



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

David Luhrssen

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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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