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6: Hitler's Supernatural Sciences: Astrology, Anthroposophy, and World Ice Theory in the Third Reich

Eric Kurlander

Introduction

WHILE MANY OCCULT FIGURES and groups were surveilled or policed by the Third Reich, a closer look at Nazi policies suggests a more complex picture.¹ Reflecting back on the first eight years of the Third Reich, the Nazis' chief ideologist, Alfred Rosenberg, wrote, "The success of National Socialism, the unique appearance of the Führer, has no precedent in German History. . . . The consequence . . . is that many Germans, due to their proclivity for the romantic and the mystical, indeed the occult, came to understand the success of National Socialism in this fashion."² For Germans, Rosenberg suggests, esoteric thinking was perfectly compatible with, perhaps even intrinsic to, Nazism. This may explain why the multiple waves of arrest, detention, and murder that defined the experience of so many Communists, Jews, and "asocials" during the first few years of the Third Reich failed to envelop practitioners of occultism. Nor did the outbreak of war in September 1939 lead to the systematic eradication of esoteric practitioners as it did to Jews, Gypsies, or the mentally and physically disabled. To the contrary, as Uwe Schellinger, Andreas Anton, and Michael Schetsche's contribution to this volume indicates, the Nazi regime employed occultism "pragmatically" throughout the war, recruiting astrologers and clairvoyants to provide military and diplomatic intelligence both before and after the May 1941 Hess affair.

Except the Third Reich's interest in occult and border-scientific (*grenzwissenschaftlich*) doctrines—what I call Hitler's supernatural sciences—extended far beyond a few pragmatic "experiments" conducted during the Second World War. As an antidote to "Jewish" physics, Nazi leaders sponsored Hans Hörbiger's world ice theory, which postulated that events in the Bible and the putative destruction of Atlantis were caused by moons of ice hitting the Earth. Multiple Reich officials advocated Rudolf Steiner's occult-inspired ("biodynamic") approach to agriculture, based on the moon and planets' cosmic rhythms. Finally, both

astrology and divining were employed widely to obtain political insights and spread propaganda. Certainly many proponents of these supernatural sciences faced renewed interrogation and arrest in the wake Rudolf Hess's flight to England in May 1941, which was widely attributed to the deputy führer's immersion in occult doctrines.³ Even after the so-called Special Action Hess, however, the regime continued to experiment with multiple supernatural sciences.

Indeed, as Link and Hare suggest in their own contribution to this volume, what has often been castigated as Nazi "pseudoscience" might on second glance be characterized as a genuine openness in the Third Reich to supernatural or border science in both interdisciplinary and epistemological terms—to wanting to move beyond disciplinary boundaries as well as the "soulless" materialism many Nazis associated with mainstream science. If the Third Reich's investment in border-scientific research reflects a proclivity for interdisciplinarity and unconventional thinking, however, it also helped to propagate and reinforce Nazi conceptions of race, politics, and empire. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the epistemological foundations and ideological implications of this border-scientific approach through case studies of three of the most prominent supernatural sciences in the Third Reich: astrology, biodynamic agriculture, and world ice theory.

Astrology

A year before the Nazi seizure of power, in the waning months of the Weimar Republic, the thirty-year-old Swiss astrologer Karl Krafft asked Hans Bender, a twenty-five-year-old PhD student in psychology at the University of Bonn, whether "real, that is, unfalsified astrological . . . knowledge can be made accessible to a broader public" or whether it was something that could only be pursued in "concealed form."⁴ Bender was equally concerned about the prospects of the border sciences in the face of an increasingly professionalized scientific establishment. For disciplines like parapsychology, astrology, and pendulum dowsing to survive, Bender reasoned, it was urgent that they be recognized by mainstream science.⁵

Four years later—and three years after Hitler's seizure of power—Bender had become much more optimistic. Barely able to contain his enthusiasm, the young parapsychologist encouraged Krafft to recognize the enormous potential for research on the border sciences in the Third Reich, especially "scientific astrology."⁶ Little did Bender know when he wrote Krafft in the mid-1930s that he would eventually be chosen to head his own institute on border sciences at the newly established Reich University of Strasbourg in 1942.⁷ Nor could Krafft have imagined that he would be recruited by Josef Goebbels three years later to lead a counterpropaganda campaign against the allies, eventually working for both the SS and military intelligence.⁸

The career trajectories of these two leading German occultists does nothing to diminish the negative experience of many astrologers in the Third Reich. Like other Germans, astrologers suffered increased surveillance, “coordination” of their professional life, and by the late 1930s often the elimination of their organizations. Already early on, the regime instituted a ban on commercial forms of astrology in Berlin—the center of popular astrology in Germany—and began confiscating astrological periodicals, particularly ones containing political predictions or horoscopes of leading Nazis (a cottage industry in the late Weimar Republic and early years of the Third Reich). In 1937 the German Astrological Society (Astrologische Gesellschaft in Deutschland, or AgiD) would be forced to disband, and most of its rival organizations were eliminated soon after. Both the major astrological periodicals, *Zenit* and *Astrologische Rundschau*, would cease publication in 1938.⁹

Lest we blame the Third Reich’s uneven imposition of legal restrictions against popular astrology on Nazi “antioccultism,” however, it is important to emphasize two things. First, we need to remember that, despite these legal restrictions, the Gestapo did very little to police astrologers before Hess’s flight in May 1941. Meanwhile, in 1939, two years after the first “bans” on astrological periodicals, three such papers still had circulations approaching the thousands in Saxony alone and the Reich continued to approve the publication of astrological calendars well into the war.¹⁰ At the same time, we must acknowledge the role played by leading astrologers, who vociferously attacked each other for practicing “unscientific” astrology—a pattern of mutual recrimination and professional boundary-marking that extended back to Imperial Germany but had particularly deleterious consequences under a regime that was only too willing to outlaw those who appeared to be working against the “racial community,” as angry astrologers often accused their opponents of doing. On the other hand, it was professional astrologers’ insistence that “scientific astrology” should be permitted—as opposed to the “charlatanism” of popular astrology—that facilitated the rise to prominence of individuals like Krafft and Bender, whose esoteric research, while clearly on the margins of mainstream science, was deemed sufficiently rigorous by many Nazis.¹¹ The question is not whether astrology was taken seriously among the leaders of the Third Reich, but to what extent and in what ways it was deployed.

To begin with, it is important to reiterate how fundamentally popular and widespread the belief was among working and middle class Germans that one could glean hidden knowledge from reading the stars and planets or from uncovering hidden forces operating in everyday life—what Bender and Krafft called the “border fields” (*Grenzgebiete*) of the sciences. As Corinna Treitel has convincingly shown, thousands of Germans participated in astrological societies, séances, and spiritual experiments

during the interwar period, while hundreds of thousands more purchased occult, New Age, and other esoteric literature.¹² As G. Szeszcnny put it in his 1940 Munich dissertation on the occult press, “The general cultural and economic collapse, inflation and the ensuing big political and social crises . . . prepared the way for the occult” in its most widespread and popular form in interwar Germany.¹³ It is therefore no coincidence that many of the important figures in founding the early Nazi Party, from Rudolf von Sebottendorf and Wilhelm Gutberlet to Rudolf Hess, Ernst Roehm, and Heinrich Himmler, were fascinated by astrology.¹⁴ Just as significant, many of Germany’s most famous astrologers, clairvoyants, dowzers, and parapsychologists continued to enjoy professional success and an ample reading public after 1933. From Bender and Krafft to Gerda Walther, H. H. Kritzinger, Ludwig Straniak, and Wilhelm Wulff, even those astrologers and parapsychologists whose commercial publications were eventually curtailed would end up working for the regime at some point during the Second World War.¹⁵

What distinguished these esotericists from many “popular” astrologers, of course, was the putatively scientific nature of their work. Kritzinger, for instance, was a reputable physicist who led an important research institute on military matters. This lent his multiple experiments with cosmic and subterranean “death rays” that could only be located with divining rods the imprimatur of reputable science.¹⁶ Kritzinger’s future colleague in the wartime Pendulum Institute, Ludwig Straniak, was viewed by colleagues as “the most serious researcher” in the new scientific field of dowzing.¹⁷ The astrologer and religious mystic Gerda Walther had earned a PhD in philosophy and was research assistant to the renowned parapsychologist Schrenk-Notzing in the 1920s.¹⁸ Perhaps the most prominent astrologer to work for the regime besides Krafft was Himmler’s “personal astrologer” Wilhelm Wulff, whom the Reichsführer praised for his serious “scientific” approach to astrology.¹⁹ All these individuals would at some point encounter difficulties in pursuing their interests after 1933. It is nonetheless one of the major paradoxes of occultism in the Third Reich that leading practitioners of perhaps the most infamous border science—astrology—would find greatest political prominence during the Second World War, at the precise moment that other ostensibly dangerous elements (e.g., Jews, Gypsies, Bolsheviks, the mentally and physically disabled) experienced the greatest persecution.²⁰

The first astrologer to come to prominence during the war was Krafft. Like many astrologers, Krafft was enthusiastic about the Third Reich and made some efforts to earn the trust of the regime through his published horoscopes.²¹ By late 1939, Krafft had apparently made the acquaintance of the Nazi Labor Minister Robert Ley and Justice Minister Hans Frank, himself a member of the occult-infused Thule Society.²² Among the favorable horoscopes Krafft published during the 1930s in order

to ingratiate himself with the regime, none was more important than a seemingly accurate prediction of the assassination attempt on Hitler by Georg Elser in November 1939. It is this horoscope, which Krafft had sent to the authorities shortly before the attempt, that brought Krafft to the attention of Goebbels. Wanting to control public opinion, which continued to pay close attention to horoscopes, Goebbels' first reaction was to ban all astrological journals (earlier bans had been partial), particularly those making political predictions along the lines of Krafft's.²³

Goebbels' next move, however, was to approach the renowned astrologer and dowsing expert Kritzinger about heading a division within the Reich Ministry of Propaganda producing pamphlets to counter the anti-German Nostradamus prophecies being spread by the Allies. As the full-time director of a research institute, Kritzinger recommended hiring his colleague Krafft as well, who was living hand to mouth in Berlin, writing reports for SS intelligence.²⁴ After eventually acquiescing to Goebbels' offer, Kritzinger, Krafft, and another well-known astrologer, Georg Lucht, went to work on the quatrains. But instead of producing propaganda, they debated points of astrological interpretation, such as whether "the great duc of Armenia" in Quatrain V was Stalin, the German tribal leader Arminius, or Hitler himself. When Goebbels finally propagated their findings in France and Great Britain, they had little impact on foreign public opinion.²⁵ SS Intelligence Chief Walter Schellenberg nonetheless acknowledged their domestic political value since Germans, "who are well-informed in occult matters," remained susceptible to fake horoscopes propagated by the British.²⁶

Astrology had purposes beyond the mere manipulation of public opinion. As Krafft wrote to Bender in March 1940, "About the prospects of border sciences in *our* generation, I'm not as pessimistic as you—especially in government circles they are *seeking* people who not only have something to say, but also can be taken seriously in terms of character."²⁷ Just as the war paved the way for unorthodox military strategies and freed up previously bottled-up economic energies, it led to a greater willingness than ever to experiment with supernatural sciences like astrology and divining.²⁸ Himmler was in fact enthusiastic enough about the possibilities of scientific astrology to ask the astronomer and amateur astrologist Kurd Kisshauer, an associate of Alfred Rosenberg, to review the talents of prominent German astrologers, the "best" of whom the Reichsführer hoped to employ in gathering military intelligence, carrying out psychological warfare and eliciting foreign policy advice.²⁹

Even Rudolf Hess's infamous flight to Scotland in May 1941, which unleashed a brief wave of antioccult activity, signaled less the final attack on the "supernatural sciences" in the Third Reich than the culmination of Himmler and other Nazis' attempts to control, coordinate, and co-opt such ideas for themselves.³⁰ To be sure, the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security

Service; SD) and Gestapo arrested or interrogated hundreds of astrologers and confiscated thousands of occult publications, a large number of which dealt directly with astrology.³¹ Within weeks of Special Action Hess, however, most of these astrologers had been released after questioning. The longer-term detentions were reserved either for a minority of political opponents, such as Hess's friends Ernst Schulte-Strathaus and Albrecht Haushofer, or "scientific astrologers," including Krafft, Wulff, and Walther, whose services were now to be employed exclusively by the regime.³² Walther herself notes that many Nazi leaders continued to employ horoscopes and other occult practices after 1941 and suggests that her brief imprisonment was more likely connected to her support for the *Christengemeinschaft* (Christian community), a successor organization to anthroposophy, rather than to her interest in astrology.³³ Equally indicative of the regime's open-minded attitude toward the supernatural sciences is the fact that Hans Bender got the SS to provide him a sixty-two-page list of—and eventually to loan him—confiscated astrological publications, which he put to use in his newly opened "Paracelsus Institute" for research on the border sciences in Strasbourg.³⁴

Whether fearing its abuse or wanting to use occultism for its own purposes, the regime evidently had an abiding interest in the powers of astrology and divining. In 1942, Navy Captain Hans Roeder even recommended the creation of a Pendulum Institute "to pinpoint the position of enemy convoys at sea by means of pendulums and other supernatural devices, so that the German submarine flotillas could be certain of sinking them."³⁵ While Krafft was recruited directly from prison, where he had languished for a time after Special Action Hess, the institute also attracted some of Germany's most respected mathematicians, astronomers, astrologers, mediums, psychics, and radiesthetic (pendulum) practitioners, including Wilhelm Wulff and Ludwig Straniak—the first dowser to claim he could teach lay people how to employ a pendulum to locate large metal objects hundreds of miles away.³⁶ Importantly, Roeder and his colleagues were inspired in their efforts by the belief that the British were themselves employing esoteric intelligence practices to find and destroy German U-boats. Of course, the British were using quite "natural scientific" methods to locate German ships, namely radar and sonar. Despite the lack of any concrete evidence that astrology or divining could locate ships with similar alacrity, the navy decided to fund the institute regardless.³⁷

Although the Pendulum Institute produced few concrete results, it did bring the SS into closer contact with Wilhelm Wulff, perhaps the most important astrologer in the Third Reich and one of Himmler's most trusted advisors. According to Hugh Trevor-Roper, SD Chief Schellenberg discovered Wulff in Hamburg in the early war years and was later introduced to the Reichsführer, whose belief in astrology was

well known, in order for Schellenberg to gain an ally against his rival, SS Chief of Security (RSHA) Ernst Kaltenbrunner.³⁸ Wulff himself would claim that it was Himmler's personal physician, Felix Kersten, who first introduced him to the Reichsführer based on a favorable horoscope of Hitler. Convinced of the scientific accuracy of Wulff's predictions, Himmler consulted the astrologer for the duration of the war, on everything from health and diet to military and diplomatic advice to the Jewish Question.³⁹

Wulff and his occult colleagues were even reassembled by Himmler a year later, in Summer 1943, as part of the famous rescue Operation Oak, organized by Kaltenbrunner and *Waffen-SS* Commander Otto Skorzeny.⁴⁰ More skeptical toward the border sciences than some SS functionaries, Schellenberg initially mocked the idea of locating Mussolini through "representatives of the occult sciences," who apparently sat in a castle chosen by Himmler consuming copious amounts of expensive food, drinks, and cigarettes. Yet the otherwise cynical Schellenberg attests in his memoirs that the motley group of astrologers and diviners did somehow help locate Il Duce in a secret hideout south of Rome: "And in all honesty, it must be said, that these dowsers had no contact to the outside world."⁴¹ After the success of Operation Oak, Himmler charged Wulff, Straniak, and company with a number of "scientific" and military tasks beyond astrology—for example, determining whether there was an astrological way to calculate the weather, a question he had world ice theorists explore as well.⁴²

So how does one reconcile this high-level interest in astrology and related doctrines, from the SS to the Party Chancellery to the German military, with the arrest and persecution of so many of its practitioners? As suggested above and further illustrated below, it comes down to questions of political control and "scientific" professionalization. Bender, Krafft, Wulff, Straniak, Kritziger—indeed, virtually all the leading astrologers, diviners, and parapsychologists discussed above—agreed with Himmler that most occultists were charlatans who exploited people's gullibility for personal financial gain.⁴³ As Kisshauer put it in critically evaluating a book, *Son of the Stars*, that attacked popular astrology, "Practical accuracy is a necessary precondition, for otherwise the author can be easily dismissed as laughable in the circles of those who are well-informed in occult matters, whose number is still very large." After delineating the book's lack of astrological rigor, Kisshauer concluded that the author must likewise expurgate remarks critical of world ice theory and its greatest living proponent, Phillip Fauth, "who had just been given an honorary doctorate by the Führer for his service."⁴⁴ Thus, even as the regime's attitude to popular astrology became less tolerant after 1937, its investment in "scientific astrology" and other border sciences became increasingly serious, a pattern we see repeated in respect to anthroposophy and world ice theory.

Anthroposophy

The Austrian founder of anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner, began his career as a follower of the Theosophist Madame Blavatsky. He was drawn to her movement because it recognized “a ‘truth’ that stands above all religions” and sought to uncover “still unexplained natural laws and powers sleeping in human beings,” including spiritualism, clairvoyance, and telepathy.⁴⁵ In developing anthroposophy shortly before the First World War, Steiner dispensed with some of the more eastern and spiritualist aspects of theosophy. Claiming to be more practical, Steiner sought to help human beings achieve “recognition of higher worlds” through a combination of esotericism and the natural sciences. Steiner and his colleagues encouraged, for instance, experiments in clairvoyance and capturing people’s “auras,” employing x-rays and microscopes in order to attract the approval of mainstream science. But much like astrology and other supernatural sciences, anthroposophy remained reliant “on aesthetic rather than functional logics” which “prevented the acceptance in the scientific community.”⁴⁶

Similar to the closely related field of astrology, the dubious border-scientific claims of anthroposophy did little to dissuade leading National Socialists from trafficking in Steiner’s ideas. Many Nazis, to be sure, expressed hostility to Steiner and his doctrines, and the Gestapo would declare the Anthroposophic Society illegal in late 1935. But most of the criticism highlighted Steiner’s putatively Jewish, cosmopolitan, and sectarian proclivities, not the supernatural essence of his doctrines.⁴⁷ We also need to remember that the ban of the Anthroposophic Society came nearly three years after the Nazi seizure of power and two years after the Third Reich had banned virtually every rival political organization, including conservative nationalist groups that endorsed Hitler’s rise to power.

The 1935 ban therefore obscures the reality that many anthroposophic ideas, practices, and affiliated organizations were permitted to continue. Occult-inclined Nazis still believed after 1935 that Nazism and anthroposophy might come together in a “movement of renewal with totalizing claims.”⁴⁸ Conversely, many leading anthroposophists were authentically attracted to aspects of National Socialism, having participated before 1933 in the same *völkisch* (racialist)-occult German Order, Thule Society, or Artamanen Society as Hess, Himmler, and other leading Nazis.⁴⁹ The Third Reich may have attempted to marginalize anthroposophy as an integrated, sectarian belief system devoted to a rival charismatic führer, namely Rudolf Steiner. But it nonetheless coopted many of its interdisciplinary, border-scientific ideas and practices as an alternative to mainstream natural and social-scientific praxis.

While one sees many points of contact between National Socialism and Steiner’s literary, philosophical, and pedagogical work, nowhere were

anthroposophic ideas and practices embraced more systematically than in respect to “biodynamic agriculture [*biodynamische Wirtschaftsweise*]” or BDW.⁵⁰ Developed by Steiner toward the end of his career, BDW was based, in the words of Peter Staudenmaier,

on a holistic view of the farm or garden as an integrated organism comprising soil, plants, animals, and various cosmic forces, with sowing and harvesting conducted according to astrological principles. Biodynamic growers reject monoculture and abjure artificial fertilizers and pesticides, relying instead on manure, compost, and a variety of homeopathic preparations meant to channel the etheric and astral energies of the earth and other celestial bodies.⁵¹

A protégé of Steiner and BDW’s chief proponent in the Third Reich, Erhard Bartsch, formed the Reich League for Biodynamic Agriculture in July 1933, mixing romantic, quasi-mystical language invoking the *völkisch*, “blood and soil” underpinnings of BDW with its practical economic benefits to promote their methods. Very quickly Bartsch managed to enlist the support of individuals like Alwin Seifert, Reich advocate for landscape and arguably the Third Reich’s leading environmentalist, as well as pro-BDW Nazi functionaries like Georg Halbe and Hans Merkel who desired independence from foreign-made fertilizer and other scarce industrial chemicals as part of the move toward economic autarchy under Hermann Goering’s Four Year Plan.⁵² Even Berlin’s athletics fields for the 1936 Summer Olympics were treated biodynamically, which garnered so much interest and praise that BDW’s continuation was reassured.⁵³

As one might expect, the chemical industry and some Nazi leaders with links to big business rejected this “spiritually-aware peasant wisdom” as both economically and ideologically deficient.⁵⁴ But Bartsch’s clever and concerted propaganda efforts helped BDW spread across many circles, from the interior ministry to the *Wehrmacht*.⁵⁵ Influenced by the turn-of-the century “life reform” movement and interwar Artamanen Society, Nazi leaders like Himmler, Rudolf Hess, Walther Darré, and Julius Streicher saw biodynamic agriculture as a natural corollary to their attempts to purify German blood and soil through natural healing, vegetarianism, animal rights, and holistic views toward biology and spirituality.⁵⁶ With this goal in mind Hitler’s deputy führer, Hess, chastised “industries interested in artificial fertilizer, preoccupied with the height of their dividends” for “carrying out a kind of witch trial against all people who would experiment [with BDW].”⁵⁷ The SS, via Otto Ohlendorff, worked closely with Bartsch to get the Interior Ministry to loosen rules against anthroposophy in the late 1930s.⁵⁸ Hitler himself admonished the Gestapo to grant amnesty to Masonic lodges in 1938, including former members of Anthroposophic Society like

Bartsch.⁵⁹ And by the outbreak of the Second World War, high-ranking party members, such as Rosenberg, Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick, and Minister of Labor Robert Ley had all visited the BDW headquarters and expressed support for the organization.⁶⁰

Perhaps BDW's most consistent supporter was SS-*Obergruppenführer*, Reich Minister for Food and Agriculture, and SS Office of Race and Settlement (RuSHA) Chief Walther Darré. While economic rationale had much to do with his emerging interest in BDW in the late 1930s—namely the drive toward autarchy in agriculture—Darré's proclivity for the supernatural played an important role.⁶¹ Darré had in fact met his protégé Himmler through their joint membership in the Weimar-era Artamanen Society which, inspired by “esoteric preconceptions” and “Ariosophic and Theosophic ideas,” sought to build an agrarian racial utopia in the ethnically mixed eastern parts of the Reich.⁶² Further belying Darré's claims that his interest in anthroposophy was purely pragmatic, his correspondence is littered with excerpts from Steiner's writings that have little to do with BDW.⁶³ Darré's insistence that he “worked to protect the whole endeavor without being a follower of R. Steiner” is probably accurate. But the Reich minister's justifications for BDW—wanting to restore man's organic relationship to God “who works and lives in everything that's essential in this world”—straddled the same lines between science and the supernatural as Steiner's original doctrine.⁶⁴ Darré was consequently frustrated by accusations by mainstream thinkers who claimed that BDW emerged from “mysticism, spiritualism, superstition.” If biologists could claim that plants grow through “invisible” rays generated by the sun resulting in photosynthesis, then why couldn't they accept the cosmic forces behind BDW?⁶⁵

Having fallen out with Himmler in 1938 and lost his position as head of the RuSHA, Darré's effectiveness in propagating BDW declined.⁶⁶ But Bartsch had many other allies in the Nazi Party and especially the SS. Günther Pancke, SS-*Gruppenführer* and Darré's successor as head of the RuSHA, urged Heydrich to allow Bartsch into the SS. When Heydrich rejected this request on the grounds that Bartsch was an unapologetic follower of Rudolf Steiner, Pancke nonetheless wrote Bartsch on behalf of himself and the SS economic expert and concentration camp administrator Oswald Pohl: “I welcome the hope that we can work together closely in the future.”⁶⁷ In his postwar testimony Otto Ohlendorff likewise indicated that he “found in many branches of [anthroposophic] research valuable suggestions and results that promised to lead out of the impasse in which [the natural sciences] were invested.” The spiritual aspects of anthroposophy were equally useful, Ohlendorff reasoned, since “National Socialism had in the short time of its existence [developed] no spiritual education.” To be sure, some powerful interests in the Third Reich, especially the chemical industry, had opposed anthroposophy and its practical

uses. It nonetheless “seemed imperative for the overall intellectual development of National Socialism,” Ohlendorff concluded, “not to disturb [anthroposophic] research and their institutions, but to leave them in peace, to develop without violent influence from the outside, regardless of the direction of the research.”⁶⁸

Hess’s flight did represent an important turning point in the regime’s relationship to anthroposophy. Encouraged by Darré’s rivals Herbert Backe and Martin Bormann, Heydrich took the opportunity to ban the Reich League for Biodynamic Agriculture and arrest Bartsch.⁶⁹ But before we see this action as a move against BDW per se, we need to remember that Bartsch, according to his own SS ally Otto Ohlendorff, “was such a stubborn, uncompromising Anthroposophist in his negotiations with me that he repeatedly threatened my work over the years.” Bartsch insisted that “[anthroposophic] methods could be used only by people who were inwardly convinced of the intellectual foundations of these fundamental beliefs” and sought to exploit the sympathies of Ohlendorff and others “not only to enforce biodynamic agriculture” but also to impose “the anthroposophical world view” on everyone in the Third Reich. According to Ohlendorff, Bartsch even tried to bring Steiner’s peace proclamation from the First World War to Hitler as the basis for Nazi foreign policy. “Any attempt to explain to him the absurdity of this attempt in the current political situation,” Ohlendorff recalls, “and the extreme danger that threatens him and his work . . . were in vain. He was obsessed with . . . Steiner and his ideas.”⁷⁰

Given Bartsch’s remarkably bold and unapologetic propagation of anthroposophy in the Third Reich, we should hardly be surprised at Heydrich’s response to Darré explaining his decision to arrest Bartsch and his colleagues. “The essence of Anthroposophic teaching,” Heydrich explained, could provide “no ideology for the entire people, but dangerous sectarian teachings for a narrowly confined circle of people.”⁷¹ And yet, despite Bartsch’s clear occult proclivities and the SD chief’s clear hostility to the occult, Heydrich assured Darré that he would continue to make exceptions for farmers experimenting with BDW provided they were not *also* practicing anthroposophists like Bartsch.⁷²

Why Heydrich’s efforts to exercise greater restraint in regard to Anthroposophy when he indicated no such nuance in his actions against Communists, Jews, Gypsies, or Jehovah’s Witnesses? The answer lies in his superior Heinrich Himmler and other SS leaders’ remarkable fascination with BDW even after Hess’s flight.⁷³ Like Hess, Ohlendorff, and Darré, Himmler was interested in BDW out of a combination of his longer-term predisposition toward border-scientific thinking and a practical desire to improve the quality and productivity of German agriculture. “In regard to biological-dynamic fertilization,” Himmler wrote, “I can only say: as a farmer I am generally sympathetic.” Even if it would be hard to

introduce BDW in the context of technologically intensive modern agriculture, Himmler reasoned, its practitioners should be tolerated.⁷⁴

Himmler's interest in BDW—encouraged by Darré, Pohl, and Ohlendorff—only increased with the prospect of realizing his dreams of racial resettlement in the East.⁷⁵ In October 1939, with the invasion of Poland finally underway, Himmler charged Pancke and Pohl to think about “reshap[ing] eastern lands along organic lines,” employing anthroposophists like Bartsch as consultants. In cooperation with the new *Deutsche Versuchsanstalt für Ernährung und Verpflegung* (German Research Facility for Food and Nutrition), the SS soon established biodynamic plantations in the eastern territories as well as the Dachau and Ravensbrück concentration camps. Ignoring the protests of Heydrich and Bormann, Himmler directed his SS colleagues to begin purchasing a large amount of products with the anthroposophic copyright (Demeter) from Steiner's pharmaceutical firm, Weleda.⁷⁶ In 1940 alone, Hess, Darré, Rosenberg, and Ley all visited Bartsch's farm in Marienhöhe while Pancke and Pohl expressed the desire to begin experimenting with medicinal plants in Dachau.⁷⁷

Beginning with the outbreak of the war, the concentration camp system therefore served not only to eliminate “life unworthy of life” based on border-scientific premises, but also as “part of SS plans to use biodynamic cultivation in the environmental and ethnic reordering of the East.”⁷⁸ Darré's former protégé Georg Halbe now went to work for the Ministry of the Occupied Eastern Territories and later Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry, where he combined his affinities for BDW and living space to advance German settlement policies. Merkel, still an official for the RuSHA, began publishing a range of pamphlets “combining organic metaphors with calls for expanded German Lebensraum.”⁷⁹ The former RuSHA functionary and later Commissar for Peasantry and Eastern Territories, Rudi Peuckert, employed his connections to the labor czar Fritz Sauckel to assure that BDW found an audience across the eastern territories. In fact, the use of BDW as part of SS agricultural and (re) settlement plans in the East continued under the leadership of SS men like Seifert and Franz Lippert as well as Agricultural Economics and Forestry Minister Albert Gayl.⁸⁰

Clearly it was never primarily BDW's supernatural provenance or border-scientific approach that caused the Third Reich consternation. It was anthroposophy's roots as an alternative weltanschauung emanating from a rival charismatic führer, Rudolf Steiner.⁸¹ Faced with the dubious ideological loyalties of individuals like Bartsch, the Third Reich exercised a significant level of repression and coordination toward anthroposophic organizations—as they had toward the Christian churches and even rival nationalist groups like the German National People's Party, Pan-German League, and German Christian movement.⁸² But this refusal to accept

alternative loyalties did nothing to dissuade leading Nazis from embracing BDW as form of “higher knowledge” that merged empirical methods with spirituality, science, and the supernatural.⁸³ Similar to what occurred in the case of astrology, the Third Reich sought not to eliminate anthroposophy outright but rather to “coordinate” its supporters while co-opting the elements they deemed useful in achieving their domestic and foreign policy goals.

World Ice Theory

Glacial cosmogony, later known as world ice theory (*Welteislehre* or WEL), was developed in the 1890s by the Austrian scientist and philosopher Hans Hörbiger, who claimed that the idea came to him in a dream. Hörbiger and his collaborator, the amateur astronomer Philip Fauth, posited that much of the known universe was created when a small, water-filled star collided with a much larger star, causing an explosion, the frozen fragments of which created multiple solar systems. This explosion and the ensuing fragments, Hörbiger and Fauth argued, explained gravity, the rotation of the planets, and various other interstellar phenomena. In emphasizing the impact of prehistoric moons made of ice, the fragments of which created the various layers of earth’s crust, WEL supposedly revealed Earth’s own geological history as well.⁸⁴ Beyond its natural scientific implications, Hörbiger and his supporters believed that WEL provided “the foundation of a new ‘cosmic cultural history’” and an “astronomy of the invisible” founded upon “creative intuition.”⁸⁵ Needless to say, few mainstream physicists, astronomers, or geologists gave this theory credence, with the Austrian astronomer Edmund Weiss famously pointing out that, by employing Hörbiger’s “intuitive” methods, one could just as easily claim the cosmos is made out of olive oil as ice.⁸⁶ Hörbiger, in turn, merely ignored mainstream science, seeking to popularize WEL among a Weimar public hungry for spiritual alternatives through public lectures, cosmic ice movies, and radio programs.⁸⁷

Although there was nothing explicitly racist about Hörbiger’s theories, WEL attracted a number of Germans who, weaned on ariosophy and other esoteric doctrines, sought an “Aryan” alternative to so-called Jewish physics, from relativity to quantum mechanics. WEL supporters also were keen to point out the parallels between Hörbiger and Hitler, from their Austrian origins to their successes as so-called amateurs reshaping “professional” fields (physics and politics, respectively).⁸⁸ Hitler, who was generally less enthusiastic about esoteric beliefs than were some Nazi colleagues, nonetheless found world ice theory attractive, from its utility in countering “Jewish physics” to his genuine belief in its predictive qualities when it came to geological and meteorological phenomena.⁸⁹ In this respect, WEL becomes the perfect exemplar of the mix of science and

the supernatural that defined the Nazi approach toward knowledge and society, producing “sensations of authenticity that made the distinction between ‘serious’ scientific work, committed to objectivity and rationality, and mere dramatic banter about it almost impossible, at least for the broader public.”⁹⁰

If Hitler and other leading Nazis embraced WEL in theory for both practical and ideological reasons, it fell to Himmler’s Institute for Ancestral Research (*Ahnenerbe*) to lend the ideas legitimacy in the face of withering criticism from mainstream scientific circles. Already during the first three years of the Third Reich, a number of pro-Nazi intellectuals and functionaries associated with Himmler’s *Ahnenerbe* began to push to make WEL an officially recognized science. Among WEL’s leading defenders in Himmler’s circle were *SS-Obersturmführer* Hans Robert Scultetus, head of the *Ahnenerbe*’s Institute for Meteorology, which maintained close ties to the Austrian-based Hörbiger Institute. Himmler’s WEL brain trust also included Edmund Kiss, the SS novelist, explorer, and amateur scientist whose science fiction combined the ariosophic premise of a lost Nordic Atlantis or Thule (whose remnants were now preserved in Tibet) with Hörbiger’s world ice theory.⁹¹

From early in Third Reich, Kiss, Scultetus, and other supporters of WEL recognized that it would require the public imprimatur of Himmler and the NSDAP to give their unorthodox ideas official status.⁹² In 1936 Scultetus therefore proposed the Pyrmonter Protocol, a document designating Hörbiger’s theories as “the intellectual gift of a genius” and sponsoring “all people working on WEL under the leadership of a spiritual leader, whose sole responsibility was to the Reichsführers-SS.” Needless to say, Scultetus already had the perfect “spiritual leader” in mind: himself.⁹³ The protocol indicated further that scientists deviating from “Meister Hoerbiger’s” theories in their “fundamental form” would cease to receive funding and could be disciplined in some way.⁹⁴ So again we find the regime persecuting esoteric practitioners not because of their supernatural premises but because it wanted to control who could practice such doctrines and what they could preach.

One of the first WEL proponents to run afoul of the Pyrmonter Protocol was Georg Hinzpeter, president of the “Society for the Sponsorship of World Ice Theory [*Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Welteislehre* or GFW].”⁹⁵ Hinzpeter’s research on various astronomical and meteorological questions—in particular his accurate critique of Hörbiger’s icy basis of the Milky Way—failed to comport with Hörbiger’s original findings and hence were causing friction between Hörbiger’s son, who directed the Austrian Hörbiger Institute, and the GFW, under Hinzpeter’s presidency.⁹⁶ In December 1936 Scultetus began lobbying behind the scenes to get rid of Hinzpeter as president of the GFW and put the devout Nazi, racist esotericist, and WEL supporter, Rudolf von

Elmayer-Vestenbrugg, in charge (of the GFW-sponsored *Zeitschrift der Welteislehre* [Journal of World Ice Theory]).⁹⁷ Scultetus was particularly impressed by the draft of a recent article Elmayer had written, “Hanns Hoerbiger, the Copernicus of the 20th Century,” which had passed peer review at Himmler’s *Ahnenerbe* with flying colors.⁹⁸

Unfortunately, Elmayer proved not to be the best replacement. After Elmayer’s article appeared in the nonspecialist *Illustrierter Beobachter* (Illustrated Observer) in January 1937, the publisher received a flurry angry of letters from the mainstream scientific community. The Rostock physicist P. Kunze observed that Elmayer approached WEL with a “nearly religious fervor,” producing an article that “does no service either to the man on the street nor the state.”⁹⁹ The *Wehrmacht* engineer Peter Lautner added that the article “damages of the reputation of German science” in its “wholly unjustified disdain” for a generation’s work by “mathematicians, physicists, and engineers.” Elmayer should have known “very well that German scientists have no time for fruitless debates with religious theories.” How could “fairy tales” and “religious teachings” like WEL be lent “the name of science” at a moment when young men are coming to the *Wehrmacht* with minimal “basic knowledge of mathematics and physics”? Lautner sent his letter not only to the editorial staff but also “to the Ministry for Science, Art and Public Education, so that they might more effectively put the tellers of fairy tales in their place.”¹⁰⁰

A letter from the head of the German astronomical observatory, Cuno Hoffmeister, was especially critical of the “plethora of factual inaccuracies and arbitrary claims,” asking rhetorically, “What impression must a reader get if he discovers that a theory exists that in its achievements surpasses everything we know until this point, that is destined to put our entire world view and mastery of nature on new foundations, but that science—and especially German science—has refused to recognize, partly out of incompetence and partly out of ill-will?” Either the reader would recognize that something was not right in this argument, Hoffmeister suggested, or “that the positions in Germany trusted with the propagation of science are filled partly with idiots, partly with narrow-minded bureaucrats, who stand in the way of progress, either because they’re incompetent or because they reject anything that does not originate from themselves and comport with their preordained views. . . . If the reader draws the second conclusion,” Hoffmeister concluded, “then he must also take a critical view toward those individuals who appointed the representatives of science to their offices, therefore the ministries and the government . . . such publications are capable of damaging the reputation of state institutions and consequently the state itself.”¹⁰¹ Faced with this unanimous criticism from mainstream scientific circles, Scultetus and the *Ahnenerbe* nonetheless came to Elmayer’s defense, offering to bring in Goebbels’s Propaganda Ministry if necessary.¹⁰²

Only a few weeks after the Elmayer debacle, Scultetus dutifully notified Hinzpeter that his work was no longer going to be supported by the regime because it deviated from Hörbinger's original theory and hence the Pyrmonter Protocol.¹⁰³ Hinzpeter replied sensibly, "If I may make a comparison: no one would call into question the extraordinary service of Daimler or Benz, but one would nevertheless not drive in a car of their original construction, preferring a model with a more modern style. For the same reason no one would think of diminishing the great service of Hanns Hörbiger, but would focus on maintaining the living development of WEL."¹⁰⁴ Sievers and Himmler nonetheless found Hinzpeter's justification unconvincing, urging him to leave larger interpretative matters to Scultetus.¹⁰⁵ Finally, in May 1937 Hörbiger's son joined the controversy, writing an open letter to the GFW, which admonished Hinzpeter not to represent the WEL in his work with the *Abnenerbe*, since he hasn't been following the leadership principle (*Führergrundsatz*) of his father.¹⁰⁶ Hinzpeter and a colleague wrote a response, which they planned to submit to the *Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Prussian Academy of Sciences). But Himmler and Scultetus, at Hörbiger's urging, had the document suppressed.¹⁰⁷

Just when Hörbiger, Scultetus, and company were emerging from the Hinzpeter affair, a new controversy arose, stemming from a January 1938 article, "Science and World Ice Theory," by the geologist Karl Hummel, published in the mainstream *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Geologischen Gesellschaft* (Journal of the German Geological Society). Hummel began cautiously, "If unscientific thoughts on scientific issues can gain a foothold in many parts of the population, it is on the one hand a sign of the positive fact that a widespread interest in these scientific matters is present in the people; but it represents on the other hand a reproach to the relevant representatives of science, who have failed to meet the scientific needs of the people due to their better judgment."¹⁰⁸ While one could blame this lack of judgement on the socialistic Weimar Republic, Hummel conceded, the fact remains that "the followers and representatives of World Ice Theory were not proletarians, but largely representative of thoroughly bourgeois social groups (especially from technical fields)," which "shows just how far the mental confusion and alienation between the different strata then thrived."¹⁰⁹ That Nazi voters derived primarily from these "thoroughly bourgeois groups" could not have been lost on the reader.

Needless to say, Fauth was furious and the Nazi authorities troubled by Hummel's article, which suggested a link between WEL, irrational thinking, and, implicitly at least, the popularity of National Socialism. Recognizing the larger implications, Scultetus immediately forwarded the article and his initial response to Hummel to the head of the *Abnenerbe*, Wüst. Fauth's letter criticized many aspects of Hummel's article, in

particular his typically “scientific” language, such as “we *know*, we have *concluded*, we have *calculated*, we have *proven*,” words that WEL proponents rarely used because they were far too positivistic.¹¹⁰ Far from conceding anything to the amateur astronomer whom Hitler had recently granted an honorary doctorate, Hummel asserted that having a scientific debate with Fauth was impossible “because one can refute a rational but never a faith-based [*glaubensmaessige*] conviction through objective counterarguments.” Hummel, it should be noted, did not oppose Fauth’s openness to alternative points of view. “You claim for yourself the right to reject every . . . claim to authority,” Hummel observed, and “in this principle you are united with me and most scientists worth taking seriously.” After examining recent debates in geological circles, however,

you have merely taken from the discussion that science is in disagreement over some questions; indeed, we know that there are still many unsolved questions; were this not the case then we wouldn’t need to carry on further research . . . [T]here is long way from recognizing the disagreement over this or that question to the conclusion you draw that now any hypothesis you like, no matter how questionable, any air-headed collection of thoughts that completely contradicts empirical observations, may claim equal academic value.¹¹¹

It is hard to say what is more remarkable about this article and the ensuing exchange: the fact that Hummel so eloquently exposed the Third Reich’s faith-based approach to science or the fact that he was able to do so without paying any professional price.

Fauth would have the last laugh, however. While mainstream geologists agreed with Hummel, the *Ahnenerbe* chose to double down in their support of WEL.¹¹² In summer 1939, on the three-year anniversary of the Pyrmonter Protocol, the *Ahnenerbe*’s Geophysical Research Institute sponsored a conference focused on using WEL to make long-term meteorological predictions in assisting the *Luftwaffe*, which invited only those WEL proponents most favorable to the SS point of view.¹¹³ But when it came to the planned discussion of how to proceed in regard to the Pyrmonter Protocol, some debate ensued. Fauth, true to his open-minded if largely faith-based approach to science, felt that WEL supporters should be allowed to diverge from the protocol so long as they worked in “pure scientific” fashion. Scultetus nonetheless insisted that it was time to reinforce the Pyrmonter Protocol by issuing a more binding agreement endorsed by Himmler. Scultetus followed up with a letter arguing this same point to Sievers, Wüst, and Himmler, noting that Hinzpeter’s GFW would now “disappear, so that the complete efforts of the *Ahnenerbe* could no longer be called into question.” As soon as the Austrian Cosmotekhnical Society and all other related organizations

were “dissolved,” Scultetus concluded, the *Reichsführer* SS would assume “protective control [*Schirmherrschaft*] over World Ice Theory.”¹¹⁴

The official letter, endorsed by Himmler, instructed all recipients that the “promotion [of WEL] through lay publications be kept at a minimum and that no signees of the Pyrmonter Protocol may compose new works of that kind” in order to guarantee that “the reputation of WEL was no longer endangered by dilettantish treatment by other circles.” This codicil was clearly directed at individuals like Elmayer, whose terrible reputation in mainstream scientific circles was deemed a liability.¹¹⁵ Hence, what might appear at first glance as a lack of the trust in some of the proponents of WEL, whether Hinzpeter or Elmayer, was in fact another case of the Third Reich wanting to coordinate and control the supernatural sciences, absorbing the entire WEL research apparatus into the *Ahenenerbe*. Having become almost completely discredited within the mainstream scientific community, WEL’s only chance of legitimacy was based on the monopoly support of a Nazi regime intent on exploring, like Krafft, Steiner, and Hörbiger before them, a range of border sciences based on supernatural premises.

Conclusion

In her groundbreaking work on German esotericism, Corinna Treitel represents the views of much recent scholarship when she concludes, “Occultism ceased its highly public presence as part of Germany’s reformist milieu of cultural experimentation only after 1937, when the Nazi regime suppressed occultism as one of its many ideological enemies.”¹¹⁶ The evidence in this chapter, while not entirely incompatible with this statement, suggests a more complex picture. First and most importantly, the Nazi regime was much more selective in its suppression of occult and other border sciences than Treitel and other revisionist accounts suggest. As Eberhard Bauer observes, the Nazi approach to the border sciences was one of “double entry book-keeping,” alternating persecution of leading occultists with official sponsorship of border-scientific research, sometimes involving the same individuals who had been earlier or would be later surveilled or arrested.¹¹⁷

Second, the “highly public presence” of occult and border sciences did not necessarily diminish in the Third Reich. Certainly the process of coordination and control that the Third Reich exercised in virtually every aspect of cultural and intellectual life often meant reducing the free pursuit of a particular esoteric doctrine or pushing “cultural experimentation” behind closed doors—as in the case of astrology. But in terms of biodynamic agriculture and world ice theory, the regime’s commitment was both public and powerful, suggesting that the Nazis were hardly ideologically opposed to the supernatural sciences themselves. When the

regime did “coordinate” such ideas, it had less to do with an epistemological rejection of occultism than a desire to control public opinion, as in the case of popular astrology, eliminate alternative loyalties, as in the case of anthroposophy, or assert a particular version of the regime’s border-scientific view, as in the case of world ice theory.¹¹⁸

Third, and related, the Third Reich was drawn to the border sciences, as we have seen, precisely because of their interest in the “reformist milieu of cultural experimentation.” Whereas the balance between free experimentation on the one hand and coordination and appropriation on the other was always precarious, we have seen multiple examples of the regime’s willingness to experiment with alternatives to mainstream science.¹¹⁹ Whether it was Goebbels employing Krafft and Kritzinger; Schellenberg and Kaltenbrunner funding Wulff and Walther; Roeder and the *Reichsmarine*’s use of pendulum dowzers; Hess, Darré, and Ohlendorff employing BDW and defending other aspects of Anthroposophy, or Himmler and Hitler protecting and propagating world ice theory, a remarkable number of high-ranking Nazis were passionately in favor of the new possibilities offered by the border sciences and took clear political risks in defending them vis-à-vis traditional academic disciplines. In short, the regime’s ideological and epistemological investment in supernatural science extended well beyond the “pragmatic” efforts outlined in chapter 7.

Finally, and despite the Hess affair, we cannot even say with certainty that the regime’s hostility to such ideas or likelihood to persecute their practitioners increased after 1937. To be sure, the regime increasingly “coordinated” all three supernatural sciences we have surveyed, eliminating their free pursuit in civil society, arresting or co-opting their practitioners, and subordinating those doctrines to the interests of the state. But there is no clear pattern between the radicalization of Nazi domestic and foreign policy, culminating in war and genocide, and the eradication of the supernatural sciences. To the contrary, if anything, the war led to a greater willingness to experiment with border-scientific practices, even after the so-called Special Action Hess of 1941.¹²⁰

In the end, far from eliminating the supernatural sciences after 1933, the Third Reich was more concerned with exploiting these ideas and practices for their own purposes. Typical of a one-party state with totalitarian pretensions, the Nazis sought to marginalize alternative interpretations and ideologically compromised proponents of the supernatural sciences in order to preserve the legitimacy of the ideas and practices on which these doctrines were based. That is, like most border scientists, Nazi leaders repeatedly invoked the putatively “scientific” nature of the esoteric practices that they found useful, rejecting rival views as “occult” or unscientific.¹²¹ But the fact remains that the Nazis drew on a wide range of supernatural sciences in decision making and policy, ideas that, while not

invariably fascist in origin, would help facilitate projects both fantastical and monstrous during the Third Reich.

Notes

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¹ Eric Kurlander, "Hitler's Monsters: The Occult Roots of Nazism and the Emergence of the Nazi Supernatural Imaginary," *German History* 30, no. 4 (2012): 528–49; Peter Staudenmaier, "Occultism, Race and Politics in Germany, 1880–1940," *EHQ* 39, no. 1 (January 2009): 47–70; Thomas Laqueur, "Why the Margins Matter: Occultism and the Making of Modernity," *Modern Intellectual History* 3 (2006): 111–35; Uwe Schellinger, Andreas Anton, and Michael Schetsche, eds., "Zwischen Szientismus und Okkultismus: Grenzwissenschaftliche Experimente der deutschen Marine im Zweiten Weltkrieg," *Zeitschrift für Anomalistik* 10 (2010): 287–321.

² Alfred Rosenberg, as quoted in BAB: NS 8/185, 49–50.

³ Uwe Schellinger, "Die 'Sonderaktion Heß' im Juni 1941: Beschlagnahmung und Verwertung von Buchbeständen der 'Geheimlehren' und 'Geheimwissenschaften,'" in ed. Regine Dehnel, *NS-Raubgut in Museen, Bibliotheken und Archiven* (Frankfurt am Main: Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, 2012), 317–41.

⁴ Karl Krafft to Hans Bender, February 20, 1932, IGPP 10/5 AII9 file 1.

⁵ Karl Krafft to Hans Bender, March 12, 1931, IGPP 10/5 AII9 file 2; also see Hans Bender to Karl Krafft, November 10, 1936, IGPP 10 /5 AII9 File 2.

⁶ Hans Bender to Karl Krafft, October 11, 1936, IGPP 10/5 AII9 file 2.

⁷ Frank-Rutger Hausmann, *Hans Bender (1907–1991) und das "Institut für Psychologie und Klinische Psychologie" an der Reichsuniversität Straßburg 1941–1944, Grenzüberschreitungen 4* (Würzburg: Ergon 2006).

⁸ Ellic Howe, *Urania's Children: The Strange World of the Astrologers* (London: Kimber, 1967), 171–83.

⁹ Howe, *Urania's Children*, 114–19.

¹⁰ Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 229–30; August 3, 1938, sgd. Dr. Kittler, "Positives Gutachten Werner Kittler für PPK für Ebertin *Regulus Kalenders für 1939*," Berlin, August 3, 1938, BAB (*Reichskanzlei*) R 43-II/479a, <http://www.polunbi.de/archiv/38-08-03-01.html>.

¹¹ Treitel, *A Science for the Soul*, 229–30; Gerda Walther, *Zum Anderen Ufer: Vom Atheismus zum Christentum* (Remagen: Reichl, Otto Der Leuchter Verlag, 1960), 568–82.

¹² Treitel, *A Science for the Soul*.

¹³ IFZ, ED 386, G. Szczesny, "Die Presse des Okkultismus: Geschichte und Typologie der okkultistischen Zeitschriften" (PhD diss., University of Munich 1940), 55.

¹⁴ Ellic Howe, *Nostradamus and the Nazis* (London: Arborfield, 1965), 124–26; Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 77–78; Dietrich Bronder, *Bevor Hitler Kam: Eine Historische Studie* (Hanover: Summer, 1975), 239–44.

¹⁵ See Bernhard Hörmann to Eduard Neumann, June 12, 1940, Eduard Neumann to Bernhard Hörmann, September 12, 1940, in BAB: NS 18/497. Wolfgang Behringer and Jürgen Michael Schmidt, eds., *Himmlers Hexenkarthotek: Das Interesse des. Nationalsozialismus an der Hexenverfolgung* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1999); Hugh Trevor Roper, ed., *Hitler's Secret Conversations: 1941–1944* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1953); Felix Kersten, *The Kersten Memoirs* (London: Hutchinson, 1956). Wilhelm Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika* (New York: Coward, 1973).

¹⁶ H. H. Kritzinger, *Erdstrahlen, Reizstreifen, und Wünschelrute: Neue Versuche zur Abwendung krankmachender Einflüsse auf Grund eigener Forschungen* (Dresden: Talisman, 1933).

¹⁷ Ludwig Straniak, *Das Siderische Pendel als Indikator der achten Naturkraft* (Rudolstadt: Gesundes Leben, 1937).

¹⁸ Gerda Walther, *Zum Anderen Ufer: Vom Atheismus zum Christentum* (Remagen: Reichl, Otto Der Leuchter Verlag, 1960), 261–69, 409–92.

¹⁹ Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 6–7.

²⁰ Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 15.

²¹ See Krafft Horoscopes in Hans Bender IGPP 10/5 AII9 file 2.

²² Howe, *Urania's Children*, 173–76, 178–81; Hans Frank, *Im Angesicht des Galgens* (Munich: Frank, 1955), 15.

²³ Howe, *Urania's Children*, 164–72; Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 15–16; Walther, *Zum Anderen Ufer*, 560–67.

²⁴ Howe, *Urania's Children*, 164–72; Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 15–16.

²⁵ Howe, *Urania's Children*, 2–3, 182–91; Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 94–98.

²⁶ See exchange between Alfred Rosenberg's expert in occult matters, Kurd Kischauer, and Goebbels' Reichspropaganda Ministry, July 23, 1941, August 25, 1941, in BAB: NS 15/399; Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 92–95.

²⁷ Karl Krafft to Hans Bender, March 27, 1940, IGPP 10/5 AII9 file 2 (Karl Krafft).

²⁸ Hans Bender to Herr Schenz, February 16, 1940, IGPP 10/5 AII9 file 1 (Karl Krafft—Walther).

²⁹ Wilhelm Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, pp. 92–94.

³⁰ Ellic Howe, *Nostradamus and the Nazis*, 130–31; Walther, *Zum Anderen Ufer*, 599–601; Schellinger et. al., “Zwischen Szientismus und Okkultismus.”

³¹ Schellinger, “Die ‘Sonderaktion Heß.’”

³² Howe, *Urania's Children*, 192–203.

³³ Gerda Walther, *Zum Anderen Ufer*, 583–99.

³⁴ See letters, including one from personal staff of *Reichsführer* SS to Hans Bender, July 28, 1943, in NL Hans Bender, IGPP 10/5 AIII2. Also see Hausmann, *Hans Bender*.

³⁵ Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 75–77; Schellinger, Anton, and Schetsche, “Zwischen Szientismus und Okkultismus.”

³⁶ Howe, *Nostradamus and the Nazis*, 130–31; Schellinger, Anton, and Schetsche, “Zwischen Szientismus und Okkultismus”; Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 74–76.

³⁷ Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 74–76; Howe, *Urania's Children*, 235–43; Howe, *Nostradamus and the Nazis*, 131; Walther, *Zum Anderen Ufer*, 599–602.

³⁸ Wulff, introduction to *Zodiac and Swastika*, 18.

³⁹ Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 81–88, 115–19.

⁴⁰ Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 77–80, 86–87; also see files on Operation Eiche in BAF: N 756/329b, *Sonderlehrgang z.b.V. Oranienburg, SS-Sonderverband z.b.V. Friedenthal, SS-Jäger-Bataillon 502 Unternehmen “Eiche” (Mussolini-Befreiung am 12.9.1943)*; Walter Schellenberg, *Memoiren* (Cologne: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Politik, 301–2; Howe, *Urania's Children*, 235–43.

⁴¹ Schellenberg, *Memoiren*, 301.

⁴² Longerich, *Himmler*, 281.

⁴³ Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika*, 29–33.

⁴⁴ See exchange between Kissbauer and Reich Propaganda Ministry, July 23, 1941, August 25, 1941, in BAB: NS 15/399.

⁴⁵ Helmut Zander, “Esoterische Wissenschaft um 1900: ‘Pseudowissenschaft’ als Produkt ehemals ‘hochkultureller’ Praxis,” in *Pseudowissenschaft: Konzeptionen von Nichtwissenschaftlichkeit in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, ed. Dirk Rupnow, Veronika Lipphardt, Jens Thietl, and Christina Wessely (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), 77–81.

⁴⁶ Helmut Zander, “Esoterische Wissenschaft um 1900,” 88–89, 95–96.

⁴⁷ Uwe Werner, *Anthroposophen in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus (1933–1945)* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999) 7–8, 38–46.

⁴⁸ Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 47–50, 212–21.

⁴⁹ Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 32–38; Anna Bramwell, *Blood and Soil: Walther Darré and Hitler's Green Party* (Windsor: Kensal Press, 1985), 176; Peter Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming in Nazi Germany: The Politics of Biodynamic Agriculture, 1933–1945,” *Environmental History* 18 (2013): 14.

⁵⁰ See Gutachten by Alfred Bäumler über Rudolf Steiner und Waldorfschulen, in IfZG MA 610/1 (Rosenberg), 57707–23.

⁵¹ Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 3.

⁵² IfZG ED 498/23 NL Otto Ohlendorff, (1945), 2–3; Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 85–91; Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 10–11.

⁵³ Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 93.

- ⁵⁴ IfZG ED 498/23 NL Otto Ohlendorff, (1945), 2–6; Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 44–45, 83–84.
- ⁵⁵ Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 83–84; Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 5.
- ⁵⁶ Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 93–94; Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 4–8.
- ⁵⁷ Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 89–91; Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 4–8.
- ⁵⁸ IfZG ED 498/23 NL Otto Ohlendorff (1945), 2–3.
- ⁵⁹ Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 248–49, 259–61.
- ⁶⁰ Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 4; Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 49–51, 283.
- ⁶¹ Heather Pringle, *Master Plan*, 40–41.
- ⁶² Paula Diehl, *Macht, Mythos, Utopie: die Körperbilder der SS-Männer* (Berlin: Akademie, 2005), 59.
- ⁶³ See Walther Darré’s correspondence and articles in NL Walther Darré, BAK: N 1094/16 (Biodynamic Agriculture, 1951).
- ⁶⁴ Walther Darré to Herr Lübbemeier, March 26, 1953, BAK: N 1094/11.
- ⁶⁵ Walther Darré to Herbert Backe, June 1, 1941, in BAK: N 1094II/1.
- ⁶⁶ Walther Darré to Heinrich Himmler, June 5, 1939, in NL Walther Darré, BAK: N 1094II/58; Walther Darré, “Zur Geschichte des SS-Rasse-Und-Siedlungshauptamtes” in NL Walther Darré, BAK: N 1094I/3, 2–5.
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- ⁶⁹ IfZG ED 498/23 NL Otto Ohlendorff (1945), 7; Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 303–5; Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 9–10; Also see correspondence in NL Walther Darré, BAK: N 1094/14.
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- ⁷⁵ Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 279–82.
- ⁷⁶ Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 4–6.
- ⁷⁷ Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 283.
- ⁷⁸ Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 14.
- ⁷⁹ Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 11; Hans Merkel to Eugen Walter Buettner, 1951, in NL Walther Darré, BAK: N 1094/14.
- ⁸⁰ Walther Darré to Johann Blankemeyer, May 21, 1941, in NL Walther Darré, BAK: N 1094II/1; Gayl to Darré, in BAK: N1094II/1; Werner, *Anthroposophen*, 280–86.
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- ⁸³ Staudenmaier, “Organic Farming,” 16–17.
- ⁸⁴ Christina Wessely, “Welteis: Die ‘Astronomie des Unsichtbaren’ um 1900,” in Rupnow et al., *Pseudowissenschaft*, 163–78.
- ⁸⁵ Wessely, “Welteis,” 171; Robert Bowen, *Universal Ice: Science and Ideology in the Nazi State* (London: Belhaven, 1993), 4–6.
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- ⁹⁴ Longerich, *Himmler*, 279–80; Wessely, “Welteis,” 190.
- ⁹⁵ Philip Fauth to Karl Hummel, February 13, 1938, BAB: NS 21/770.
- ⁹⁶ See Hanns Hörbiger to Hans Robert Scultetus, April 15, 1937; Hanns Hörbiger to Hans Robert Scultetus, April 13, 1937; Wolfram Sievers to Georg Hinzpeter, April 19, 1937, in BAB: NS 21/770.
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- ⁹⁹ P. Kunze to Dietrich Loder, February 6, 1937, BAB: NS 21/699 (WEL).
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- ¹⁰⁴ Georg Hinzpeter to Wolfram Sievers, April 25, 1937. BAB: NS 21/770.

¹⁰⁵ Wolfram Sievers to Georg Hinzpeter, April 30, 1937; Heinrich Himmler to Georg Hinzpeter, April 30, 1937, BAB: NS 21/770.

¹⁰⁶ Hanns Hörbiger to Georg Hinzpeter, including “open letter,” May 25, 1913; also see Hanns Hörbiger to Hans Robert Scultetus, May 25, 1937; Hans Robert Scultetus to Hanns Hörbiger, May 27, 1937; Hans Robert Scultetus to Wolfram Sievers, May 27, 1937; BAB: NS 21/770.

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¹¹⁰ Hans Robert Scultetus to Walther Wüst, February 9, 1938; Philip Fauth to Karl Hummel, February 7, 1938, BAB: NS 21/770.

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¹¹² Philip Fauth, *Denkschrift*, February 1938, BAB: NS 21/770.

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¹¹⁴ “Allgemein verstaendliche Darstellungen der Welteislehre,” July 1939; Wolfram Sievers to *Forschungstätte für Geophysik*, August 21, 1939, BAB: NS21-458 (WEL).

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¹¹⁷ Eberhard Bauer, *German Parapsychology during the Third Reich* (Freiburg: Institut fuer Grenzgebiete der Psychologie & Psychohygiene, 2007).

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¹¹⁹ Wessely, “Cosmic Ice Theory.”

¹²⁰ Walther, *Zum anderen Ufer*; Schellenberg, *Memoiren*, 160.

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