation and peace; it stresses the subordination of the individual to the state, the inequality of men and races, the right of the strong to rule the weak, and the necessity of the principle of blind and unswerving obedience to leaders appointed from above; it praises military virtues; it despises and rejects pacifism, humanitarianism, and charity; it glorifies hatred and conquest; and it aims at the transformation of the whole nation into an armed camp, an instrument of perpetual readiness for warfare.

It will be noted not only that the selections of Heldentum und Macht may be interpreted as stabilizers of Nazism, but also that the style in which they are written is peculiarly suited to Nazi propaganda. Cazamian describes this style well:

To an astounding degree Carlyle had the faculty for coining memorable formulae, formulae which impress upon a reader's mind the general tendency, the profile so to speak, of new ideas; and along with his faculty went a penchant, early developed, to repeat his formulae with some obstinacy. With his imaginative and historical talent and his prophetic genius he was able to draw from what was, after all, a very simple process, effects of remarkable power.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly this style would measure up to Hitler's demands that propaganda force a doctrine upon an entire people<sup>5</sup> and to the over-all national socialistic requirement that propaganda should say very little but repeat this very little forever.<sup>6</sup>

"The Beginnings" is used as the first selection in Heldentum und

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<sup>4</sup> Louis Cazamian, Carlyle, p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 849.

<sup>6</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 16, p. 162A.

Macht because it satisfies many of Hitler's demands: the untiring presentation of an idea designed to win followers, the destruction of existing conditions, and the permeation of this condition with a new doctrine.<sup>7</sup> "The Beginnings" gives startling expression to the key of the Nazi propaganda: to tear down and rid the world of dead formulas so that nationalities may clothe the man; to honor the forgotten brave men; and to work for the glory of the nation.

"Midas," besides being used as a criticism of England's form of government, can be interpreted as a support for the German autarchy, economy of self-sufficiency. Under the autarchy there would be no hundred thousand sitting in workhouses and other hundred thousands with not yet even workhouses to sit in. There would be no human faces glooming discordantly, disloyally on one another.

The nine chapters from Chartism provided the Nazis with a revolutionary call to the masses just as the German section entitled "The Revolt of the Laborer" shows. And what an emphatic call these chapters are when they fall into the hands of a reader who does not have the English historical background which caused Thomas Carlyle to write Chartism! Here is found ample support for the destruction of liberalism and democracy. In "Condition of England" Carlyle defines chartism as a bitter discontent grown fierce and mad, as a wrong condition and therefore the wrong disposition of the working classes. It could not be left to the collective folly of the nation. He expresses in "New Poor-Law" his desire for the supervisal by the central government as an assurance of justice for the poor man who is struggling for a just wage not only in

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<sup>7</sup> Hitler, op. cit., pp. 849-51.



money alone but in a manlike place and relation. After the struggle through the worst siege of unemployment in German history, "Finest Peasantry in the World" is a perfect stabilizer for the Nazi Labor Front.

"Laissez-Faire" shows that Carlyle advocated the right of the strong to rule the weak just as German national socialism did. He declared that the right of the ignorant man to be guided by the wiser, to be, gently or forcibly, held in the true course by the wiser, is the most indisputable of all 'rights of man.' This, to Carlyle and national socialism, is the meaning of freedom, and it is a sacred right and duty on both sides. He saw the multitudes clamouring for democracy, yet he declared that all men of good sight can see that in democracy can lie no finality. It can exist nowhere except where no government is wanted save that of the parish-constable as in America. Democracy, Carlyle believed, never yet was able to accomplish much work beyond the canceling of its own accomplishments. Napoleon and Cromwell had to become despots over democracy before they could work out the obscure purpose of democracy itself.

Both Carlyle and the Nazis declared individual freedom to be a myth. The only real freedom recognized in Nazi Germany was the freedom to serve as a member of a community adhering to the theory of Blood and Soil and Folk, upon which the strength of Nazi Germany depended.<sup>8</sup> Carlyle writes:

It is for a manlike place and relation, in this world where he sees himself a man, that he struggles. At bottom, may we not say, it is

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<sup>8</sup> Roberts, op. cit., p. 57.

even for this, that guidance and government, which he cannot give himself, which in our complex world he can no longer do without, might be afforded him? <sup>9</sup>

"Rights and Might" may be interpreted to emphasize the idea much used by the Nazis that real injustice was the hurt inflicted on the moral self, and that revenge must be had. Here also they found utterance of their formula that it is not what a man outwardly has or wants that constitutes his happiness or misery, but it is the injustice that is insupportable. This is the belief that enabled the German people to suffer restrictions of their liberties and a lowered standard of living because they thought the result would be the restoration of Germany's national pride and the revenge of the injustices she had suffered at Versailles. "Rights and Might" may also be used as a sanction of conquest. The Nazis were doing all in their power to glorify hatred and conquest.

The ideas that the rights of man are of little worth ascertaining in comparison to the might of man and that man's notion of rights varies according to place and time are found in "Rights and Might." "New Eras" lends itself, however, more readily to the Nazi idea of might and rights. Carlyle, in this chapter, points out that new eras do come and that with a change of era there had to be a change of practice and outward relations brought about, if not peaceably, then by violence. Rights, as Carlyle saw them, were might correctly-articulated. These statements are almost identical with Dr. Goebbels's idea that "the end justifies any means." <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Carlyle, Chartism, p. 268.

<sup>10</sup> Roberts, op. cit., p. 362.

"Parliamentary-Radicalism" furnishes a basis for criticism of the ballot-box. Carlyle showed that extended suffrage is the English panacea for all that goes wrong and that so far, through it the poor discontented worker had gained only shadows of things. This chapter also contains two other ideas popular with the Nazis: that each man has his superiors whether he recognize them or not and that obedience is the primary duty of man.

The last chapter of Chartism calls for a girding up for actual doing, universal education, and emigration. According to Deimel, Nazi Germany did gird up and actually put into practice the philosophy presented by Carlyle. "He had the idea which, brought into action, laid the groundwork for a new Germany."<sup>11</sup> Hitler stressed along with Carlyle the importance of education:

It is precisely our German people, that today, broken down, lies defenseless against the kicks of the rest of the world, who need that suggestive force that lies in self-confidence. But this self-confidence has to be instilled into the young fellow citizen from childhood on. His entire education and development has to be directed at giving him the conviction of being absolutely superior to others.<sup>12</sup>

Emigration was used by the Germans through their Blood, Soil, and Folk, which demanded recognition of German racial borders.<sup>13</sup>

"The Present Time" from Latter-Day Pamphlets was used to tear down old formulas, to call attention to the new eras, to criticize democracy with its universal suffrage as being impossible. Carlyle urged that the

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<sup>11</sup> Deimel, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>12</sup> Hitler, op. cit., p. 618.

<sup>13</sup> Roberts, op. cit., p. 50.

confused embroilments of human clamor and folly be deciphered. Here he reasoned that as soon as America used up her waste land, democracy would not be successful, and that then America's battle would have to be fought. In Carlyle's sight, America had accomplished nothing except to double its population every twenty years and beget eighteen millions of the greatest bores ever seen in this world before. Such statements as these would naturally rate high in the propaganda program so effectively carried out for the purpose of belittling the accomplishments of all democratic nations. Carlyle also stressed the inequality of man and the organization of labor in "The Present Time."

"Speech of the British Prime-Minister" helped the Nazis poke fun at enfranchisement, emancipation, freedom, suffrage, and civil and religious liberties. It also furnished arguments for industrial regiments and the organization of labor.

"The One Institution" also advocated the organization of labor in accordance with military regulations. It furnished effective propaganda in developing a sense of the importance of the army and praise for any military virtue in government. For who can despair of governments when he passes a soldier's guardhouse? The German Labor Front's emphasis on co-operation between the employers and the employees through legislation is expressed by Carlyle in this chapter.

"The New Downing-Street" condemns the deficit in the ruling class and the lethargy of governments. Here the Nazis found expressed their idea that the gifted souls who direct all the energies upon the real and living interests of the nation should be the rulers without regard to rank. Both Carlyle and the Nazis believed that the kind of ruler

is more important than all the constitutions, forms of government, and political methods among men. No ballot-boxes, according to them, could select a worthy ruler, for only the man of worth can recognize worth in men. They both advocated finding skilled leaders for the new era and loyally following the leaders wheresoever they led.

A second philosophy held in common by the Nazis and Carlyle and expressed in "The New Downing-Street" is that governments have something to do besides keep the peace. To Goering who advocated a policy of guns instead of butter the following statement by Carlyle would certainly be quite satisfying:

Foreign wars are sometimes unavoidable. We ourselves, in the course of natural merchandising and laudable business, have now and then got into ambiguous situations; into quarrels which needed to be settled, and without fighting would not settle. Sugar Islands, Spice Islands, Indias, Canadas,---these, by the real decree of Heaven, were ours; and nobody would or could believe it, till it was tried by cannon law, and so proved. Such cases happen. <sup>14</sup>

In Mein Kampf, Hitler wrote:

He who wants to live should fight, therefore, and he who does not want to battle in this world of eternal struggle does not deserve to be alive. <sup>15</sup>

In "The New Downing-Street," Thomas Carlyle expresses the same idea much more effectively:

Or indeed, all citizens of the Commonwealth, as is the right and the interest of every free man in this world, will have themselves trained to arms; each citizen ready to defend his country with his own body and soul,---he is not worthy to have a country otherwise. <sup>16</sup>

A government rushing its people headlong into a war less than a quarter

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<sup>14</sup> Carlyle, Latter-Day Pamphlets, pp. 392-3.

<sup>15</sup> Hitler, op. cit., p. 397.

<sup>16</sup> Carlyle, Latter-Day Pamphlets, p. 395.

of a century after they had suffered crushing defeat had need of such a statement.

Two other policies which may be interpreted as complimentary to the Nazi doctrine are expressed in this selection. Carlyle's demand that the minister of education be free of "the wreck of moribund 'religions'" and "clear ahead of all that; steering free and piously towards his divine goal under eternal stars!"<sup>17</sup> is exactly as the Nazi government planned its educational program. In accordance with his policy, the Nazis also sought out, educated, and bred for leadership.

The German propagandist could wish for no better condemnation of democracy than Thomas Carlyle's Shooting Niagara: and After. It is a torrential depreciatory outburst against the equality of men and governments operated on such a basis.

Following this condemnation is "The Sphinx," which supports the Nazi program for rebuilding Germany. Both Carlyle and the Nazis likened life to the sphinx who asks each nation to answer the riddle of destiny. Foolish men cannot answer it right; therefore, nations perish. In all battles each man prospers according to his rights. Nazi Germany believed that she was planning carefully and that the Third Reich would never perish. At this writing it seems rather ironic that "The Sphinx" should have been included in Heldentum und Macht since history has proved that Nazi Germany did not answer the riddle.

"The Universalmedicine" may be interpreted as encouragement to the people during the radical changes being made in the Nazi regime. Car-

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 396.

lyle declared that there was no Morrison's pill which could be swallowed to cure the ills of the world. Only radical universal alteration of regimen and the way of life could effect the cure. The world would of necessity have to be ridded of quacks and sham-heroes.

Both "Hero-Worship" from Past and Present and "The Hero as King--- Cromwell and Napoleon" fit the Nazi pattern in that they advocate blind unswerving obedience to the hero-kings. Once the hero comes forward, he should merit leader devotion and true sacrifice from the people. The Nazi aim in selecting Cromwell and Napoleon from Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History is obvious. The following statement alone would warrant Nazi publication:

Find in any country the Ablest Man that exists there; raise him to the supreme place, and loyally reverence him: you have a perfect government for that country; no ballot-box, parliamentary eloquence, voting, constitution-building, or other machinery whatsoever can improve it a whit. It is in the perfect state; and ideal country. The Ablest Man; he means also the truest hearted, justest, the Noblest Man: what he tells us to do must be precisely the wisest, fittest, that we could anywhere or anyhow learn;-- the thing which it will in all ways behove us, with right loyal thankfulness, and nothing doubting, to do! Our doing and life were then, so far as government could regulate it well regulated; that were the ideal of constitutions. <sup>18</sup>

The very evident purpose in publishing Heldentum und Macht is threefold: (1) to tear down old formulas; (2) to issue anew the revolutionary call to the masses; and (3) to present new formulas. Thus it meets the regulations of the Nazi method of propaganda and presents formulas in accordance with the German national socialistic party.

To sum up, the Nazi formula interpretations found in their own selec-

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<sup>18</sup> Carlyle, Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, pp. 161-162.

tion, which are indubitably Thomas Carlyle's ideas, are the following: to oppose liberalism and democracy; to praise military virtue and develop a sense of the importance of the army; to justify conquest and perpetual readiness of the whole nation for warfare; to interpret right and might synonymously; to favor restricted individual liberties; to educate towards the nation's goal; to prove that not constitutions and laws, but the strong man ruler could stabilize society; and to advocate blind unswerving obedience to leaders appointed from above.



# THE NAZI INTERPRETATION OF CARLYLE IS NOT TRULY REPRESENTATIVE

In view of the Nazi interpretations, all of which contain truth, it would be useless to protest that Carlyle did not advocate principles which became a part of German national socialism. Yet, to say that his writing as a whole sanctioned the Nazi form of national socialism would brand him as the noisiest of hypocrites. It would disregard both his real morality and uprightness. It would give the lie to his personal qualities reflected over and over again in his writing: his sincerity, his earnestness, his integrity, his independence, his humanitarianism, his hatred of sham, cant, and affectation.

Furthermore, Frederick the Great and The French Revolution can hardly be called representative of Thomas Carlyle's moral and social philosophy, since, one the biography of a man, carries the philosophy of that man, and the other, the history of a social upheaval, although marred somewhat with personal bias, still gives expression to the history of the retribution France actually paid for her social ills rather than the writer's philosophy. Chartism and Shooting Niagara: and After were written under conditions not conducive to truly representative ideas. However, Past and Present, Latter-Day Pamphlets, and Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, all used extensively by the Nazis, will furnish ample basis for the re-evaluation of Carlyle's views on moral, social, and political problems in the light of the present interpretations.

When one takes into consideration the indignation expressed by the

English-speaking peoples toward Carlyle's doctrine, he is surprised that in their condemnation of him as a philosopher whose ideas gave rise to the Nazi blood, iron, fire, and sword, they made little attempt to understand Carlyle. Even so great a scholar as Herbert Grierson in a book entitled Carlyle and Hitler made no attempt to show the difference in Carlyle's philosophy and the use the Nazis made of it. Just as it is possible to fix with approximate stability some of Carlyle's views as supporting all out national socialism, it is possible, also, to find those which condemn the Nazi execution of the national socialistic program to the utmost degree, thus proving that the Nazi interpretation is not truly representative.

The first, and perhaps the most outstanding, difference between Carlyle's doctrine and that of national socialism is their views on religion. Despite Hitler's statement made in Mein Kampf that the two religious denominations were equally valuable pillars for the existence of the German people,<sup>1</sup> everything within the power of the Nazis was brought into play in their effort to stifle the church's opposition to their program. They battled diligently to place the worship, not of a divine God, but of a centralized state, race, and party leader above all else.

Carlyle might have upheld the leaders' rights to tear down the church's opposition to Nazism for the same reasons that he criticized the religions of his own day. Even a cursory reading of any of his works, however, will testify that at the mention of the idea that state, race, or party leader was to supersede God in importance, he would have

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<sup>1</sup> Hitler, op. cit., pp. 479-485.

gone into a tirade of condemnation heretofore undreamed of. A man who lamented at France's casting "out its benighted blind Priesthood into destruction"<sup>2</sup> and who wrote:

That one whole generation of thinkers should be without a religion to believe, or even to contradict; that Christianity, in thinking France, should as it were fade away so long into a remote extraneous tradition, was one of the saddest facts connected with the future of that country.<sup>3</sup>

could never be truly interpreted as a forerunner of the Nazi doctrine, no matter how many Nazi points of view could be found in his social philosophy.

In his Sartor Resartus, Thomas Carlyle enunciated his God-inspired doctrine, and nothing, even when he had reached the despair of Shooting Niagara, ever supplanted it. His moral philosophy hinges wholly on his early religious training and his continued study of the Bible. Even history to Carlyle was a part of the Living God. No one can fail to note this difference in Carlyle and Nazism.

Theodor Deimel in his Carlyle und der Nationalsozialismus readily admits that Carlyle's religious philosophy has no place in German national socialism:

Carlyle stressed most in everything his religious ideas. In him are bound up in a personal tug of war the German idealism with the Scottish Puritan method of thought. In this last element, which always remained in him even after his change from the religion of his youth, is he foreign to national socialism. In spite of his fight against Western Jewish formula and the old Jewish clothes from which Carlyle would have Christianity freed, the dusty idea of Calvinistic old testament, of the terrible wrath of God and his

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<sup>2</sup> Carlyle, Chartism, p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

adversary, the devil, rules him.<sup>4</sup>

Here is proof that the Nazis themselves, in making full use of Carlyle's philosophy, rejected his religious teachings as foreign to their program.

Other than that of religion the widest breach between Carlyle's philosophy and the Nazi doctrine is found in their different views on humanitarianism. At the outset, German national socialism rejected any form of humanitarianism. The execution of the program proved that the Nazi leaders considered the human race as so many ants to be managed or stamped on and humaneness as a mixture of stupidity and cowardice. Just how far this rejection was carried has been witnessed in the mass exterminations at Dachau.

Thomas Carlyle wrote:

A shade more rational is that of those other benefactors of the species, who counsel that in each parish, in some central locality, instead of the Parish Clergyman, there might be established some Parish Exterminator; or say a Reservoir of Arsenic, kept up at the public expense, free to all parishioners; for which Church the rates probably would not be grudged.---Ah, it is bitter jesting on such a subject. One's heart is sick to look at the dreary chaos, and valley of Jehosaphat, scattered with the limbs and souls of one's fellow-men; and no divine voice, only creaking of hungry vultures, inarticulate bodeful ravens, horn-eyed parrots that do articulate proclaiming, Let these bones live!<sup>5</sup>

A man who penned such opposition to a proposal for extermination as a remedy for over-population as that would never have brooked the Nazi killings. Not once but repeatedly does Carlyle proclaim his broad human sympathy.

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<sup>4</sup> Deimel, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>5</sup> Carlyle, Chartism, p. 325.

This fact must not be forgotten in saying that Carlyle and the Nazis preached the inequalities of man. It must be remembered that the Reich leaders stopped just where the result was objectionable in justice to all who did not find favor in their sight. Carlyle after declaring men unequal demanded justice and recognition of the value of each mortal whether in favor or not. He wrote of the Irish, "There abides he, in his squalor and unreason, in his falsity and drunken violence, as the ready-made nucleus of degradation and disorder."<sup>6</sup> Such persons could command very little equality, yet Carlyle called out for society to help them. He presented vividly proof of his belief in justice to all mortals in his story of the poor Irish widow, who proved her sisterhood when she contracted typhus-fever, died, and infested her lane, thus causing seventeen other persons to die there in consequence.<sup>7</sup> He cited the fact that even in Black Dohney sisterhood is not forgotten to the typhus-fever length. The black woman and her daughter ministered to the horrible white object which had sunk down to die under the Negro Village-Tree.<sup>8</sup> He demanded justice for the starving mill workers, and admonished the rich mill owner that cash-payment is not the sole relation of human beings. With the scathing comment, "What a committee of ways and means!" he condemned a society wherein a father and mother of necessity were driven to kill poor little starveling Tom for the three pounds

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 272.

<sup>7</sup> Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 203.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 203-204.

and eight shillings.<sup>9</sup>

It would be hard indeed to reconcile the Nazi treatment of non-Aryans with these statements of Carlyle:

All men, we must repeat, were made by God, and have immortal souls in them. The Sanspotato is of the selfsame stuff as the super-finest Lord Lieutenant. Not an individual Sanspotato human scarecrow but had a Life given him out of Heaven, with Eternities depending on it; for once and no second time.<sup>10</sup>

and

Every mortal can do something: this let him faithfully do, and leave with assured heart the issue to a Higher Power!<sup>11</sup>

If Carlyle were truly in harmony with German national socialism, the Sanspotato's misery would never have been noticed. The individual had meaning only as a member of the Volk in Nazi Germany. Poor Sanspotato, poor non-Aryan, these among the Nazis had no value whatsoever.

In one sense the whole of Chartism may be called a plea for the betterment of degraded humanity. Here a definite argument in favor of the statement that the Nazi interpretation is not truly representative of Carlyle's philosophy may be gained by noting that nine of the twenty-two selections in Heldentum und Macht are from Chartism. As has been stated before, Chartism with no historical background takes on quite a different and startling significance. As it is read, one should understand that Thomas Carlyle wrote it because he feared that agitation to get the People's Charter through Parliament might lead to a workingman's revolt, which would completely destroy his beloved England. From first-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Carlyle, Chartism, p. 270.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

hand study he was thoroughly familiar with England's laissez-faire policy, and in his violent, extravagant style of writing he attempted to awaken the English people to the dangers. Just as thoroughly was he familiar with the injustices against the working man occasioned by the sole cash-nexus, and he cried out against these injustices not just for the Englishman but for the Irishman, the Scotchman, and all men who lived under the rule of England. Yet this plea for better wages, better working conditions, better understanding and therefore better relations between the employer and the employee from a humanitarian point of view would not be that to which the Nazi ear would be tuned. "Liberty when it becomes the 'Liberty to die by starvation' is not so divine!"<sup>12</sup> would have an entirely different interpretation in the Nazi mind to that for which it was intended. Thomas Carlyle as the humanitarian was as foreign to German national socialism as his religious teachings were admitted to be.

Without considering any other difference a contrast drawn between Carlyle's idea of right and might and that of the Nazis would definitely necessitate a correction of the statement that his whole creation moved toward the Nazi state. His French Revolution was written to warn England that accumulated wrongs brought on their own retributions which Carlyle recognized as divine might no matter how human the agents of retribution might be. Might for Carlyle meant right; might for the Nazis made right. His clearest definition of mights and rights may be found in Past and Present. While discussing fighting he wrote:

Mights which do in the long-run, and forever will in this just

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<sup>12</sup> Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 204.

Universe in the long-run, mean Rights. <sup>13</sup>

and

Victory is the aim of each. But deep in the heart of the noble man it lies forever legible, that as an Invisible Just God made him, so will and must God's justice and this only, were it never so invisible, ultimately prosper in all controversies and enterprises and battles whatsoever. <sup>14</sup>

His is a simple faith. If a thing is right, in the long-run, might proves it right; if it is not right, no might in the universe can make it right.

Note this incident which is recorded in Past and Present:

The case was this. Adam de Cokefield, one of the chief feudatories of St. Edmund, and a principal man in the Eastern Counties, died, leaving large possessions, and for heiress a daughter of three months; who by clear law, as all men know became thus Abbot Samson's ward; whom accordingly he proceeded to dispose of to such person as seemed fittest. But now King Richard has another person in view, to whom the little ward and her great possessions were a suitable thing. He, by letter, requested that Abbot Samson will have the goodness to give her to this person. Abbot Samson, with deep humility, replies that she is already given. New letters from Richard, of severer tenor; answered with new deep humilities, with gifts and entreaties, with no promise of obedience. King Richard's ire is kindled; messengers arrive at St. Edmundsbury, with emphatic message to obey or tremble! Abbot Samson, wisely silent as to the King's threats, makes answer: 'The King can send if he will, and seize the ward: force and power he has to do his pleasure, and abolish the whole Abbey. But I, for my part, never can be bent to wish this he seeks, nor shall it by me be ever done. For there is danger lest such things be made a precedent of, to the prejudice of my successors. Videat Altissimus, Let the Most High look on it. Whatsoever thing shall befall I will patiently endure.'

Such was Abbot Samson's deliberate decision. Why not? Coeur-de-Lion is very dreadful, but not the dreadfullest. Videat Altissimus. I reverence Coeur-de-Lion to the marrow of my bones, and will in all right things be homo suus; but it is not, properly speaking with terror, with any fear at all. On the whole, have I not looked on the face of 'Satan with outspread wings; steadily into Hell-fire

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 184.



these seven-and-forty;---and was not melted into terror even at that, such the Lord's goodness to me? Coeur-de-Lion!

Richard swore tornado oaths, worse than our armies in Flanders, To be revenged on that proud Priest. But in the end he discovered that the Priest was right; and forgave him, and even loved him.<sup>15</sup>

It is admitted Carlyle's plain statement that right means might comes perilously near the Nazi dictum that might makes right. When Carlyle pits Abbot Samson armed with right against Coeur-de-Lion with all his might and the result is not only absolute victory of right over might but forgiveness granted the representative of right by the mighty king, no room is left for doubt concerning Carlyle's philosophy that might without right avails nothing.

There is even a difference in the method of compelling obedience to the leader as Carlyle advocated it and as the Nazis practiced it. Both began with the question: What if the masses did not recognize the hero-leader and therefore refused to obey him? Both ceded that the hero was justified in using force to compel obedience. Here, however, a radical difference emerges between the Nazi idea of force and Carlyle's idea.

When Hitler became leader of the National Socialistic German Workers party, he organized, with the help of Captain Ernst Roehm, the Storm Troops. Their physical attacks on the political opponents of the Nazi program aided unquestionably in Hitler's rise to power. When Hitler was ready to force from the Reichstag authority to rule by decree through the Enabling Act of March 23, 1933, he put thirty Reichstag members in prison. Before the end of 1933, he organized the secret police force, which became known to the world as the Gestapo. Members of the Gestapo

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 110-111.

were chosen for their overbearing manners and their capacity for cruelty. Their favorite methods of compelling obedience were flogging, torture, and mutilation. Any person having or suspected of having anti-Nazi political ideas was arrested and condemned sometimes without a chance to say a word in his own defense. The Gestapo power, secret actions, and brutality terrified the German people into obedience.

When Hitler became absolute dictator in 1934, he destroyed radical opposition within his party by conducting his "blood purge." More than one thousand persons were executed, among them Captain Roehm of the Storm Troops. Many were thrown into concentration camps, the Jews were brutally robbed of their property and civil rights, and as the program gained in power many hundreds of thousands were murdered.<sup>16</sup> With such a method, opposition within Germany was completely suppressed, and all were compelled to obey the leader.

In Carlyle's case the force to be used in compelling obedience was not brutal violence but spiritual power to establish the rule of the divine. Again an incident from Past and Present, "The Abbot's Troubles," furnishes an insight to Carlyle's idea of the kind of force that should be used to exact obedience to the leader. Samson's lazy monks had declared themselves against his economic program and had struck work; they had even refused to do the regular chanting of the day. Abbot Samson did not ride rough-shod with brutal force over this situation. He withdrew to another residence and acted only by messengers. Not through fear had he gone but for the purpose of cooling his temper so that he would

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<sup>16</sup> The World Book Encyclopedia, pp. 2979, 3433-3436.

not take vengeance on them in his anger. When it was noised about that the Abbot was in danger of being murdered by the monks, however, he returned to St. Edmundsbury, hurled out a bolt or two of excommunication, foot-shackled one, and gave lesser sentences to three more. On the morrow when the monks came in to humble themselves, the Abbot on his side replied with much humility. Although he alleged his justice and blamed the monks, when he saw them conquered, he burst into tears and embraced each with the kiss of peace. Samson with his love of truth and justice would never have stooped to using a secret police. He wouldn't even permit eavesdropping:

He intimated, openly in chapter to us all, that he would have no eavesdropping: 'Let none,' said he, 'come to me secretly accusing another, unless he will publicly stand to the same; if he come otherwise, I will openly proclaim the name of him. I wish, too, that every Monk of you have free access to me, to speak of your needs or grievances when you will.'<sup>17</sup>

Nowhere in the history of the Nazi party can be found any record of such actions as these of Abbot Samson. The "kiss of peace" had no place in the Storm Troops, the Gestapo, or the Nazi plan for compelling obedience to the leaders. Certainly Samson's condemnation of eavesdropping would have met with ill-favor since this was one of the Nazis' favorite devices for uncovering opposition to their program.

The Nazi party sprang up, fed, and grew on the belief of the German people that they had suffered unjustly from the Treaty of Versailles. After the Nazis gained considerable power, however, there was no pretense towards justice in their program. Carlyle, who in all his works

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

proved himself to be a crusader for social justice, could hardly be said to be in accord with the Nazi program in this instance. He begged the industrialists to transfer their magnificent energies from the conquest of matter to the quest of ideal justice. He declared:

Foolish men imagine that because judgment for an evil thing is delayed, there is no justice, but an accidental one, here below. Judgment for an evil thing is many times delayed some day or two, some century or two, but it is sure as life, it is sure as death! In the centre of the world-whirlwind, verily now as in the oldest days, dwells and speaks a God. The great soul of the world is just. <sup>18</sup>

The value that he placed on truth along with justice was also an element of his philosophy which could never be fitted into the Nazi doctrine:

Truth and Justice alone are capable of being 'conserved' and preserved! The thing which is unjust, which is not according to God's Law, will you, in a God's Universe, try to conserve that? <sup>19</sup>

Carlyle's advocacy of justice is as much a part of his philosophy as his condemnation of democracy. Certainly it would not be just, because Carlyle and the Nazis condemned democracy, to say that Carlyle was a prophet for the Nazi doctrine. A man who closed a book with the plea to the workers who are already at work to "Subdue mutiny, discord, wide-spread despair, by manfulness, justice, mercy and wisdom" <sup>20</sup> would not become a very efficient Nazi.

Both Nazi Germany and Thomas Carlyle valued education as a factor contributing to the advancement of their respective nations. As in

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 286.

other instances, however, after the initial statement the difference between their views becomes apparent. Education as one of the two remedies advocated by Carlyle for the ills of England was to be used as a weapon against ignorance, stupidity, and brute-mindedness:

But above all, where thou findest Ignorance, Stupidity, Brute-mindedness,—yes there, with or without Church-tithes and Shovel-hat, with or without Talfourd-Mahon Copyrights, or were it with mere dungeons and gibbets and crosses, attack it, I say; smite it wisely, unweariedly, and rest not while thou livest and it lives; but smite, smite, in the name of God! <sup>21</sup>

Education in Germany was used as a weapon in the battle for Nazism. In the German schools, history was not taught to erase ignorance and brute-mindedness. It was taught for purely political reasons. All rights of other nations were forgotten, and Germany was put in the very best light possible. Not only history, but other subjects were used in this same manner. Stephen H. Roberts wrote:

The Nazis have laid a heavy hand on education. They know that the text-books of to-day are shaping the political realities of the decades to come, and accordingly have made every part of education—curiously enough, even mathematics—a training ground in Nazi ideology. As soon as the child enters an elementary school at the age of six, his days are given over to the idealizing of the Nazis. <sup>22</sup>

Hitler made clear the fact that education was the one means by which the confidence of the German people could be restored by declaring that they were the super-race. His educational aim was to teach the Nazi doctrine to millions of individuals and inculcate loyalty, willingness to sacrifice, and silence. He valued the physical far greater than the intellectual education. The ultimate aim of education, as Hitler saw

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>22</sup> Roberts, op. cit., p. 254.

it, was to build military might. <sup>23</sup> That is why eight million boys and girls between the age of ten and eighteen were compelled to join the Hitler Youth movement.

Carlyle urged an Education Bill which of itself would be the sure parent of innumerable wise bills. Understanding awakened in the individual million heads, he believed, would bring order:

To irradiate with intelligence, that is to say, with order, arrangement and all blessedness, the Chaotic, Unintelligent: how, except by educating, can you accomplish this? <sup>24</sup>

Carlyle's immediate objective was to teach every Englishman to read. His ultimate aim was to increase the capacity to battle the complicated industrial chaos and to develop intelligence in all classes which would contribute to social efficiency. Then the nation would have no "faculty misdirected, strength that has not yet found its way" <sup>25</sup> to cause human misery. This aim is quite remote from that of the Nazis.

Perhaps the most contradictory statement found in Carlyle's writings are those concerning the army, war, and conquest. Other than his condemnation of democracy and his strong-man-leadership idea, more support for the Nazi doctrine can be based on his "One Institution" than any other of his ideas. In the last analysis, however, this part of his philosophy proves to be synonymous with the modern democracy's idea of war instead of with that of Nazi Germany.

Carlyle sets the army up as the one institution after which a suc-

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<sup>23</sup> Hitler, op. cit., pp. 618-632.

<sup>24</sup> Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 255.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 279.

cessful government could be modeled on the presumption that

No Working World, any more than a Fighting World, can be led on without a noble Chivalry of Work, and laws and fixed rules which follow out of that, — far nobler than any Chivalry of Fighting was.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, his army-modeled government with its "Industry Fighters and Captains" is to battle the industrial ills of the nation rather than other nations:

Not on Ilion's or Latium's plains; on far other plains and places henceforth can noble deeds be now done. Not on Ilion's plains; how much less on Mayfair's drawing-rooms! Not in victory over poor brother French or Phrygians; but in victory over Frost-jötuns, Marsh-giants, over demons of Discord, Idleness, Injustice, Unreason, and Chaos come again.<sup>27</sup>

This battle of industrial ills he calls the one true war and the workers the warriors.

The Nazi party with the foremost aim of strengthening German military might and bringing as much of the world as possible under German military control would have no place in their translation of Thomas Carlyle for the following statement:

Captains of Industry are the true Fighters, henceforth recognisable as the only true ones: Fighters against Chaos, Necessity and Devils and Jotuns; and lead on Mankind in that great, and alone true, and all Heaven and all Earth saying audibly, Well done!<sup>28</sup>

Nazi Germany maintained its army for the sole purpose of conquest, and war always meant the war of conquest. In "The One Institution" Carlyle moves as easily from his lengthy praise of the army and the soldier, that had to be realized in order that governments might exist, to his

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 285-286.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

concise idea of true warfare and back again to his praise of the "drilled forty against the ten-thousand" as he does from the England of his own day to medieval England and back again to his England. Because of this unusually smooth manner of transition from one age to another or one train of thought to another this statement may very easily escape the notice of the reader:

O heavens, if we saw an army of Ninety- thousand strong, maintained and fully equipt, in continual real action and battle against Human Starvation, against Chaos, Necessity, Stupidity, and our real 'natural enemies' what a business were it! Fighting and molesting not 'the French,' who, poor men, have a hard enough battle of their own in the like kind, and need no additional molesting from us; but fighting and incessantly spearing down and destroying Falsehood, Nescience, Delusion, Disorder, and the Devil and his Angels! <sup>29</sup>

This plainly shows that war, for Carlyle, was not aggressive conquest of a nation's neighbors, but a battle against the genuine enemies of all nations. There is no hint that Carlyle would favor the use the Nazis made of their army. Yet, this is a very important part of Carlyle's philosophy and can not be overlooked.

Because to Carlyle the divine influence of God's Justice was "traceable even in the horror of Battlefields and garments rolled in blood," he saw right in armies marching against one another:

Fighting, for example, as I often say to myself, Fighting with steel murder-tools is surely a much uglier operation than Working, take it how you will. Yet even of Fighting, in religious Abbot Samson's days see what Feudalism there had grown, --- a 'glorious Chivalry,' much besung down to the present day. <sup>30</sup>

and

I remark, for the present, only two things: first, that the Fighting

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 252-253.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 183.



itself was not, as we rashly suppose it, a fighting without cause, but more or less with cause. Man is created to fight; he is perhaps best of all definable as a born soldier; his life 'a battle and a march,' under the right General. It is forever indispensable for a man to fight: now with Necessity, and Barrenness, Scarcity, and Puddles, Bogs, tangled Forests, unkempt Cotton; --- now also with the hallucinations of his poor fellow Men. Hallucinatory visions rise in the head of my poor fellow man; make him claim over the rights which are not his. <sup>31</sup>

In this description of man as a born soldier one notes the minor importance given the actual warfare as the Nazis understood it. Furthermore, between the two statements he sandwiched a question which could not be interpreted as Nazism, for it takes all the glory out of any war:

Under the sky is no uglier spectacle than two men with clenched teeth, and hell-fire eyes, hacking one another's flesh; converting precious living bodies, and priceless living souls, into nameless masses of putrescence, useful only for turnip-manure. How did a Chivalry ever come out of that; how anything that was not hideous scandalous, infernal? <sup>32</sup>

As so many other ideas of Carlyle found utterance first in Sartor Resartus, so did his notion of conquest. He explains himself quite clearly:

What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net-purport and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five-hundred souls. From these, by certain "Natural Enemies" of the French, there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men: Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them: she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected; all dressed in red; and shipped away, at the public charge, some two-thousand miles, or say only to the south of Spain; and fed there till wanted. And now to that same spot, in the south of Spain, are thirty similar French artisans, from the French

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 183-184.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

Dumdrudge, in like manner wending: till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition; and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word "Fire!" is given: and they blow the souls out of one another; and in place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury, and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest! They lived far enough apart; were the entirest strangers; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even, unconsciously, by Commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! their Governors had fallen-out; and, instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot. --- Alas, so is it in Deutchland, and hitherto in all other lands; still as of old, "what devilry soever Kings do, the Greeks must pay the piper!" --- In that fiction of the English Smollet, it is true, the final Cessation of War is perhaps prophetically shadowed forth; where the two Natural Enemies, in person, take each a Tobacco-pipe, filled with Brimstone; light the same, and smoke in one another's faces, till the weaker gives in: but from such predicted Peace-Era, what blood-filled trenches, and contentious centuries, may still divide us! <sup>33</sup>

This passage can hardly be used to develop a sense of the importance of the army. There is no praise in it for military virtue or the glory of conquest. There is nothing except stark realism of horror and hideous waste in either this passage or in this description of a whole Marchfield:

Strewed with shell-splinters, cannon-shot, ruined tumbrils and dead men and horses; stragglers still remaining not so much as buried. And those red mould heaps; ay, there lie the Shells of Men, out of which all the Life and Virtue has been blown; and now are they swept together, and crammed-down out of sight, like blown Egg-shells! <sup>34</sup>

Rather the utter futility of war is presented by Carlyle:

Nevertheless, Nature is at work; neither shall these Powder-Devilkins with their unmost devilry gainsay her; but all that gore and carnage will be shrouded-in, absorbed into manure; and next year the Marchfield will be green, nay greener. Thrifty unwearied Nature,

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<sup>33</sup> Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, pp. 119-120.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

ever out of our great waste educating some little profit of thy own,--  
how dost thou, from the very carcass of the Killer, bring Life for  
the Living! <sup>35</sup>

Although Carlyle does praise the army as a model for government, he does not mean that an army for invasion-purposes be maintained and held ready to be unleashed on one's neighbors upon any small excuse. Nor does he mean when he says that every man is a born soldier that he is born to make turnip-manure of his fellow man. Rather he is a born fighter against all those conditions which create disorder and misery in the life of all mankind. The age of armed aggression is passed:

For we are to bethink us that the Epic verily is not Arms and the Man, but Tools and the Man,---an infinitely wider kind of Epic. <sup>36</sup>

Finally there is the contrast of Carlyle's ideal of leadership and that of Nazi leadership as personified by Adolph Hitler. Of all the great leaders that Carlyle held in reverence there is only one who he declares possesses the elements of true leadership. Each of the others fails in some respect. This ideal leader is the Abbot Samson of whom Carlyle says:

That the fit Governor could be met with under such disguise, could be recognized and laid hold of under such? Here he is discovered with a maximum of two shillings in his pocket, and a leather scrip round his neck; trudging along the highway, his frock-skirts looped over his arm. They think this, is he nevertheless, the true Governor; and he proves to be so. <sup>37</sup>

Samson was a personable man with eyes that beamed into one in a really strange way. He was possessed of

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>36</sup> Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 241.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

a right honest unconscious feeling, without insolence as without fear or flutter, of what he is and what others are. <sup>38</sup>

Here was a man who was sure of himself because he held first of all the love of God in his heart and the vision of right in his head. Every action of the man shows this; his clear-flashing eyes and his complete poise in the unexpected situation. When Samson was called forth as Abbot, he

steps forward, kisses the King's feet; but swiftly rises erect again, swiftly turns towards the altar, uplifting with the other Twelve, in clear tenor-note, the Fifty-first Psalm, 'Miserere mei Deus.'

'After thy loving-kindness, Lord  
Have mercy upon me;'

with firm voice, firm step and head, no change in his countenance whatever. <sup>39</sup>

Immediately the king recognized the signs of the peace of spirit within this man and decided that he would govern the Abbey well.

Hitler never achieved this peace of spirit although he achieved power and glory. Just as Samson's features and actions showed the measure of the man, so Hitler's features showed his lack of inner peace. The jerky manner in which he walked and gestured showed this lack. His shifty eyes were always watching for victims. No record can be found of his ever appearing calm and at ease.

The basic traits of Abbot Samson's character are "courage to quell the proudest, and honest pity to encourage the humblest." <sup>40</sup> He "showed

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

no extraordinary favour to the Monks who had been his familiars of old." <sup>41</sup> He was "the justest of judges; insisted on understanding the case to the bottom, and then swiftly decided without feud or favour." <sup>42</sup> He was patient, loving, and forgiving. <sup>43</sup> When he had trouble with his mutinous monks, he showed himself against violence as well as reaping revenge. <sup>44</sup> He subdued by manfulness, justice, mercy, and wisdom.

In contrast to these traits the Nazi leader was possessed of a belief in violence. He not only desired revenge against his enemies, but he took it against minor as well as great. He could not show courage because he was never able to rid himself of his sense of insecurity. Pity and justice were entirely alien to his character.

It is hard to believe that Carlyle would ever have approved of Hitler's leadership, if for no other reason than that Hitler failed. He would be the sham leader who became known by his weakness and eventual failure. Unless Carlyle's printed words are given the lie, it must be recognized that the Nazi leader would have been classified as the "Chactaw" fighter with five hundred scalps hanged in his wigwam.

To have ruled and fought not in a Mammonish but in a Godlike spirit; to have had the hearts of the people bless me, as a true ruler and captain of my people; to have felt my own heart bless me, and that God above instead of Mammon below was blessing me,---this had been something. <sup>45</sup>

could very well have been written of Hitler as he stood ready to take

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 93-98.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 283.

his own life rather than surrender to the onrushing enemy armies. Surely his people in their present dejected state can hold no blessing in their hearts for him.

Adolph Hitler's position in world history is a very convincing argument in favor of all world leaders heeding this advice given by Thomas Carlyle:

For Justice and Reverence are the everlasting central Law of this Universe; and to forget them, and have all the Universe against one, God and One's own Self for enemies, and only the Devil and the Dragons for friends, is not that 'lameness' like few? <sup>46</sup>

Carlyle's philosophy taken intact, comes to this: he wrote to point out the evils of the English government during his day and to awaken modern society to the realization that unless it perform its true function, nameless death would be its fate; he believed in the spiritual nature of all existence, the indwelling of the Divine in the actual, and in the outgrowth of finite forms from the Infinite; his social economy emphasized improved working conditions, housing and factory reforms, regulated working hours, and a guarantee of a living wage for workers, all brought about by supervisal government. The only two remedies he actually offered for the ills of England were compulsory spiritual and intellectual education and emigration.

The re-evaluation of Carlyle's philosophy in the light of the interpretation made of the selections used by the Nazis and the interpretation of his representative works as a whole brings out these facts: Carlyle placed first in every man's life the worship of the divine God. Nazism

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

would force all mankind to worship a centralized state, ruler, and race. Carlyle emphasized the principles of humanity as the responsibility and duty of society. Nazism resorted to cruel, brutal subjugation. Carlyle advocated right as correctly articulated might, but he never showed by example that might made right. Nazism ruled with the iron rod of might and called it correctly articulated right. Carlyle would compel obedience through manfulness, justice, mercy, and wisdom. Nazism would compel it through blood-purges, torture, and mutilation. Carlyle advocated education as a means of individual improvement; as a weapon against ignorance, stupidity, and brute-mindedness. Nazism used it as a weapon to indoctrinate the people with the superman theory. Carlyle glorified the army as a means of fighting discord, idleness, injustice, unreason, and chaos. Nazism glorified it for aggressive warfare against weaker nations. Carlyle's strong man carried in his heart the love of the divine God. He was possessed of inner peace, courage, complete poise, honest pity, justice, and understanding. The Nazi strong man carried in his heart a love of the state, party, and race which completely pushed God out of the program. His chief characteristics were a belief in violence, a desire for revenge, a lack of inner peace, and a sense of insecurity.

When German national socialism had its beginning, especially at the time of the mental revolution, Carlyle, according to the whole of his philosophy, might possibly have given the program complete approbation, but as it progressed and as he saw his most cherished moral teachings concerning religion, human sympathy, justice, education, leadership, rights and might completely stifled, even mocked at, he would have been compelled to "get to the other side" to find the silver lining "beshone by the

Heavenly lights." <sup>47</sup> For Carlyle was first of all a critic in search of true religion, and through that search he developed a political philosophy which combined the national socialistic idea with the teachings of the New Testament. One cannot resist visualizing where the Third Reich would stand today in world affairs if the Nazis, like Carlyle, had seen fit to use the New Testament teachings along with their national socialistic doctrine.

But the Nazi regime of the Third Reich has passed. "Conquest of that kind does not endure." <sup>48</sup> Failure to answer correctly the ever new social problem posed by the Sphinx means certain death. Perhaps Carlyle would classify the Nazi regime as one of the experiments he speaks of in "New Eras," Chartism, an experiment to see who has the "might over whom, the right over whom." <sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, the acclamations and accusations accorded Carlyle during Nazism's hey-day stand as testimony to his great personal influence on the continent as well as in English-speaking countries. They show that he reached the standards prescribed by him for all writers:

The writer of a Book, is not he a Preacher preaching not to this parish or that, on this day or that, but to all men in all times and places? <sup>50</sup>

He has uttered forth "in such a way as he has, the inspired soul of him;

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<sup>47</sup> Carlyle, Shooting Niagara: and After, p. 624.

<sup>48</sup> Carlyle, Chartism, p. 279.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 301.

<sup>50</sup> Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, p. 131.



all that a man, in any case, can do." 51

It is regrettable that any people would twist such a writer's thoughts so that his motives are entirely lost. Perhaps the great reading public of a war-weary world will look for the whole of his philosophy. Then Thomas Carlyle might say as he did to the English listeners at the close of his lectures, On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History:

With many feelings, I heartily thank you all; and say,

Good be with you all! 52

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51 Ibid., p. 128.

52 Ibid., p. 200.

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