

TO WHAT EXTENT WERE THE IDEAS OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844-1900) AN INFLUENCE ON HITLER AND HIS INTELLECTUAL FOLLOWING?

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This question has often been tentatively raised by writers on Nietzsche and historians of the Third Reich but, in my view, not conclusively resolved. Therefore we must ask: which aspects of Nietzsche's thought the Nazis appropriated; where they distorted his ideas; and how these errors were able to occur.

Unfortunately, these questions must involve a certain degree of speculation since Hitler in fact made no reference to Nietzsche, neither in *Mein Kampf* nor in the speeches, and the few passing remarks we find in the *Table-Talk*¹ suggest no more than a superficial acquaintance. Some facts we do know, however, are that on the Brenner Pass in 1943 Hitler presented Mussolini with a special edition of Nietzsche's complete works; that Nietzsche's anti-Semitic younger sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, gave Hitler her brother's walking-stick: and that on the occasion of Nietzsche's ninetieth anniversary (15 October 1934) the Führer paid a ceremonial visit to the Nietzsche-Archive at Weimar and was photographed publicly beside a bust of him.

It is more in the activities of certain Nazi intellectuals, however, that Nietzsche's influence is best detected. These included, among many others, notably Oswald Spengler, Stefan George, Gottfried Benn and Ernst Wachler. Typical tracts circulating at the time were: Alfred Bäumler, "*Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker*" 1931; Richard Oehler, "*Friedrich Nietzsche und die deutsche Zukunft*" 1935; and Alfred Rosenberg, "*Der Mythos der zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*" 1930.

In 1937 an extra Nazi building was erected beside the Nietzsche-Archive "to give instruction in the spirit of Zarathustra",² and on the day of Nietzsche's centenary a special lecture was delivered there by Alfred Rosenberg on the relevance of Nietzsche to the struggles of National Socialism. The archive's founder, Frau Förster-Nietzsche, published a selection of her brother's more dubious notes on the values of heroism, war and race, originally intended for his unfinished work *Der Wille zur Macht*, and during the First World War she had also organised a mass distribution of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* to the soldiers at the front line.

All this indicates a sympathetic interest in Nietzsche on the part of the Nazi intelligentsia in relation to the politics of National Socialism. Indeed, extracts from the Förster-Nietzsche notebooks were utilised by Goebbels in some of his

propaganda procedures, and Hermann Rauschnig's *The Revolution of Nihilism* in a similar way, according to Ernst Nolte, combined statements of Hitler with quotations loosely drawn from Nietzsche and Ernst Jünger.³ Now the question arises; was the Nazis' misappropriation of Nietzsche the result of an erroneous misapprehension determined unwittingly by the will of the age? Or did it represent a conscious attempt to fabricate some spuriously "philosophic" justification for themselves, involving free will and therefore moral responsibility? If so, what was it in Nietzsche that permitted him to be misused in the first place?

Essentially, it was Nietzsche's doctrine of the Will-to-Power as an index of Goodness which, in a narrowly political sense, the Nazis were to assimilate. His Superman was understood as a prefiguration of Führerprinzip, likewise his assault on Judaeo-Christianity as a variation on anti-Semitism. Nietzsche had agreeably compared his Superman to a beast of prey, "the magnificent blond brute, wildly rampant for spoil and victory",⁴ and had rashly declared of Napoleon, his Superman *par excellence*, that "for such a prize we would welcome even the anarchical crash of our entire civilisation."⁵ Nietzsche saw the fall of Roman civilisation as a return to barbarism (Hitler shared similar views) and despised Judaeo-Christianity for its encouragement of cowardliness, "resentment" and humility in place of the values of "pride, exuberance, splendid animalism, the instincts of war and conquest, ... passion, revenge, anger ...".⁶ Nietzsche's politics were quasi-Machiavellian, repudiating parliamentary democracy as a product of this same effect morality and advocating a ruling élite as the only "authentic" form of government. Lastly, he demanded what he called a "transvaluation of values", advocating a morality that went "beyond Good and Evil". "Man", he proclaimed, "must grow better and more evil – thus do I teach. The most evil is necessary for the Superman's best."⁷

However, there were many other equally important aspects of Nietzsche's thought which the Nazis overlooked; concepts like Eternal Recurrence, spiritual integrity, self-struggle and magnanimity, all expressed in subtle poetic metaphors, were either ignored or else vulgarised with political connotations. Admittedly, Nietzsche was unrealistic about the social implications of his ideas: if the Superman was a law unto himself, he had no answer to how the ruling élite was going to cohere. But he did argue that if individuals conquered all that was comfortable or unadventurous within *themselves*, then they would no longer need to use aggression against others. Again, these private dimensions were overlooked.

Here I would add, however, that another variable complicates our attempt to pursue the nature of these differences in more detail. It is that Nietzsche, in a sense, anticipated Fascism. He both predicted the collapse of traditional ideology which occurred in Europe after the first World War and understood the kind of response this was to receive from phenomena like political dictatorship. His use of the future tense in *Zarathustra* gave German patriots a sense of destiny; his belief in the bankruptcy of conventional morality, in the need to defeat nihilism, in the inherent chaos of democracy, even his dictum "God is dead" – all of these

have been borne out in some way by the events of this century, and therefore Nietzsche's philosophy also explains Nazism, irrespective of whether his influence was openly acknowledged. Indeed, with astonishing accuracy, Nietzsche once wrote: "I know my fate. One day there will be associates with my name the recollection of something frightful – of a crisis like no other before on earth ..." ⁸ Therefore perhaps we should ask not only how Nietzsche influenced Fascism, but how Fascism fulfilled what Nietzsche had already comprehended.

All these philosophic insights, however, would be quite irrelevant if it had not been for the concrete political and economic circumstances of Germany which enabled Hitler to take office in 1933. Superficially, one might compare him to Nietzschean protagonists like Zarathustra, the Anti-Christ or Superman; or Hitler's struggle to prominence with Nietzsche's Will-to-Power; or Hitler's myth about the Versailles democrats with Nietzsche's attack on petty parliamentarians; or *Mein Kampf* and its ethos with Nietzsche's self-struggle ("Eure Arbeit sei ein Kampf, euer Friede sie ein Sieg!"). ⁹ Certainly, when Nietzsche writes like this, sinister evocations of Nuremberg spring to mind: "Behold, I teach you the Superman".

The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The Superman *shall be* the meaning of the earth! ¹⁰

Yet Hitler in fact attached very little importance to "philosophy", let alone to that of Nietzsche. A. J. P. Taylor contends, "there is nothing to sustain the view that he was a close student of Nietzsche", instead suggesting, "it would be nearer the truth to say that he translated Wagner into political terms." ¹¹ R. J. Hollingdale ventures further, "to feel fairly convinced that Nietzsche played no very great part in Hitler's intellectual education, it is sufficient to have read *Mein Kampf*." ¹²

Certainly Hitler, unlike Mussolini, was no avid reader of Nietzsche. But to hold that Nazism owed nothing to intellectual precursors like Nietzsche is to make the question of how Hitler gained support from the educated middle-classes a very difficult one to answer. For it was one such supporter who, in Theodore Abel's survey of 1934 confessed: "In Nietzsche I discovered a bit of my primal self." ¹³ Moreover, one cannot dismiss the influence of Nietzsche in *Mein Kampf* simply on the grounds of there being no conscious acknowledgement. After all, Hitler was characteristically vague about the sources of his ideas, and *Mein Kampf* was also the bestseller to gentlemen as well as thugs.

Indeed, in Book Two we find passages of deistically Nietzschean overtones. In Chapter Four, Hitler writes, "a *philosophy of life* which endeavours to reject the *democratic mass idea* and give this earth to the *best people* ... must logically obey the same *aristocratic principle* ... and ensure that leadership .. falls to the *best minds*." Compare Nietzsche's assertion that society's task is "not what ought to succeed mankind in the sequence of species, but what type of human being one ought to *breed*, ought to *will*, as ... the more worthy of life", ¹⁴ with Hitler's statement "... the folkish philosophy of life must succeed in bringing about that nobler

age, ... in elevating man himself, an age in which the one knowingly and silently renounces, the other joyfully sacrifices and gives",¹⁵ where people, as Nietzsche said, "sacrifice themselves to the earth, that the earth may one day belong to the Superman."¹⁰

These quotations, however, I select quite arbitrarily. More generally in *Mein Kampf*, we find paraphrases of Social Darwinism, together with an over-riding belief in great individuals as initiators of change; Hitler heads one of his chapters, "The Strong Man is Mightiest Alone."¹⁶ These things bear some relationship to Nietzsche, albeit a coarse and tenuous one. Most historians agree that, in practice, Hitler knew nothing of Nietzsche except a few of his great catchphrases like the Will-to-Power, the Superman or the Master Race. As Werner Maser concludes from his analysis, "the only probability is that Hitler acquired from Nietzsche a few words to which he gave new currency: such words as "Macht" and "Wille" and the pathos of his exhortation to go beyond contemporary morality and "become hard".¹⁷ Hitler appropriated these slogans for the purposes of propaganda; concrete evidence extends no further than this.

Yet there is also something about these catchphrases which, in A.J.P. Taylor's words, seemed "made for Fascism."¹¹ J. P. Stern concurs, "it cannot be denied that his affective rhetoric ... was to become central to the ideology of German Fascism."¹⁸ Taylor even suggests, "Nietzsche's genius was his curse: if he had written less well, he would have never won the admiration of these solitary souls, the dictators." Then again, these phrases were lifted flagrantly out of context without regard for their underlying concepts; as Hollingdale writes, "what was required was the lifting of individual sentences and parts of sentences – not out of a mistaken interpretation but from a desire to falsify."¹²

No more was this true than of the Förster-Nietzsche notebooks. Here again one discovers evidence of Social Darwinism "the weak and infirm must perish; that is the first principle of our charity."¹⁹ Nietzsche also appears to espouse racialism and militarism, even Lebensraum: the state he describes as "a band of blond beasts, a race of conquerors and masters organised for war and strong enough to organise in their turn, seizing without qualms in their terrible grip a population that is perhaps enormously superior in numbers but that still lacks cohesion...". But this is a highly unreliable document and not at all representative of the Nietzsche corpus as a whole. Indeed, Walter Kaufmann goes so far as to attribute the Nazi's entire misappropriation of Nietzsche to the machinations of Elizabeth, its compiler.²⁰ If this solution is too convenient, statements of certain Nazi intellectuals do resemble its contents.

In 1919 Ernst Bertram avowed that Nietzsche would represent the "lightning breakthrough of the self-knowledge of the Volk at the moment of its greatest inner danger",²¹ and five years later Spengler certified, "that the Will-to-Power is stronger than all axioms and precepts ... – this constitutes the definitive apprehension of true history."²² Men such as these were in a position to monopolise criticism and publication of Nietzsche's works, in such a way that, as Hol-

lingdale writes, subsequently "it was because the leading Nietzsche scholars inside Germany said Nietzsche was four-fifths a Nazi, that the Nazis themselves believed it."¹² In 1944, for example, the Nazi press then celebrated Nietzsche as "the man who had expressed the German heroic instinct and Will-to-Life".²³ Even Martin Heidegger, another authority on Nietzsche, had asserted in 1934 that, under Hitler, the German Volk were "guided by the inexorability of that spiritual mission that the destiny of the German people forcibly impressed upon its history."²⁴ A. J. P. Taylor concludes from such evidence, "if the ... Nazis, with their Will-to-Power and their Freedom from Slave Morality, Beyond Good and Evil, were not the Supermen of Nietzsche's imagination, they were too near it to be comfortable."¹¹

Yet Nietzsche conceived his superman as someone of noble, philanthropic plans for the world, someone like Goethe or Peter the Great; he would have turned in his grave at the thought of Himmler or Goering. Doubtless Günther or Bonus saw themselves in this guise; but in their research they invariably appear to have overlooked those all-important qualifications which Nietzsche adds to virtually every one of his assertions. It was an *intellectual* battle he intended when in *Zarathustra* he wrote, "you should seek your enemy, you should wage your war - a war for your opinions."⁹ It was as a spiritual kingdom, not a military one, that he designated the word 'Reich.' By "great suffering" he meant self-induced asceticism, not malicious torture; and he said "praised be that which makes us tough", affirming the spiritually developed man, not the senseless warlord. Finally, it was Judaeo-Christianity in general which Nietzsche detested, not Jewry as such. Possibly Nietzsche was naive to expect his readers to appreciate these subtleties; as J. P. Stern comments, "there are many occasions when Nietzsche argues as though "the Will", for example, "were just such a disembodied, independent ... principle as Hitler seems to have had in mind."²⁵

But Nietzsche also appears to have understood, and despised, that same cult of personality phenomenon which Hitler later epitomised. "The hollow head", he wrote, "... heavy with the echo of the great void ... that nearly always speaks hoarse... that speaks aggressively."²⁶ Nietzsche hated state-worship, *demos*, nationalism. And of the war with France in 1870 he warned against precisely that impoverishment of culture which was to re-occur seventy years later until Nazism: "a great victory is a great danger", he discerned, for it risked "the defeat, nay extirpation, of the German spirit in favour of the German "Reich".²⁷ As Hermann Glaser put it, "for Nietzsche, to be "good German" meant to de-Germanize oneself:"²⁸ his Superman was to champion what he called the "Good European", the model western statesman, not some Teutonic demagogue. Hence in 1876 he declared: "present Germany... represents the stupidest, most depraved and most mendacious form of the German spirit that has ever existed."²⁷ It is from such evidence as this that J. P. Stern is moved to conclude, "Nietzsche, more than any other thinker, understood the situation which Hitler

exploited. In response to this situation Hitler's messianic image came into being, embodying the religiosity Nietzsche despised."²⁵

Nazi intellectuals invariably either deprecated these less favourable of Nietzsche's remarks, or else laboured to present them, as did Wilhelm Löbsack in his essay "Nietzsche and the War", 1944, as an attack on these same sectors of society which National Socialism also aimed to eliminate; namely they equated his anti-Germanism with his assault on bourgeois-liberalism.²⁹ His "Good European" they interpreted as a prophecy of "the coming struggle for a new Empire", heroically led by the disciples of the Führer. Löbsack then advanced a bizarre argument, which betrayed the Nazis' desperation at the imminence of defeat: he praised Nietzsche for having unmasked the Russian menace as a nihilist conspiracy and for demanding a new ruling élite in Europe expressly to push the dangerous colossus back towards Asia. Similar absurdities were expressed by Alfred Rosenberg in his centenary lecture. He cited Nietzsche's enthusiastic comments on the values of honour and prowess, but omitted his a-cerbic tirades on the German army in 1870. Rosenberg then concluded his address with an utterance that quite laid bare the ludicrousness of the Nazis' muddled and twisted vision of themselves, as the mythic self-appointed agents of Nietzsche's imagination, committed to the reinstatement of his own pre-Socratic utopia, the Age of Heroes: "if we can therefore proudly declare that this National Socialist Germany is today alone defending this old Europe, if we can perhaps say, albeit in another sense than did Nietzsche ... but in an even deeper way, that we today are the "Good Europeans", then we have historically and honourably earned the right to do so."²⁹

This evidence would corroborate the view that the Nazis wilfully twisted Nietzsche for immediate credit; social forces, therefore, were not the issue here. As Hollingdale writes, "it was not ignorance or error which was at work here: Bäumler and Oehler knew very well none better – that Nietzsche was not a nationalist nor an anti-Semite."¹² They exalted "Life" as he had commanded, but at the expense of tolerance, reason and self-control, calling themselves, as Kurt Sontheimer put it, "thinkers who despised thought."³⁰ Hence Stern indicts, "... they find their encouragement in Nietzsche's thinking. But where Nietzsche anxiously questions ... and tentatively speculates ..., these men reduce his complexities and ambivalences to an exaltation of the "Volksgemeinschaft" ..." Thus "they went out of their way ... to offer ... intellectual credentials to a leadership which did not want them," constructing "complex intellectual arguments in contempt of ... the mind."²⁵

It was neatly forgotten that Nietzsche shared no belief in the racial superiority of the Teutons, denouncing such notions as "a mendacious swindle",²⁷ nor any inclinations to anti-Semitism; no heed was paid to remarks like, "have abolished Wilhelm, Bismarck and all anti-Semites!" an instruction he wrote in 1889 in a letter to Jacob Burkhardt.³¹ Ronald Hayman claims from this "he would have hated the Third Reich even more, if possible, than he hated the Second",³² and

Koppel Pinson suggests further, "had Nietzsche lived on into the Third Reich he would undoubtedly have been one of the first to land in a Nazi concentration camp."³³

Yet it is also fair to argue that Nietzsche was scathing of just about everything; and in places he became self-contradictory as a result. He detested nationalism, yet advocated breeding of his "noble race"; he upheld the Superman but denounced hero-worship; he propounded the Will-to-Power but resented idolatry of the state, assailed the legacy of the Bible but admired the Jews and rejected reason and science in the very act of writing profound philosophy. So can we take Nietzsche's statements at face-value, whatever side of the argument?

Perhaps the answer is that these paradoxes are his essence. The nihilist despairs simply in order to justify the Superman, who in his turn "loves in contempt" but is still the "something to be overcome".³⁴ Abstruse paradoxes such as these are, however, not always clear; sincere comment may be obscured by ironic paraphrasing or ambivalent caricature. For example, as R. D. 'O. Butler noted, "if Nietzsche was not actually a racist, he wrote a good deal could invoke a completely different picture of Nietzsche depending on which quotations are selected. Certainly he gave the Nazis openings; his ideas do admit distortion. One French writer, Léon Brunschvig, has seen this as the key to Nietzsche's Fascist legacy: by their intrinsic acceptance or contradiction, Nietzsche placed his ideas at the disposal of intellectual opportunists with quite different concerns. Hence "their punishment is that their antithesis still resembles them."³⁶

It is these contradictions that now offer us clues as to the reason for Nietzsche's subsequent misuse. The most important of these was his attitude to German ideology. His paradox was that, as Glaser observed, "his work promoted what he rejected",²⁸ not because other men plundered him, but because the net impact on his work of collective aspirations in the society of his own day exceeded that of what he may have consciously protested to be the contrary. Nietzsche was the direct product of contemporary German society, whether he liked it or not. Besides, to propose Nietzsche's "anti-Germanism" as an argument against his alleged Nazi connections is to assume that the two Reichs, Bismarck's and Hitler's, were in some way *comparable*, and this in itself is only to reinforce my belief in the existence of an uninterrupted continuum of ideology from the Germany of Nietzsche's day to the Germany of Hitler. Taylor in fact takes this to an extreme: "from Luther to Hitler the Germans have always wanted an iron framework of discipline to keep them in reasonable order."¹¹ If this rings alarm bells of historical determinism, Thomas Nipperdey's rejoinder would be fair: "it is a rather petty endeavour to stretch Wagner or Nietzsche or Max Weber on the Procrustean bed of our concept of democracy and examine them for "pre-Fascist" tendencies ... That is the tyranny of suspicion."³⁷

Nevertheless, we see there is this Hegelian ideology-nexus, through which Nietzsche's responsibility must be traced. Now we must ask: how, fundamentally, was Nietzsche's Fascist association able to arise? But before answering this, I

would first add that here causal explanations would still not excuse the Nazis, nor would it be right to criticise Nietzsche simply on the basis of this connection having arisen subsequently. On the other hand, if the link between Nietzsche and Hitler could be proven as an historically logical one, then such a criticism would be considerably more legitimate. It would simply demonstrate that Romanticism of this literary-philosophic kind does conceal one of the most potentially dangerous of western ideologies.³⁸

Some historians cite weaknesses in Nietzsche's argument. A. J. P. Taylor describes his work as "raving made and savagely intolerant", suggesting even that his Will-to-Power was some kind of cosmic irony: "it was a provocation, almost a joke ... a jeering reference to the contemporary German craze for the power of the state."¹¹ Similarly perceiving in *Zarathustra* and *Der Wille zur Macht* the inception of Nietzsche's insanity, Hermann Glaser frames this as the reason for his subsequent legacy of nihilism; "Nietzsche's call for the Blond Beast", for the "dangerous life", for "dwellings at Vesuvius", grew out of an internal instability which heightened itself into madness."²⁸

Another explanation looks at Nietzsche's belief in the necessity of "aesthetic living." It was Gottfried Benn who upheld his obscure assertion, "only as an aesthetic phenomenon is the world and all being justified."³⁹ Nietzsche had argued that, in future, artist and politician were to be one and the same being: "... they come like fate, ... like lightning",⁴⁰ he declared, and here one recalls that same "lightning" imagery of which Hitler likewise made extensive use. Life was richer the more it was tragic, because war ennobled aesthetically. Society was to be the organic harmony, perfectly formed by this one artist-Superman - in effect along lines not very different from those of "Kraft durch Freude". Yet these implications Nietzsche apparently did not foresee. Hence, as J. P. Stern sees it, we may say he aspired to "a fatal confusion of aesthetic, ethical and personal values", which the Nazis subsequently politicised.²⁵

Underpinning this again was Nietzsche's prophetic vision. Stern remarks that in 1918, for example, "the moment of defeat and the period of anarchy following the defeat do have about them something of that "lightning" quality of which Nietzsche had spoken thirty years earlier."²⁵ Indeed it was as if Nietzsche's "prophecies" gave moral sanction to what the Nazis were going to do anyway. Or perhaps his ideas did not merely elucidate what was to happen inevitably, as I suggested at the outset, but by his very influence he moulded precisely these social forces which were to result in Germany's acceptance of Hitler. Therefore perhaps, as Wilhelm Grenzmann claims, "far from braking humanity's plunge to destruction, he deliberately hastened it."⁴¹

Grenzmann is not alone in emphasising Nietzsche's responsibility for Fascism. Peter Gay speaks of that "humourless overevaluation of ideas at the expense of experience" which characterised intellectual attitudes of Nietzsche's day.³¹ Bertrand Russell, in fact, seems to have borne an unfounded prejudice against Nietzsche, simply by linking him to the Third Reich: "I will not deny that, partly

as a result of his teaching, the real world has become very like his nightmare, but that does not make it any the less horrible.”⁴² Russell does not recognise Nietzsche’s poetic licence, denouncing him on purely ethical grounds and, in a sense, playing into the hands of the Nazis’ own equivalent misunderstandings in the political sphere. Another writer, R. D. ’O. Butler, likewise overestimates Nietzsche’s responsibility, holding that the Nazis’ “Real design ... was nothing less than the Nietzschean transvaluation of values, the education of Germans in Germany, the nihilistic revolution which would not stop at smashing countries but would wreck the very hearts of men ...”;³⁵ all this he attributes to Nietzsche as its root cause.

These errors find extreme expression in Willhelm Grenzmann’s emotional UNESCO essay c. 1949.⁴¹ Grenzmann claims Nazism took from Nietzsche not a call for anti-nihilism but its exact opposite, nihilism itself, a secret exhortation to annihilate the world. He exclaims, “the Superman of modern times is the political dictator ... But his partner the individual ... is a grey faceless being ... He is a mere fragment of the general chaos, the material that the Superman moulds and masters ...” Grenzmann interprets Nazi terrorism as the expression of Nietzsche’s terrible argument that honour achieves more than love since love was merely the outcome of fear. Finally he alleges: “Nietzsche wanted to destroy everything, root and branch; but his impassioned thought blinded him to such an extent that he could not see the foundations of the edifice; ... he took no account of contradictions; he ignored system ...”

This fanatic position cannot stand for it is surely tantamount to blaming Nietzsche for the whole phenomenon. Grenzmann also predicates his argument entirely on the contents of the Förster-Nietzsche notebooks, which, as I indicated earlier, is a misleading document. Moreover is this not reading too much into one man? After all, Fascism was only one amongst many other of Nietzsche’s influences, and, conversely, Nietzsche represented only a small fraction of Hitler’s numerous mythologies. Then as an alternative to the Superman, perhaps one could cite Wagner’s Siegfried or Goethe’s Faust, also Hegel’s power-doctrine or Bergson’s “*élan vital*” instead of the Will-to-Power. But it will not do either, to dismiss the connection altogether as Kaufmann and Hollingdale have attempted; my evidence disproves this possibility. The most balanced conclusion I have found is that of the American historian, Koppel Pinson, who expresses it like this: “Nietzsche like Hegel and all ‘dynamic’ philosophers, must bear the responsibility for having set upon the sea of German and European culture a lot of ideas and phrases which *allowed* themselves to be vulgarised and distorted.”³³

In conclusion, we see therefore that the influence of Nietzsche on Hitler cannot be explained except as part of one intellectual trend, among several others, in the history of ideas generally. Fritz Stern⁴³ and Jeffrey Herf,⁴⁴ for example, loosely account for it in terms of “the Conservative Revolution” or the “Reactionary Modernism”, positing Nietzsche as its original spokesman. A Marxist explanation might present Nietzsche as the ethical counterpart of capitalism in its

historic resort to force in defence of the traditional ideas and economics of western civilisation. Alternatively, one could view Nietzsche as the forerunner of existentialism who held that, since mankind determines his own destiny, Goodness is defined by the extent to which this destiny is fulfilled in life, authenticated in selfhood, no matter how disastrous its consequences may turn out to be. It was possibly this kind of apocalyptic mentality, for example, which led Martin Heidegger to extol Hitler in 1934.⁴⁵

These conclusions may sound speculative. Nonetheless, they are rooted in the credibility of those quotations from Nazi literature which I have analysed and found to relate, in part, to certain of Nietzsche's original concepts.

The relationship of Nazism to Nietzsche was therefore a logical one; although it also involved a substantial element of distortion and conscious selectivity. Hitler personally knew little more than a few of Nietzsche's principal catchphrases, but it was Nietzsche's original influence which helped fashion those forces of German society which were later to facilitate Hitler's rise to power. The implications of this for the integrity of Nietzsche are not to be found alarming – this is, I believe, precisely the reason why the question has so far stimulated only a mild response from historians. On the contrary, this contentious problem of how Nietzsche influenced Fascism has to be accepted, I believe, *de facto*, as a necessary historical development to be treated and approached as such.

1. HITLER'S TABLE-TALK ED. TREVOR-ROPER P. 89. 720. OXFORD 1988
2. SEE R. J. HOLLINGDALE NIETZSCHE ROUTLEDGE
3. ERNST NOLTE *THREE FACES OF FASCISM* LONDON 1985
4. FROM THE FÖRSTER-NIETZSCHE NOTEBOOKS. QUOTED W. GRENZMANN
"NIETZSCHE AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM" *THE THIRD REICH* UNESCO
5. *THE JOYFUL WISDOM* SEC. 362
6. BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL SEC 61-62
7. *ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA* "OF THE HIGHER MAN"
8. *ECCE HOMO* "WHY I AM A DESTINY"
9. *ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA* "OF WAR AND WARRIORS"
11. a. j. p. TAYLOR *EUROPE: GRANDEUR AND DECLINE* PELICAN 1969
12. R. J. HOLLINGDALE *NIETZSCHE* ROUTLEDGE
13. RESEARCH OF AN AMERICAN SOCIOLOGIST IN 1934
14. *THE ANTI-CHRIST* SEC. 3-4
15. *MEIN KAMPF* BOOK 2 CHAPTER 2 "THE STATE"
16. ALSO A FAMILIAR QUOTATION FROM SCHILLER'S *WILLHELM TELL*
17. WERNER MASER *HITLER'S MEIN KAMPF: AN ANALYSIS* TRANS. BARRY
18. J. P. STERN *NIETZSCHE* FONTANA 1978
19. QUOTED *EN MASSE* W. GRENZMANN "NIETZSCHE AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM" *THE THIRD REICH* UNESCO
20. WALTER KAUFMANN *NIETZSCHE: PHILOSOPHER, PSYCHOLOGIST ANTI-CHRIST* PRINCETON 1950

21. QUOTED BY GEORGE L. MOSSE *CRISIS OF GERMAN IDEOLOGY: INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF THE THIRD REICH* WEIDENFELD
22. QUOTED BY ELIOT S. WHEATON *PRELUDE TO CALAMITY: THE NAZI REVOLUTION 1933-35.*
23. *IBID*
24. QUOTED BY GORDON a. CRAIG *THE GERMANS*
25. J. P. STERN *HITLER: THE FÜHRER AND THE PEOPLE* FONTANA 1975
26. *THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS*
27. *UNTIMELY MEDITATIONS 1873-76*
28. HERMANN GLASER *THE CULTURAL ROOTS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM*
29. J. STERN: „HITLER: THE FÜHRER AND THE PEOPLE” FONTANA 1975
30. KURT SONTHEIMER “ANTI-DEMOCRATIC THOUGHT IN THE WEIMAR REPUBLICS” *ROADS TO DICTATORSHIP*
31. QUOTED BY PETER GAY *FREUD, JEWS AND OTHER GERMANS*, ALTHOUGH BOTH GAY AND HAYMAN ALSO PRODUCE EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY.
32. RONALD HAYMAN *NIETZSCHE: A CRITICAL LIFE*
- 33 KOPEL S. PINSON *MODERN GERMANY*
34. “DER ÜBERMENSCH IST ETWAS DAS ÜBERWUNDEN WERDEN SOLL”
35. R. D. O. BUTLER *THE ROOTS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM* OXFORD 1941
36. QUOTED BY PINSON *MODERN GERMANY*
37. THOMAS NIPPERDEY “1933 AND THE CONTINUITY OF GERMAN HISTORY” *ASPECTS OF THE THIRD REICH* 3ED. H.W. KOCH
38. ALTHOUGH THE EQUATION OF LITERATURE WITH IDEOLOGY
39. SEE ALISTAIR HAMILTON *THE APPEAL OF FASCISM*
40. *THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS* SEC. II.
41. WILLHELM GRENZMANN “NIETZSCHE AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM” *THE THIRD REICH* UNESCO
42. BERTRAND RUSSELL *HISTORY OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY* 1946 – NOTABLE FOR ITS OMISSION OF HEIDEGGER
43. FIRTZ STERN *THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL DESPAIR: A STUDY IN THE RISE OF GERMANIC IDEOLOGY* BERKELEY 1961
44. JEFFREY HERF *REACTIONARY MODERNISM* CAMBRIDGE
45. CONSULT THE CLOSING SECTION OF HEIDEGGER’S *SEIN UND ZEIT* FOR AN INDICATION OF THESE TENDENCIES.