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The MORNING of the MAGICIANS

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Translated from the French by Rollo Myers



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*To the fine soul, to the warm heart of Gustave Bouju,
a worker, a real father to me. In memoriam.*

L.P.

forces of the Universe which had been set in motion to drown the Earth and punish humanity, because humanity had allowed the ice to triumph over fire and the forces of death to prevail over the powers of life and resurrection. The vengeance of Heaven would strike; all that was left for him to do on his deathbed was to summon the Great Flood. Hitler staged a water sacrifice and gave orders that the Berlin Underground should be flooded: 300,000 people who had taken refuge there perished in this way. It was an act of initiative magic: this gesture would be the signal for Apocalyptic events in the Heavens and on the Earth. Goebbels published one last article before putting to death in the Bunker his wife and children and committing suicide himself. He declared that the tragedy that was being enacted was not on an earthly, but on a cosmic plane. 'Our end will be the end of the whole Universe.'

They soared on the wings of their demented imagination into infinite space - and died in a cellar.

They thought they were preparing the way for a demi-god who would command the elements. They believed in a cycle of fire. They would conquer the ice, on Earth and in Heaven, and their soldiers died of exposure in performing their natural functions. They had fantastic ideas about the evolution of the species, and thought that far-reaching mutations would take place. And the last news they received from the world outside came to them from the head keeper of the Berlin Zoo who, from his perch on the branch of a tree, telephoned it to the Bunker.

In the days of their power, ambition and pride, they prophesied:

*'Le grand âge du monde renaît.
Les années d'or reviennent;
La terre, comme un serpent,
Renouvelle ses vêtements usés de l'hiver.'*

But there is, no doubt, a deeper kind of prophesy that condemns the prophets themselves to a more than tragic - a caricatural death. From the depths of their cellar, with the thundering of the tanks growing ever louder in their ears, they ended their tumultuous and evil lives in the agony and supplication which Shelley in his *Hellas*, describes:

'Oh, cease! must hate and death return?
Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past,
Oh, might it die or rest at last!'

VII

A hollow Earth - We are living inside it - The Sun and Moon are in the centre of the Earth - Radar in the service of the Wise Men - Birth of a new religion in America - Its prophet was a German airman - Anti-Einstein - The work of a madman - A hollow Earth, Artificial Satellites and the notion of Infinity - Hitler as arbiter - Beyond coherence

We are in April 1942. Germany is putting her whole strength into the war. Nothing, it would seem, could distract the technicians, scientists and military chiefs from the performance of their immediate tasks.

Nevertheless, an expedition organized with the approval of Goering, Himmler and Hitler set out from the Reich surrounded by the greatest secrecy. The members of this expedition were some of the greatest experts on radar. Under the direction of Dr. Heinz Fisher, well known for his work on infra-red rays, they disembarked on the island of Rügen in the Baltic. The expedition was equipped with the most up-to-date radar apparatus, despite the fact that these instruments were still rare at that time, and distributed over the principal nerve-centres of the German defence system.

However, the observations to be carried out on the island of Rügen were considered by the Admiralty General Staff as of capital importance for the offensive which Hitler was preparing to launch on every front.

Immediately on arrival at their destination Dr. Fisher aimed his radar at the sky at an angle of 45 degrees. There appeared to be nothing to detect in that particular direction. The other members of the expedition thought that a test was being carried out. They did not know what was expected of them; the object of these experiments would be revealed to them later. To their amazement, the radar remained fixed in the same position for several days. It was then that they learned the reason: Hitler had formed the idea that the Earth is not convex but concave. We are not living on the outside of the globe, but inside it. Our position is comparable to that of flies walking about inside a round bowl. The object of the expedition was to demonstrate this truth scientifically. By the reflection of radar rays travelling in a straight line it would be possible to obtain an image of points situated at a great distance inside the sphere. The expedition also had a second object, namely, to obtain by reflection an image of the British Fleet at Scapa Flow.

Martin Gardner tells the story of this crazy adventure on the island of Rügen in his book *In the Name of Science*. Dr. Fisher himself made some allusion to it after the war. In 1946 Professor Gerard S. Kuiper, of the Mount Palomar Observatory, wrote a series of articles on the theory of a hollow Earth which had inspired this expedition. This is what he wrote in *Popular Astronomy*: 'High officials in the German Admiralty and Air Force believed

in the theory of a hollow Earth. They thought this would be useful for locating the whereabouts of the British Fleet, because the concave curvature of the Earth would facilitate long-distance observation by means of infra-red rays, which are less curved than visible rays.' The engineer Willy Ley records the same facts in his essay (May 1947) on 'Pseudo-sciences Under the Nazi Régime'.

All this is extraordinary, but true: high Nazi dignitaries and military experts denied purely and simply what has always appeared self-evident even to a little child in our civilized world - namely, that the Earth is round, and that we are living on its surface. Above us, so the child believes, is an infinite Universe with its myriads of stars and galaxies. Beneath us is a hard rock.

Whether he be English, French, American or Russian, our small boy in all these respects is in agreement with official science, and also with the accepted religions and philosophies. Our moral code, our arts and our techniques are founded on this vision which seems to be confirmed by experience. If we are looking for something that can provide the best guarantee of the unity of our modern civilization, it is in our cosmogony that we shall find it. As regards essentials, that is to say, the situation of man and the Earth in the Universe, we are all agreed, Marxists and non-Marxists alike. Only the Nazis thought differently.

The defenders of the hollow Earth theory, who organized the famous para-scientific expedition to the island of Rügen, believed that we are living inside a globe fixed into a mass of rock extending to infinity, adhering to its concave sides. The sky is in the middle of this globe; it is a mass of bluish gas, with points of brilliant light which we mistake for stars. There are only the Sun and the Moon - both infinitely smaller than the orthodox astronomers think. This is the entire Universe. We are all alone, surrounded by rock.

We shall see how this conception arose - out of legends, intuition and illumination. In the year 1942 a nation engaged in a war in which everything depends on technique expects science to come to the aid of mysticism, and mysticism to increase the efficiency of techniques. Dr. Fisher, a specialist in infra-red rays, is entrusted with the mission of using radar for the benefit of people who believe in magic.

In Paris or London we have our eccentrics, our believers in weird cosmogonies, our prophets who preach all kinds of strange things. They publish pamphlets, frequent old bookshops, address meetings in Hyde Park or the *Salle de Geographie* in the Boulevard Saint-Germain. In Hitler's Germany we saw people of this kind mobilizing the forces of a nation and the whole technical machinery of an army at war. We saw the influence they had over the High Command, the political leaders and the scientists. This is because such people belonged to a brand-new civilization founded on a contempt for classical culture and reason. In such a civilization intuition, mystical and poetical illumination are elevated to exactly the same level as scientific research and rational learning. 'When I hear anyone speaking of culture I draw my revolver,' said Goering. This terri-

fyng saying has a double meaning: a literal one that shows us a Goering-Ubu demolishing the intellectuals, and a deeper one that is really more harmful to what we call culture which shows Goering firing explosive bullets in the form of Horbiger's cosmogony, the hollow Earth theory or the mystical dogmas of the group known as *Thule*.

The hollow Earth theory was initiated in America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. On 10th April, 1818, all the members of Congress, Heads of Universities and a few leading scientists received the following letter:

Saint-Louis,
Missouri,
N. America.
10th April.

To the whole world:

I declare that the Earth is hollow and habitable in the interior. It contains several solid, concentric spheres, placed one inside the other, and is open to the pole at an angle of from 12 to 16 degrees. I undertake to prove the truth of what I am asserting, and am ready to explore the interior of the Earth if the world agrees to help me in my undertaking.

(signed) Jno. Cleves Symnes,
Captain (Retd.) Ohio Infantry.

Sprague de Camp and Willy Ley in their remarkable book, *From Atlantis to Eldorado*, give the following account of the theory and of the adventures of the former Captain:

'Symnes maintained that since everything in the world was hollow, including bones, hair, the stalks of plants, etc., the planets too were hollow; and in the case of the Earth it was possible to distinguish five spheres one inside the other, all of them being habitable both inside and out, and equipped with enormous polar apertures through which the inhabitants of each sphere could go from any one point to another, inside or out, like ants running about on the inside or the outside of a china bowl. . . . Symnes organized lecture tours on the scale of electoral campaigns. He left behind him, after his death, masses of notes and what was probably a little wooden model of the Symnes Globe now in the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. His son, Americ Vespucci Symnes, was one of his disciples, who tried, unsuccessfully, to collect his father's notes and present them in a coherent form. He contributed the suggestion that, in the course of time, the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel would be discovered, probably living inside the outermost sphere.'

In 1870 another American, Cyrus Read Teed, proclaimed, in his turn, that the Earth was hollow. Teed was a very learned man, who had specialized in alchemist literature. In 1869, while working in his laboratory and meditating on the Book of Isaiah, he had a vision. He at once understood that we were living, not on the

legends, so he created a sort of religion and, in order to publicize his teaching founded a small journal entitled *The Sword of Fire*. In 1894 he had a following of more than 4,000 fanatics. His religion was called *Koreshism*. He died in 1908, after announcing that his corpse would not suffer decay. But his disciples were obliged to embalm him after two days.

This idea of a hollow Earth is connected with a tradition which is to be found everywhere throughout the ages. The most ancient religious texts speak of a separate world situated underneath the Earth's crust which was supposed to be the dwelling-place of departed spirits. When Gilgamesh, the legendary hero of the ancient Sumerian and Babylonian epics, went to visit his ancestor Utnapishtim, he descended into the bowels of the Earth; and it was there that Orpheus went to seek the soul of Euridice. Ulysses, having reached the furthestmost boundaries of the Western world, offered a sacrifice so that the spirits of the Ancients would rise up from the depths of the Earth and give him advice. Pluto was said to reign over the underworld and over the spirits of the dead. The early Christians used to meet in the catacombs, and believed that the souls of the damned went to live in caverns beneath the Earth. Venus, in some Germanic legends, was banished to the bowels of the Earth. Dante situated his Inferno among the lowest circles. In European folk-lore dragons have their habitat underground, and the Japanese believe that deep down underneath their island dwells a monster whose stirrings are the cause of earthquakes.

We have referred above to a pre-Hitlerian secret society, the Vril which mixed these legends with the theories put forward by the English author Bulwer Lytton in his novel *The Coming Race*. According to the members of this society, beings endowed with psychic powers superior to our own inhabit caverns in the centre of the Earth. One day they will come forth and reign over us.

At the end of the 1914 war a young German airman, Bender, while a prisoner in France, discovered some old copies of Teed's paper *The Sword of Fire* along with some propaganda pamphlets in support of the hollow Earth theory. Attracted by this creed, and having himself received 'enlightenment' on the subject, he developed and formulated this doctrine in precise terms and, on his return to Germany, founded a movement entitled the *Hohl Welt Lehre*. He also continued the work of another American, Marshall B. Gardner, who in 1913 had published a book to prove that the Sun was not above the Earth, but inside it, and that it was the pressure exerted by its rays that kept us attached to the Earth's concave surface.

For Bender, the Earth is a sphere of the same size as in orthodox geography, but hollow; living creatures adhere to its internal surface through the agency of certain solar radiations. All round there is nothing but rock, stretching to infinity. The layer of air inside extends to forty-five miles, after which it rarefies to become a complete vacuum in the centre, where there are three bodies:

the Sun, the Moon, and a PHANTOM UNIVERSE. This consists of a globe of bluish gas pierced by bright, shining points of light which the astronomers call stars. It is night over a part of this concave Earth when the blue mass passes in front of the Sun, and the shadow of this mass on the Moon produces eclipses. We, on the other hand believe in an external Universe, situated outside us, because light-rays do not travel in a straight line but, with the exception of infra-red rays, are curved. This theory of Bender's became popular round about the 1930s. The rulers of Germany and officers of the Admiralty and Air Force High Command believed that the Earth is hollow.

It is quite fantastic that men in charge of a nation's destiny should have shaped their policy to some extent on mystical intuitions and theories which deny the existence of our Universe. It is nevertheless true that for the ordinary German 'man in the street', in the 1930s, crushed by defeat and misery, the idea of a hollow Earth might well have seemed, after all, no crazier than the idea of sources of unlimited energy being contained in a speck of matter, or the notion of a four-dimensional Universe. Since the end of the nineteenth century science has been following a path which seems to run counter to common sense. To a nation of primitive, unhappy and mystically-minded people anything strange seemed admissible, especially if it were something as comprehensible and consoling as the idea of a hollow Earth. Hitler and his cronies, who were men of the 'people' and hostile to any kind of intellectualism, were no doubt more inclined to accept the ideas of a man like Bender than the theories of an Einstein which revealed a Universe of infinite complexity which demanded an infinitely delicate approach. Bender's world was apparently as mad as Einstein's; but represented a more elementary form of madness. Bender's explanation of the Universe, though starting from crazy premisses, was logically developed. The madman had lost everything except his reason.

The *Hohl Welt Lehre*, which considered humanity to be the only intelligence in the Universe, which reduced that Universe to the dimensions of the Earth and gave men the sensation of being enfolded, enclosed and protected, like a foetus in the womb, satisfied certain aspirations of an unhappy people, thrown back on themselves and full of pride and resentment against the outside world. It was, moreover, the only German theory which could be set against the teaching of the Jew Einstein.

Einstein's theory was based on the Michelson-Morley experiment showing that the speed of light travelling in the direction of the Earth's rotation is the same as that of light travelling at right angles to the Earth's orbit. Einstein deduced from this that light is not 'carried' on anything, but is composed of independent particles. From these premisses Einstein saw that light contracts along the path on which it is moving and that it is a condensed form of energy. He then formulated the theory of the relativity of the speed of light. In Bender's system the Earth, being hollow,

Earth, but inside it. This vision gave fresh confirmation to ancient legends, so he created a sort of religion and, in order to publicize his teaching founded a small journal entitled *The Sword of Fire*. In 1894 he had a following of more than 4,000 fanatics. His religion was called *Koreshism*. He died in 1908, after announcing that his corpse would not suffer decay. But his disciples were obliged to embalm him after two days.

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does not move, so the Michelson theory does not apply. The hollow Earth theory therefore seems to conform to reality just as much as Einstein's. At that time no experiment had yet been made to verify Einstein's thesis, as the atomic bomb had not yet arrived to provide an absolutely conclusive and terrifying proof of its correctness. The German rulers made this a pretext for discrediting the work of the distinguished Jewish scientist, and for launching a campaign against Jewish scientists and official science in general.

Einstein, Teller, Fermi and a number of other eminent scientists were obliged to go into exile. They were welcomed in the United States, and provided with money and well-equipped laboratories. It was from these beginnings that America built up her atomic power. Thus the rise to power of occult forces in Germany had the result of endowing America with nuclear energy.

The most important study centre in the American Army was at Dayton, Ohio. In 1957 it was announced that the laboratory there where work was proceeding on the hydrogen bomb had succeeded in producing a temperature of one million degrees. The scientist who had successfully conducted this astonishing experiment was none other than the Dr. Heinz Fisher who had led the expedition to the island of Rügen to verify the truth of the hollow Earth theory.

Ever since 1945 he had been working freely in the United States. When asked by the American Press about his past, he said: 'The Nazis forced me to do crazy things which hindered me considerably in my researches.' One wonders what would have happened, and how the war would have developed if Dr. Fisher's researches had not been interrupted to further the mystical notions of Bender. . . .

After the Rügen expedition, Bender's prestige, in the eyes of the Nazi leaders, declined, in spite of the protection of Goering who had a great affection for this formerly distinguished airman.

The followers of Horbiger, the believers in the Universe of eternal ice, won the day. Bender was thrown into a concentration camp and died there. He was thus a martyr to the theory of the hollow Earth.

Some time before the crazy expedition, however, the Horbigerians had mocked at Bender and demanded a ban on his writings in support of the hollow Earth theory. Horbiger's system was on the same scale as orthodox cosmology, and it would be impossible to believe at one and the same time in a Cosmos where ice and fire are in eternal conflict, and in a hollow globe surrounded by an infinite expanse of rock. Hitler was asked to decide between them. His answer gives food for thought: 'Our conception of the world need not be coherent. They may both be right.'

The important thing is not coherence and unity in our thinking, but the destruction of systems based on logic and reason, the mystical dynamism and explosive force of intuition.

In the sparkling darkness of the magician's night there is room for more than one spark.

VIII

Grist for our horrible mill - The last prayer of Dietrich Eckardt - The legend of Thule - A nursery for mediums - Haushofer the magician - Hess's silence - The swastika and the mysteries of the house of Ipatiev - The seven men who wanted to change life - A Thibetan colony - Exterminations and ritual - It is darker than you thought

IN Kiel, after the war, there lived a worthy doctor, a *bon vivant* specializing in National Health Insurance, named Fritz Sawade.

Towards the end of 1959 a mysterious voice warned the doctor that he was going to be arrested. He ran away, wandered about for a week and then surrendered. He was in reality the *Obersturmbannführer* S.S. Werner Heyde. Professor Heyde had been the doctor responsible for the scheme for euthanasia which from 1940 to 1941 caused the death of 200,000 Germans and prepared the way for the extermination of foreigners in the concentration camps.

With reference to this arrest, a French journalist who has made a special study of Hitler's Germany (M. Nobecourt) wrote as follows in *Carrefour* on 6th January, 1960:

'The case of Heyde, like many others, can be compared to an iceberg, of which the part that is visible is the least important. . . . Euthanasia of the weak, and mass extermination of all communities liable to "contaminate the purity of German blood" were carried out with a pathological degree of ruthlessness and an almost religious conviction that bordered on madness. To such an extent, indeed, that many observers who followed the post-war trials - scientific or medical authorities who would be most unlikely to accept any explanation of a mystical nature - were forced in the end to the conclusion that the motive could not have been merely political passions, but that there must have been a kind of mystical bond between all those, chiefs and subordinates alike, who acted in this way - between Himmler, in fact, and the lowest-ranking guard in a concentration camp.

'The hypothesis of a community of Initiates beneath the cloak of National-Socialism gradually came to be accepted. This must have been a truly Satanic community, obeying secret dogmas far more elaborate than the elementary precepts of *Mein Kampf* or the *Twentieth Century Myth*, and practising rites single instances of which would not attract attention although the experts on Nazi pathology (who, as we said before, were trained scientists and doctors) had no doubt whatever that they existed.' More grist for our horrible mill!

We do not, however, believe that there was only one well organized and widely diffused secret society, or only one dogma or even an organically constituted ritual system. On the contrary;