

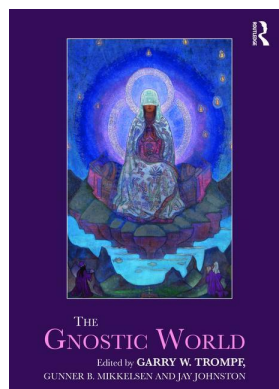
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The philosophy of Guido von List (1848–1919): connecting Gnosticism to Nazism

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CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

THE PHILOSOPHY OF GUIDO VON LIST (1848–1919): CONNECTING GNOSTICISM TO NAZISM



Jeffrey D. Lavoie

The following chapter will assess the possible connections between Nazism and the belief in a hidden knowledge (i.e., Gnosticism), especially as they pertain to the subject of Ariosophy and its founder Guido von List. Before any connection can be identified, these key terms must first be defined. For the sake of conciseness, the most generic definition of “Gnosticism” will be employed in this study, accepting that the term derives from the Greek γνῶσις, literally translated as “knowledge.” While a wider definition remains the subject of much debate, we will simply defer to Webster’s *Dictionary* for a suitable working definition: “the conviction that matter is evil and that emancipation comes through gnosis” (cf. King 2003: 1). In other words, a higher knowledge leads to a spiritual salvation that transcends the physical, natural world. Further gnostic “traits” have been identified by Tom Hall, who defined the nature of many historical “gnostics” as being “focused on the individual rather than the group,” as being “liberals rather than holy Tories ... they were hippies, not corporate executives; spiritual people rather than attendees at divine services; they saw salvation in enlightenment, they were seekers after blessedness ... they were idealists, not church-builders” (King 2003: 8). Few descriptions could apply more fittingly to the life and mystical teachings of Guido von List.

Von List is indisputably the father of a Western esoteric philosophy known as Ariosophy. Ariosophy is a current of thought propagated by Austrian-Germanic esotericists who combined racial and *völkisch* ideologies together along with a belief in an ancient knowledge (often called *ur-knowledge/gnosis*) and occultism (Mosse 1999: 4–5; Kurlander 2002: 23–6). While List labeled his teachings Wotanism and Armanism, the epithet Ariosophy was later suggested by his pupil Lanz von Liebenfels (1874–1954), and the last term has been widely accepted in modern scholarship to describe this nationalist esoteric background (Goodrick-Clarke 1995: 227). It should be clarified that a chief trait of Ariosophy included some belief in a form of an ancient gnosis which is typically assimilated into views on the origin and supremacy of the Aryan race. As such, in this article the words “Ariosophy,” “gnosis,” and “gnosticism” will be used interchangeably (as well as several variations that List employed, including “ur-knowledge/gnosis” and “Ario-gnosis”). While any study on a subject as daunting as Nazism (and Ariosophy) could easily turn into an unmanageable

and massive project, for the sake of accessibility we will remain focused on List as Ariosophy's founder-figure. This study seeks to answer the following three questions. First: why did List need to develop or "rediscover" this allegedly "ancient" gnosis, and what was it? Second: how was this gnosis practiced? And third: how did List's teachings go on to influence the rise of the Nazi Party (if at all)?

DEVELOPING THE ANCIENT-GNOSIS OF ARIOSOPHY

Despite his enormous influence on modern German esotericism, Guido Karl Anton von List (1848–1919) has been the subject of only one full-length biography, which was written in 1917 by one of his closest followers, Johannes Balzli. While many of the details of List's early life remain accessible only through this biography, it is this intimate relationship that makes the writing prone to self-aggrandizements and conclusions that are suspicious at best. What remains curious is the connection Balzli makes between List and the existence of this ancient wisdom (i.e., gnosis), as evinced by the title *The Rediscoverer of Ancient Aryan Wisdom*. Thus, the idea that List had "rediscovered" the primal "Aryan gnosis wisdom" was assumed by his early followers and provides an indisputable link between List and gnosticism.

From the very beginning, List associated himself with the primal, universal knowledge or what he called the *Ur-religion/gnosis* (which was eventually systematized into his unique esoteric belief system). He was proud of his family heritage and used a magical rune square to trace back his lineage. This occult practice indicates the type of pseudo-scientific methods List engaged in when performing his various "researches," for which he became famous (or infamous). One of his most basic and fundamental conclusions was a belief that the current Austrian and German descendants were the inheritors of the one true, primal Ario-gnostic religion. This idea became the basis for his unique mystical ideology and its racial grounding, on which future Ariosophists would build (including Liebenfels, the *Germanenorden*, Thule Society, etc.). This unusual form of gnosticism became such a defining aspect of List's teachings that it was assimilated into his own personal lineage and origin (whether real or mythical). He even incorporated this belief into his family's heraldic shield, as a historical symbol of Austrian noble families. Not surprisingly, this symbol bestowed the highest honor to the List family line:

fuartfosor: deepest knowledge of the Ur-air for the sake of revelation ... The jewel declares ... expanding (growing) deepest knowledge of the Ur-air for the sake of revelation. (I) expediently partake, guided by the wisdom of Ariarita, in the creation of rightfulness.

(Balzli 1917: 13–14)

It seemed even before he was born that List was "destined" to learn and reveal the *Ur-gnosis* to a wider Austrian-German audience.

As the first-born son of a successful businessman, List was marked to carry on the family business, but destiny had other plans for this would-be German mystic. At the young age of fourteen, he discovered the ruins of an ancient Wotan temple (Wotan was an old Saxon version of the Norse God Odin, traditionally as widely respected a divine being as Thor/Donar). It was recorded that: "He [List] felt (still unconsciously)

the presence of Hari Wotan and, in front of a torn-down altar, he took, in a pathetic dedication that takes over the sources and seeds of the Cosmos, a solemn vow: ‘When I grow up, I will build a Temple to Wotan!’” (Balzli 1917: 15). The foundation for this temple was likely torn down long ago due to the strong Christian influence that had dominated the Austrian-German religious landscape through Christian reformers, possibly as late as Martin Luther’s time. Wotan not only became a symbol of List’s nationalism, but he was also a ‘cut-out’ for List’s exoteric religious practice that he proudly called Wotanism. Yet, there was an even deeper level to List’s teaching activities: an elitist esoteric group that met in secret and was reserved for the more spiritually minded and devoted followers of List’s racial gnosis. This esoteric branch was known as Armanism, named after the ancient order of priests (the Armanens) yet borrowing some of its structure from Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism (Goodrick-Clarke 1995: 57). List was careful to distinguish between these two groups in his writing:

While Armanism is purely monotheistic, Wotanism ... is polytheistic. Since the masses were not and still are not able to grasp the immortality of the Ego (individuality) and the transience of the personality (animal nature, pseudo-ego), and also to understand the laws of reincarnation (re-embodiment) and Garma (Karma), the exoteric teachings of heaven and hell (Walhall, Thrudheim, Helheim) were created.

(Balzli 1917: 46)

Given the key ideas showing in this quotation, there is no denying that List’s Ur-gnosis owed a tremendous debt to the modern Theosophical movement led by the irascible Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891). List was introduced to her work through various associates and referenced the publications of Franz Hartmann (1838–1912), who had translated many of Blavatsky’s writings into the German language. This prompted List to reconstruct his ancient gnosis by assimilating Blavatsky’s ideological frames into his racial beliefs (Goodrick-Clarke 1995: 51). If many of his occult ideas derived from Blavatsky’s Theosophy and her macro-historical visioning, though, List altered them to make Austria and Germany the cradle of civilization (and hence of the Ur-gnosis) instead of India as Blavatsky maintained in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888: vol. 1, 311). He also replaced the *Vishnu Purana* as the main source of cosmology, switching it for the *Edda* (a book of Ancient Saxon mythology) (Lavoie 2012: 218–19). In fact, many teachings found throughout his writings, including various diagrams, were snatched from the pages of *The Secret Doctrine* (List 2005: 34, 36–8, 43; List 1914: supplemental chart). His characteristic adjustments included making German the secret holy language (as opposed to Blavatsky’s “Senzar,” the language of the Akashic text on which she based her *Doctrine*), a fixation on the number seven, and an admiration of the Incomprehensible One. When List engaged Blavatsky’s cyclical, cosmic chronology of rounds and root races (see chs. 3, 44), he argued that humanity evolved from the third “Root-race,” which was androgynous, into the fourth in which the sexes split, and finally into its present and fifth Root-race. He basically utilized her teachings to justify his own cosmology, yet instead of using Sanskrit terms deployed German ones. This included taking the concept of *karma*, which List termed “Garma,” assimilating it from a cyclical-mythological context into a German linear-historical context. He also

utilized Norse deities (Norn and Urdam) as the progenitors of the various races as distinct from Blavatsky's references to Manas, Logos, Pitris, etc. (List 2005: 48).

Blavatsky and her writings were extremely influential on List and especially in his cosmological ordering and the origin of the universe. However, nothing could supplant his own race and the sacred Ario-gnosis. For the Austrians and Germans were possessors of the wisdom, the esoteric gnosis that undergirded "not only all of the cultural history of Aryan Germans, but also that of all Aryan nations that had evolved from antiquity to the present times" (Balzli 1917: 29). This gnosis had been suppressed by Christianity at large and it desperately needed to be disseminated back into Germanic culture. List believed that by rediscovering and propagating the secret gnostic teachings, the result would be the "rejuvenation and the re-birth of Aryans, enabling them to attain the heights and reach perfection that had been dormant in them before" (Balzli 1917: 29). The idea of obtaining racial perfection is pivotal in List's writings, portending the evolution of this special gnostic Aryanism into a unique form of nationalism.

List went on to publish numerous articles and books between the years 1890 and 1903, and tirelessly worked on improving his literary capabilities and developing his writing style. It was shortly after this time that his compositions took on a noticeably esoteric aspect. This new focus followed an intense cataract surgery in 1902 that left List blind for nearly a year (incidentally in the same year the final installment of Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* was published in German translation).

While this surgery impaired his vision it also allowed him to develop gifts of clairvoyance and "extraordinary vivid activity of his memory and intuition, and immense things revealed themselves to him" (Balzli 1917: 35). This included the profound belief "that the rune song of Wotan in the Norse *Edda* contained an explanation of the original healing sign runes and magical runes; he came up with the never-before anticipated laws of creation and development of the Aryan race, its feelings, thoughts, speech, and writing, by relating these revelations to previous insights" (Balzli 1917: 36).

Renewed in ambition he produced over twelve new nationalist esoteric publications, including (we translate) *The Hieroglyphs of the Germanics* (1906) and *The Proto-language of the Aryans* (1914) on the runes and their healing signs. By these works he steadily gained his authority on Aryan Germanic history, mythology, and tradition. In 1903, in an article to the occult publication *The Gnosis*, he outlined a Theosophical cosmological picture of the universe through symbols such as the triskelion and the swastika as well as from runes.

In 1908, List published *The Secret of Runes* (*Das Geheimnis der Runen*), tracing the German language to the one true ancient gnosis-language undergirding all of history. He discovered that the root language of German was the key toward understanding an ancient Roman script that connected the rune alphabet to "the Song of Wotan." Since the names of the runes were root words of the original Aryan proto-language, the German tongue was crucial in linking the ancient gnostic teachings from Germany's ancient past to its present! This in turn inspired his first volume of *The Armanism of the Aryan Germans* (1908), which expounded a revolutionary ideology.

In this book, List introduced the idea that the Armanians were of ancient noble origin, and that the manifestation of their spirit could be found in the *Edda*, as well as in the

various Germanic myths and fairy-tales (especially those collected by the Brothers Grimm). Furthermore, List identified the Arman mystery traditions with old Austro-German customs still being practiced during his time (Balzli 1917: 39). In 1908 again, in yet another book, on *The Rites of Aryan Germans*, he derived an ancient sun ritual to the original Ur-gnosis religion of the Saxons, in his view based on a belief in racial control:

... how far we have wandered from the will of the ancient sun rite by using the Roman written law and free trade ... The sun rite was based on the old concept of racial care and, due to this, was really durable, so that even now, after its elimination – it is preserved only in folk traditions – it keeps people healthy, fresh, and strong. Those who go wandering through Aryan Germania (Middle Europe) with open eyes can find benchmarks – documents, sagas, holy trees, and thing-steeds – everywhere, and they can discover the rites themselves.

(Balzli 1917: 40)

List claimed that the true ancient Aryo-gnosis had been scattered across the history, literature and archaeology of Austria-Germany and had never been fully assimilated until now. By 1909, List pushed his theories on language and its connection to Ariosophy, publishing *The Names of Germanic Tribes and Their Interpretation* to identify how the German language should be interpreted, and by 1910 was alleging, in a work on *Ario-Germanic Hieroglyphics*, that a conspiracy lay behind the gradual repression of this Aryo-gnosis, blaming the Jesuits and Christians generally as dark forces working to wipe away all traces of the true ancient gnostic practices and the traditions of his people. This “secret science” in “many literary works” had to be “re-discovered,” against those who would end “the freedom of the Armanians and bring the Chandala (the raceless, animalistic human mutts and materialists) to power ...” (Balzli 1917: 44). In this sense, List viewed his position as a prophet and a redeemer of his people through the revelation of this unique racial gnosis.

This position was fueled by a deep disdain for materialists and his focus on the spiritual essence of race. With the second volume of *The Armanism of the Aryan Germanic People* (1911) he was laying out a plan to impart this Aryan revelation to the world:

The slogan “up to Aryanism” is the guiding principle of this work. Since the Aryan Germans have remained healthy and strong despite ecclesiasticism, despite intrigues between the Aryans and the Chandala, it is possible to save them from the troops of the rootless and to build new people in the spirit of the reawakened Arman spirit. Consolidation with God, formation of the state, law and order, and the acceptance of gender in the spirit of Armanism are the cures for the troubles of our time.

(Balzli 1917: 49)

Ariosophy (or Aryan-gnosis) now became clearly combined with German nationalism and entailed a more potent conspiracy theory to pinpoint those who were working against the Germans. With a more aggressive agenda, List pushed for a combination of a fraternity, racial superiority, a return to law and order, and national pride, all

of which solidified the Guido von List Society (founded 1908) into a new religio-political movement (Goodrick-Clarke 1995: 43).

Eventually, on 17 May 1919, List caught pneumonia and passed away. His body was cremated, and his ashes were buried in Vienna's central cemetery. An obituary published in *Prana* noted that: "Pneumonia had exhausted the meager life force, which was still weakened by the deprivations and the psychological distress of the war years. His departure was easy and unconscious ... [and he] desired to return home to the spiritual world" (Balzli 1919: 289). To his end we have been tracing the development of List's gnostic "Wotanism" and the gist of its curious secrets. The next question is: how was this Ariosophy practically applied?

APPLYING THE UR-GNOSIS AND ARIOSOPHY

List was an experienced hiker and mountain climber and he came to believe that the root to accessing this primal gnosticism was through nature. Nature was the key to all knowledge and:

a *par excellence* guide to the divine, and the conscious human search for the source of truth should always follow the trail of the nature's sleeping will ... The moment when you focus on the ever-lasting edifice of nature, you get closer to the "oldest, primeval, most profound truths" of the spiritual life.

(Balzli 1917: 18)

Nature served as an entry point towards experiencing the various forms of List's esoteric belief structure.

By 1891 the divine gnosis/nature connection inspired List to pen his great work titled *German Mythological Landscapes* in which nature, nationalism, folklore, and Ariosophy were forged together:

for the first time the monuments of the Aryan German antiquity (such as wobbling stones, sacrificial stones, phallic and vulva stones, local mountains, hill forts, cattle-sheds, tumuli), as well as folklore (the black dog, the white woman, St. Christopher, the dragon, the lint worm) are thoroughly described and interpreted ... not only are trees or roses alive, or that a brook sings to us in a silver voice, but also that we could read the meadows to see everything that an archaeologist can only discover with a spade and a shovel. Indeed, as Schopenhauer says: 'Men of learning are those who have read books. Thinkers, people of genius and those who enlighten the world and further the human race are those who have made direct use of the books of the world.'

(Balzli 1917: 26)

List attempted to enlighten the human race through the revelation of the Aryo-gnosis, creating a textbook for the reader to interpret German landscapes and runes. "The book articulates the momentous findings which, from the depths of millennia, revive the Ur-wisdom of the Aryans (Aryan Germans). *German Mythological Landscapes* is the foundation on which List built the edifice of his world-view in giant hewn stones" (Balzli 1917: 37).

From 1894 to 1895, List wrote an ongoing series in the *East German Review* called “German Mythology in the Course of a Calendar Year” that further connected the ancient Austrian-German mythologies to changes in nature, exhibiting the intertwined land, Ur-gnosis, and German *Volk* and disclosing deeper meaning behind his system. For List, myths were created because the Aryan race possessed a spiritual sensitivity and they became “wonderful pictures [that] formed the life of nature and created gods, which then reflected as a wonderful mirror of the people’s spirit their feelings and thoughts, hopes and worries, strengths and weaknesses” (List 1894: 9). The Germans were the “luckiest” of nations, for their myths contained “a higher moral pureness” and an “ethical worth” that were far superior to those told by the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, or any other race (even if there were a number of similarities among them) (List 1894: 9–10). These myths symbolized the great spirit of his people and served as proof of their cultural superiority, with its Ur-gnosticism so integral to the life of a largely agrarian people (Lauridsen 2007: 81).

In later years, List also discovered that language was the key to understanding the Germanic past and future, and the interpretation of the Ur-gnosis, and he was not the only one to conclude this. In 1902, the noted Theosophist Franz Hartmann confirmed List’s militant ideologies in his *Mysteries, Symbols, and Magical Powers*. “Since among all of the constituted nations only the Germans have a constituted proto-language, the Germans could become masters of the world, if they would only recognize the power that lies in their language” (Balzli 1917: 50). In his final book, on *The Proto-Language of the Aryan Germans and Their Mystery Language* (1914), the Aryo-Germanic original tongue became “a key for all languages and language mysteries,” using his unique

threefold interpretability, which is based on the natural Ur-law of the sacrosanct three – Creation (Becoming), Being (Prevail) and Decay towards a new uprising (Destruction- Recreation) – and that they had a reflection in the threefold division of people into Ingfoons (nutritional profession, Ingävonen), Armans (scholar profession, Irmionen) and Istfoons (military profession, Istavönen), and many other characteristics and establishments, in which this trinity was expressed.

(Balzli 1917: 50)

There are three groups of people identified by List here. The middle one, the Armans/ Imionens, were the elite class of professional academics and priests whose task it was to guard the hidden Aryan-gnosis and keep it secret/esoteric. Following the rise of Christian dominance, the Armanens broke up into various secret societies who worshipped Wotan and became the “hidden protagonists of western esotericism” (Nesi 2002: 409). They kept Ariosophy alive by hiding it in the German language using the runes as a type of kabbalistic code. This was the true lineage of the Ario-gnosis.

List’s discovery was that all primitive languages – Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and every other one – came from the proto-language of the Aryans from a one-syllable German root word called a rune. He wrote that “if one wants to trace the root-words of proto-Germanic back to their sources, and follow them back to the germinal, primordial [gnosis] words in the Aryan protolanguage, one must always write them in runes

...” (List 1914: 105). Holding this startling discovery “proved” the superiority of the German language, he sent the manuscript to the Imperial Science Academy in Vienna to be considered for publication. It was returned, however, without award or even comment, a sign of apparent rejection. But he did not give up on his combined “scientific and völkisch meaning” that “solved the puzzles of the Kala and to find the key to Antiquity” (Balzli 1917: 52–3). Apropos “Kala,” List composed one other work never formally published, but which was circulated among his closest followers under the working (here translated) title “Armanism and Kabala.” If the Kabbalah is typically credited to the Jews, List voiced anti-Semitic sentiments by insisting that “The Kabala is not a Jewish creation!” (Balzli 1917: 55–56).

List undeniably spouted anti-Semitic opinions. Though impressed at the strong nationalism of the Jews, with their attempts to maintain racial purity through marital laws, he also feared that, if given the opportunity, they would dominate and purge the earth of every non-Jew, similarly to what had been done in ancient Egypt and Canaan (according to his unique view) (List 1903: 2). He called them Germany’s “dedicated enemies,” seeing their exclusivity as a direct affront against Austria-Germany, because to a Jew every non-Jew was viewed as an unholy pagan jeopardizing their wellbeing and standard of living. It is ironic that the very fear List expressed about the Jews was eventually reversed and carried out by his own people through the unspeakable atrocities of the “Final Solution” and the mass extermination of Jewish people.

According to the Listian view, moreover, the famed Hebrew “Exodus” misconstrued the historical details of the event. It was all the result of a war the Israelites had instigated with the Egyptians as they robbed and plundered their property “as they have done many times, as is historically proven, and still do today” (List 1903: 1), and so the Exodus really “represents a successful anti-Semitic state action [by the Egyptians] that sadly was never repeated in the history of mankind” (List 1903: 1). In the long run “the inability of the Jews to form and maintain a state was demonstrated, because they lived everywhere as parasites,” until bearing weight by hosts meant they were repeatedly “carried off” (List 1896: 1–2). Despite countless anti-Semitic jibes, though, how these particular prejudices connected to his religious ideology is made unclear by the fact he could be just as intolerant of other races and religions including Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, etc., seeing them all posing threats to the Austrian-German way of life (List 1898: 9).

Such ominous connections between religion and race have naturally led some researchers to deduce a sinister goal in List’s writings. Consider Gianluca Nesi’s conclusion in an article titled “The Secret Gnosis of the ‘Spiritual Masters’ of Nazism”:

Guido List ... concealed a secret message that historians have never fully caught: God created the world through His own sacrifice and entrusted the task to carry on His work of creation to the Aryan-Germanic race. However, this mission was obstructed by Jewish people by creating a fictitious world that does not allow to get in touch with the true lineage, Creation, and the God concealed within it. The Aryan-Germanic must therefore engage a mortal struggle against Jews; by doing so, Aryan-Germanic would reach the *Sieg-heil* (the victory that ensures salvation) and would reunite to God.

(Nesi 2002: 403) [and we should note that the greeting *Sieg-heil* used by Nazis was List’s coinage; cf. Hunger 1984: 100]

While Nesi's conclusion might seem plausible at first glance, it requires too many intellectual jumps and a creative reading of List's work to justify its premise and we must be careful, as we should be in our concluding section, to gauge whether we possess sufficient "historiographic proof" (Nesi 2002: 405, 414) to confirm List's effects on Nazism.

GNOSTICISM AND NAZI SPECULATIONS

Nesi seems convinced Hitler had read List, yet the sources he cites do not confirm this direct connection because often List talks of Germany's inner enemies without specifying who they were. Still, it cannot be denied that there is an obvious esoteric influence in Nazism specifically in the ritual of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) order, and the question remains, what influence did List have on these teachings and the rise of Nazism? Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, in *The Occult Roots of Nazism* (1985), traced List's teachings and members of the List Society as they spread across various Austrian-German intellectual groups. Surely one of the most influential of these groups was the Thule Society. The Thule Society boasted some major Nazi personalities including Gottfried Feder, the financial instructor of the army and one of the main writers of the Nazi Party, Dietrich Eckart, who became Hitler's personal mentor, Alfred Rosenberg, who was placed in charge of the foreign affairs for the future Nazi regime and became the official philosopher of the party, Rudolf Hess, who became Hitler's lieutenant as well as the party's secretary, and Hans Frank, who became the governor of the Polish lands where the death camps were eventually built. If all of these high-ranking individuals were Thule Society members they would have been fully aware of the Aryo-Germanic idea and List's Ur-gnosis version of Ariosophy.

Still, for all these intellectual links, no evidence links List directly to Hitler. A trail of indirect linkages, however, can show beyond reasonable doubt that Hitler was aware of List's teachings in some form. Goodrick-Clarke notes that Hitler's knowledge of List rested "upon the testimony of a third party and some literary references" (Goodrick-Clarke 1995: 198). Inter alia Wilfried Daim (1923–2016) commented (in a 1959 lecture) that "Hitler frequently mentioned his reading List and quoted the old master's books with enthusiasm. Hitler also told him that some members of the List Society at Vienna had given him a letter of introduction to the President of the Society at Munich" (Goodrick-Clarke 1995: 198–9). And in 1921, intriguingly, Dr. Babette Steininger (a member of the Nazi Party) presented to Hitler Rabindranath Tagore's essay on nationalism as a birthday present, with the copy bearing a personal dedication which read: "To Adolf Hitler my dear Armanen-brother," suggesting a connection between Hitler and List's esoteric "Armanenschaft" (Goodrick-Clarke 1995: 199).

While other minor clusters of evidence can be discussed here – Elsa Schmidt-Falk's claim that "Hitler was particularly inspired by List's *German Mythological Landscapes*," possessing "the first edition"; Hitler's mention of his letter of recommendation to a well-known patron of the List Society; George Mosse's deduction that Hitler directly assimilated List's ideas through such associates as Alfred Schuler (Goodrick-Clarke 1995: 199–201; Kershaw 2008: 19, Mosse 1999: 75–7) – recent research has revealed deeper social connections between List and the *Führer*. Brigitte Hamann in her work *Hitler's Vienna* (2010) concludes that "there can be no doubt that young Hitler was familiar with List's theories while he was in Vienna," claiming

that certain of Hitler's ideologies could only have been derived from List's writings. Defending her position, Hamann quotes a 1920 Munich speech where Hitler credited the Aryans from the north as the originators of all human culture – in a statement virtually identical to what List wrote in *The Names of Germania's Tribes* (Hamann 2010: 211–12). The memoirs of Hitler's friend August Kubizek also have it that the young Hitler not only studied List's works, but owned at least one of his books personally (Hamann 2010: 299).

Another indirect connection has recently been uncovered by the present author following a closer perusal of part of Hitler's library housed at Brown University, which holds in its Rare Books and Manuscripts Department a copy of *Aus den Traditionen der Laf-tar-ar-Sippe der "Lauterer": eine Weihegabe an alle Treubefundenen* written by Tarnhari (Ernst Lauterer) and published by the Guido von List Society. This book builds upon List's theories, citing the master himself. In fact, List's writings were prerequisites for understanding the teachings put forth in this small booklet as it could "only be understood, if one has a thorough knowledge of the main works of List" (Lauterer 1910: 3). Lauterer even went so far as to call List's work "supernatural!," an interesting claim in a well-worn copy in Hitler's possession (Lauterer 1910: 3–7, 60–3, 81–2, 94).

Of course sorting out these filaments should not detract from a wider study of all that is going on in the minds of millions of Germany's Christians, indeed over sixty million of them, in the huge story of nationalism, world war, depression, and counter-depression and renewed war; but the role of List's "current in the religionization" of Nazism (especially through the SS practices and symbols) requires recognition and further attention" (Strube 2015: 34; Goodrick-Clarke 1995: 217; Longerich 2012: 28, 266; cf. Hockenos 2004: 4). On Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke's pertinent assessment, "List's blueprint for a new pan-German empire was detailed and unambiguous. It called for the ruthless subjection of non-Aryans to Aryan masters in a highly structured hierarchal state," even though for him "Ariosophy is a symptom rather than an influence in the way it anticipated Nazism" (Goodrick-Clarke 1995: 63, 202). In my own view, to conclude, I concur with Goodrick-Clarke: List's Ariosophy did not create Nazism, rather it was a not-insignificant factor that influenced a culture that led to the establishment of the Nazi movement.

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