
Documentation

The 'ecologist' outlook in Adolf Hitler's words

by Susan Welsh

Adolf Hitler, particularly in the early phases of the Nazi party's movement, promoted a program with which today's Greens would feel quite at home. The basic concept was laid out in his notorious *Mein Kampf*, published in 1924, nine years before the Nazi seizure of power. In it Hitler rejects the fundamental principle of both Judaism and Christianity, the call of Genesis for man to "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it." (This postulate was the subject of the encyclical *Laborem Exercens* by Pope John Paul II in Sept. 1981. The encyclical was immediately denounced by ecologists and advocates of "population control.") In Hitler's book, "nature" is synonymous with the supremacy of the "Aryan race." He writes:

When man attempts to rebel against the iron law of Nature, he comes into struggle with the principles to which he himself owes his existence as a man. And so his action against Nature must lead to his own doom.

Here, of course, we encounter the objection of the modern pacifist, as truly Jewish in its effrontery as it is stupid! "Man's role is to subdue nature."

Millions thoughtlessly parrot this Jewish nonsense and end up by really imagining that they themselves represent a kind of conqueror of Nature; though in this they dispose of no other weapon than an idea, and at that such a miserable one, that if it were true no world at all would be conceivable.

But quite aside from the fact that man has never yet conquered Nature in anything; but at most has caught hold of and tried to lift one or another corner of her immense gigantic veil of eternal riddles and secrets, that in reality he invents nothing but only discovers everything, that he does not have dominion over Nature, but has only risen on the basis of his knowledge of various laws and secrets of Nature to be lord over those other living creatures who lack this knowledge. . . .

Those who want to live, let them fight, and those who do not want to fight in this world of eternal struggle do not deserve to live.

Even if this were hard—that is how it is! Assuredly, however, by far the harder fate is that which strikes the man who thinks he can overcome Nature, but in the last analysis only mocks her. Distress, misfor-

tune, and diseases are her answer.

The man who misjudges and disregards the racial laws actually forfeits the happiness that seems destined to be his. He thwarts the triumphal march of the best race and hence also the precondition for all human progress, and remains, in consequence, burdened with all the sensibility of man, in the animal realm of helpless misery.

While the racial aspect of Hitler's notion would remain central to the ideology of his movement, the "Green" ideal of a pastoral, feudalist "back to the land" lifestyle was only "for the mickies," and was eventually sacrificed to Hitler's demand for a war machine to subjugate Europe and the world. The extent of Hitler's "pacifism" was already indicated in *Mein Kampf*, where he wrote that "anyone who really desired the victory of the pacifistic idea in the world would have to fight with all the means at his disposal for the conquest of the world by the Germans; for, if the opposite should occur, the last pacifist would die out with the last German. . . . In actual fact the pacifistic-humane idea is perfectly all right perhaps when the highest type of man has conquered and subjected the world to an extent that makes him sole ruler of this earth."

Such forthright statements apart, the "left" wing of the Nazi party did push a "green" program, until it was liquidated in the 1934 "Night of the Long Knives" in which left leaders Ernst Röhm and Gregor Strasser were murdered. The Strasser wing of the party had worked out a radical anti-industrial capitalist program for the Brown Shirts, the *Sturmabteilungen* (SA), in 1926. Its goal was a return to an artisan, pre-capitalist economic form, to primitive exchange of agricultural goods and handicrafts. The SA was not opposed to cooperation with the Communists, even though the two sometimes fought it out in the streets. According to an SA document: "The SA-man can, if necessary, understand the militant Red; he recognizes in him the readiness to give his life for an idea; he stands by him since he too comes from the *Volk*; he has sympathy for him because many comrades originally came from the Commune and had first to be won over to the Führer. Never does the SA-man have the slightest sympathy for anything reactionary."

Viewed from this historical vantage point, it is less surprising to find old Nazi Werner Vogel exposed as a leading parliamentarian for the Greens, and to find self-professed neo-Nazis lauding the efforts of their "left-ecologist" cohorts.