



# Hammer of the Gods: The Thule Society and the Birth of Nazism

By David Luhrssen

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**Hammer of the Gods: The Thule Society and the Birth of Nazism** By David Luhrssen

Public interest in Adolf Hitler and all aspects of the Third Reich continues to grow as new generations ponder the moral questions surrounding Nazi Germany and its historical legacy. One aspect of Nazism that has not received sufficient attention from historians of the Third Reich is the doctrine's origins in the Thule Society and its covert activities. A Munich occult group with a political agenda, the Thule Society was led by Rudolf von Sebottendorff, a German commoner who had been adopted by nobility during a sojourn in the Ottoman Empire. After returning to Europe, Sebottendorff embraced a form of theosophy that stressed the racial superiority of Aryans. The Thule Society attempted to establish an anti-Semitic, working-class front for disseminating its esoteric ideas and founded the German Workers' Party, which Hitler would later transform into the National Socialist German Workers' (Nazi) Party. Several of the society's members eventually assumed prestigious posts in the Third Reich. David Luhrssen has written the first comprehensive study of the society's activities, its cultural roots, and its postwar ramifications in a historical-critical context. Both general readers and academics concerned with European cultural and intellectual history will find that *Hammer of the Gods* opens new perspectives on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe.

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#### Review

"*Hammer of the Gods* is the mother lode of insights into the mindset of the Third Reich, and affirms a compelling thesis of extreme nationalism borne on the wings of international myth making. This book is for anyone who enjoys unsolved mysteries, history, and mythology, Nazi politics by stealth and terror, and attempts to probe the dark side of the human psyche. *Hammer of the Gods* is told in a compelling style that relates a haunting narrative; the reader will find this book bone chilling as its key ideologues set Adolf Hitler on his perversions of humanity, power, and destiny which exploded into a worldwide conflagration."—*Lone Star Book Review*

(*Lone Star Book Review*)

"David Luhrssen's compelling narrative exposes the crucible of Nazism in the nationalist Thule Society in post-1918 Munich. This secret organization provided the infant Nazi Party with a mass-circulation newspaper, while its key ideologues—Dietrich Eckart, Alfred Rosenberg, and Rudolf Hess—set Adolf Hitler on his path to power."—Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, author of *The Occult Roots of Nazism*

(Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke)

"In this beautifully written book, David Luhrssen evokes with lyric character studies key intellectual developments predating the critical years of Weimar and the long overlooked link between *völkisch* societies and Hitler's perversions of humanity, power, and destiny. From the Indus to Vienna, from Constantinople to Munich, the trail takes us to Nazism's door and affirms a compelling thesis of extreme nationalism borne on the wings of international myth making."—Barbara Syrrakos, professor of history, City University of New York

(Barbara Syrrakos)

"*Hammer of the Gods* provides a mother lode of insights into the mindset of the Third Reich, the personalities that populated the German landscape at the collapse of the empire in 1918, the impact of a miniscule neopagan occult lodge in planting the seeds of destruction, and the violent undercurrents in the struggle between Left and Right that thrived on fanaticism, exploding into a worldwide conflagration. Anyone who enjoys unsolved mysteries, history, mythology, politics by stealth and terror, and attempts to probe the dark side of the human psyche, told in a compelling style that relates a haunting narrative, will find this book chilling yet crave for more."—Glen Jeansonne, professor of history, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

(Glen Jeansonne)

#### About the Author

DAVID LUHRSSSEN is the arts and entertainment editor at Milwaukee's Shepherd Express and has worked as a film critic for more than twenty years. He is the author of *Mamoulia: Life on Stage and Screen*.

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