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III^oC-15

November 8, XVII

The reason for my silence during the past month is about to be explained; I have been out of the country. During the first part of October I participated in a series of tours of NATO installations in England, Belgium, and Germany arranged through the World Affairs Council. I haven't been to London and Brussels since 1958 or to Germany since XIII, so it was interesting to see the changes and non-changes that have occurred. It was surprising to discover that London, which I had supposed to be a nerve-center of occultism, has only one tiny bookshop - "Atlantis" - dealing in the Black Arts. It is perhaps 1/4 the size of Gilbert's in L.A. or Weiser's in NYC, and I made no discoveries within its shelves. The owner was pleased to display a stock of our informational pamphlets, however.

On the next block I bumped into the London office of E.J. Brill, the Dutch publishers who once published Seth, God of Confusion hardcover and expensive. For many years it has been out of print; now it is back in print softcover and less expensive (48.00 Dutch Gld.) We will explore ways to order this unique volume at minimum inconvenience to Setians.

After the conclusion of the NATO tours, I was able to undertake a long-awaited personal quest. In "That Other Black Order", an article on Nazi occultism which I wrote for Cloven Hoof #IV-4 (April VII) [DO-1, Appendix #40], I recounted that Heinrich Himmler had appropriated a Westphalian castle, the Wewelsburg, and had modified it for ritual and Black Magical activities of the SS. The more I tried to obtain details concerning the Wewelsburg, the more frustrated I became. It was soon apparent that author after author had simply recited the half-paragraph's worth of rumors first published in the mid-1950s. No one had troubled to visit the castle [if it still existed] nor photograph it.

Until this last month, therefore, I had no idea whether the Wewelsburg still existed - and, if so, whether the chambers in question had been destroyed, remodeled, or simply sealed.

Tourist guides of Germany made no mention of the castle; it was only with the aid of a large-scale map of Westphalia that I found the initials "Schl"[oss] next to the tiny village of Wewelsburg. It was the better part of a day's drive on the high-speed autobahn from Frankfurt on 10/19, then a zig-zag course through a thick forest on a small back road into the town - which looked as small and sleepy as any other German town. Still no castle to be seen. Then a directional marker ("Zum Schloss") pointing down a back alley, with more twists

and turns - and then: Castle Wewelsburg, apparently intact and perfectly preserved, and virtually invisible even from the town because of the surrounding forests and terrain. As seen from above it is in the shape of an isosceles triangle, with the keep at the north apex and the other two towers at the southwest and southeast corners.

Passing the small guardhouse (with a defaced but still legible "SS" stone emblem atop), I crossed the bridge [top left photo] to the main entrance in the east wall, entered the courtyard, and knocked at the door of what was evidently a small museum of the castle's medieval history. In answer to my questions, the elderly curator politely informed me that the two ritual chambers were very much intact. Would I like to see them? Indeed I would, thank you!

The Wewelsburg is used [except for the museum and the two ceremonial chambers] as a youth hostel; some of the children can be seen in the top center photo, which looks down the courtyard towards the keep or North Tower. Entering the North Tower from the courtyard brings one to the "Marble Hall".

This circular chamber [bottom center photo] is completely unfurnished, save for two black floor-candleholders with red candles by one of the doors. Into the center of the red marble floor is set a rune-wheel [bottom left photo] made of green stone, with the central disc of black marble. Each rune points to one of 12 green sandstone columns [the tops of two of which are visible in the bottom center photo], forming cross arris vaults above 12 windows also framed in green sandstone. The chamber's only other decoration is a roughly-hewn block of stone above the door with the black candleholders.

To give you some idea of the wild distortions that have been published concerning the Wewelsburg, the following is quoted from Francis King's Satan and Swastika:

"The center of the castle was the great banqueting hall, furnished with a gigantic table around which were placed large wooden chairs - almost thrones - upholstered with pigskin and with the name of the rightful occupant inscribed on silver plates. In these chairs Himmler and his favorite subordinates would sit both for conferences concerned with mundane matters and for group meditation - long hours of silence in which the participants were supposed to strengthen their ties with the 'Race Soul'. Besides Himmler himself, never more than 12 SS men were allowed to sit down at the table; the reasons for this are not clear, but it is possible that he was either blasphemously parodying the Last Supper or seeing himself symbolizing the sun surrounded by the 12 signs of the Zodiac.

"Above the banqueting hall were Himmler's own rooms ... Below the hall was the crypt, the 'realm of the dead', in which 12 unoccupied pedestals were placed around a stone hollow. On the death of each of Himmler's chosen 12, his coat of arms was to be burned, and the ashes placed in an urn on one of the pedestals ..."

In actuality the floor emblem and other architectural features of the Marble Hall make it clear that the chamber was never designed to contain a

central table, nor do the original SS plans (which I examined) show it ever containing one. The conference hall in the west wall held a large, but not "gigantic" table and approximately 30 - not 12 - of the large leather - not pigskin, nor with silver nameplate - chairs referred to [I tried one out]. The dining hall was a third, smaller hall located in the south wall. Himmler's own rooms were not above any of the three halls; they were in the southwest tower. Neither the library nor the weapons museum were in Himmler's rooms; they were in separate rooms on different floors.

The recurring 12s of the Marble Hall probably have a solar/cosmic significance rather than a personal/human one. [There were 12 central SS offices, each headed by an Obergruppenfuehrer (Lt. General). A 12-seat table would have excluded the 13th: Himmler himself!]

The Hall of the Dead is located directly beneath the Marble Hall in the North Tower. To enter it one must go outside the castle and down to the base of the North Tower [the point at which I took the top left photo]. A stone stair leads down to the Hall (top/bottom right photos).

The Hall of the Dead is domed; at the apex of the dome is a rune-accented swastika. Four holes in this emblem have encouraged the popular idea that there was a concealed smoke vent in the ceiling; this is not the case.

The four large windows opening into the Hall from the exterior of the tower argue against the Hall's being designed as a tomb, nor are the 12 pedestals high enough or protected enough for funerary urns. They are platforms for either statues or live individuals. The acoustics of the chamber are such that, standing upon a pedestal, one can be heard in a whisper in any other part of the room.

The central pit, in which I am photographed standing, is not designed for bonfires. Its purpose became clear to me as soon as I descended into it; it places an individual at the acoustic focus of the chamber, as well as at the converging focus of the light channeled from the four 5-foot window passages. The effect is devastating. One shimmers with light from the Sun, Moon, or stars in an otherwise shadowed and darkened chamber; and one's voice - whether lowered to a whisper or raised to a shout - is magnified and multiplied and mirrored back to the focus.

Upon returning to the medieval museum rooms with the curator, I enquired whether I might be able to spend some time in the Hall of the Dead alone. To my surprise he assented, providing that I sign in the log for the key. I did so, returned alone to the Hall, locked myself in, and undertook what I shall henceforth refer to as the Wewelsburg Working. It is discussed in a separate paper.

Late in the afternoon I closed the chamber, returned the key to the curator, and departed for Frankfurt and the rest of the World of Horrors.

Subsequently I had the opportunity to visit the Obersalzberg complex. Having written about it in Secret of the Lost Ark, I was frankly curious to see if my description [from book research only] squared with reality.

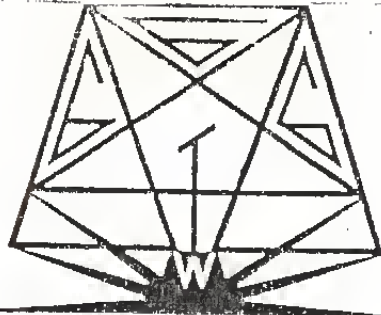
I am pleased to report that it more or less does, save that Martin Bormann's tunnel into the Kehlstein mountain begins with copper/bronze doors and is 130m long. The brass elevator takes only a couple of minutes to reach the Eagle's Nest, and there is no flagstone in front of its upper door. On the other hand there is a very conspicuous flagstone right in front of the big fireplace, so I expect that the 10 commandments are entombed there [or were until Indiana Jones & party went off with them].

Adolf Hitler's own house - the Berghof - is now so completely overgrown with forest that it's impossible to find it unless you know where to look. [It took me a half-hour's plunging around in the underbrush]. On Walpurgis 1952 the ruins of the Berghof were dynamited by the German government; only one partially underground room remains.

Back in San Francisco I am now recovering from jet-lag, reading mail, and pondering many things.

Xeper.





ORDER OF THE TRAPEZOID

The Wewelsburg Working

Michael A. Aquino VI^O

Date/Time: October 19, XVII / 3:00-4:30 PM

Location: Hall of the Dead/"Walhalla", North Tower, Wewelsburg Castle, Germany

Key: 19th Part of the Word of Set, Aethyr LIL

Purpose:

- To obtain a full Understanding of the significance of the crisis that befell the Temple of Set in June-July XVII.
- To energize the advent of the Working Year XVIII.
- As the Wewelsburg was conceived by Heinrich Himmler to be the "Mittelpunkt der Welt", and as the focus of the Hall of the Dead was to be the Gate of that Center, to summon the Powers of Darkness at their most powerful locus.

Results:

What emerged from this Working was not a written text, such as the Book of Coming Forth by Night or the Word of Set, but rather a twofold sensation: First, the suction-like impression of the inflow of certain realizations and kinds of knowledge (accompanied by an almost "electrical" sort of exhilaration), which seemed to have "remained dormant" pending an "activating" Working of this sort. Second, an extended "reverberation" or "echoing" of the focus of this Working within the Walhalla, culminating in its sending-forth into the material world.

The central features of the various principal occultisms of the 19th and 20th centuries CE ran through my consciousness almost as a pageant. I understood the object of this to be an exposure of contrasts, inaccuracies, and inconsistencies - a vast, spiraling dialectic designed to clear away the debris of sectarianism and superficiality in the search for the key principles of the true Powers of Darkness.

Concepts of "will", "intelligence", "self-consciousness", "initiation", and "magic" appeared in turn and fell aside as well; I saw them as useful, but

still, surprisingly, peripheral to the central concept being approached. When at last all veils had been removed, and that concept was revealed, it was so simple as to seem at first anticlimactic and almost disappointing. It was: the phenomenon of life.

Instantly I regretted my impatience and arrogance, my lapse into easy disappointment. Too many doors had been opened, too many forces unlocked and unleashed for this to be the ultimate impact of the Working. Then it was as though a "test" were passed: The basic concept of "life" became a sort of focal point, like that of a refractor telescope, through which the energies of the Working passed. The initial "dialectic" had reduced all to a pinpoint of fact, and now that fact, unencumbered, was expanding to full significance.

Human beings are accustomed to thinking of "nature" as including all animate and inanimate life forms, themselves included. It was the approach of the Church of Satan, and later of the Temple of Set, to single out self-consciousness as the characteristic feature of That which stood in contrast to the harmony of the natural cosmos. In fact all life has some degree of intelligence [not to be confused with self-consciousness], and somewhere within that intelligence is a subcomponent of self-consciousness, which only becomes evident when the level of basic intelligence is relatively high.

The error in any operation designed to strengthen the self-consciousness necessarily follows from the fact that self-consciousness is a function of the core intelligence, and there are many other functions of intelligence as well. Initiation thus treats a "symptom", not a "cause"; this leads the "cure" in unanticipated directions.

The Church of Satan and the Temple of Set have grappled with this problem for all the years of their existence without recognizing its actual depth. Strengthen, exalt, and encourage the Willful Self and you cannot avoid strengthening the natural instincts as well. No human being is free from these; they may be kept in check for years, but in eventual moments of stress, weakness, or stimulus they will break free. They may be either creative or destructive; this is not a mere "Jekyll/Hyde" scenario.

All initiatory efforts that are not deliberate frauds - from the most childish to the most sophisticated - are conceits of the self-conscious intellect. Those that profess to be natural, universal, nirvanic, or otherwise "Right-Hand Path" are ultimately exercises in self-delusion, if in fact the adherents actually believe in their own rhetoric. Sooner or later the masquerade becomes tiresome, the daydream boring, and the devotee discards it in favor of other sensory stimuli. The anti-natural systems of the "Left-Hand Path", on the other hand, think to suppress some aspects of the intellect while strengthening others. What results is a condition of strain which, should the tension become too great, will snap back to an equilibrium which may be more or less viable than it originally was.

The intelligent mind cannot be "escaped" so easily. If it is argued, convinced, threatened, hypnotized, drugged, or diseased into non-rational channels, then its self-consciousness will merely reassert itself in some other form. This, I understood in the Wewelsburg, was the "magical epitaph" of Nazi Germany: That, in fighting against certain features of the mind, it had seemed

at first to succeed - but then had thus unleashed other, even less desirable features of that same mind which had previously remained in some rough degree of socially-controlled equilibrium before this ultimately disastrous experiment in "conscious evolution" was attempted.

The chamber in which I stood, I now realized, was nothing less than an SS laboratory for experiments in "conscious evolution" - a sort of "Krel machine" without computerized, science-fiction accoutrements. It was not designed to teach or educate, rather to mirror and enhance thoughts and impulses already in existence. Hence its effect on the consciousness could be devastating for better or for worse.

The 18-year experience of the Church of Satan and Temple of Set now began to appear in a new perspective. Anton LaVey had thought to enhance conscious evolution by freeing the mind from self-imposed emotional prisons. He did so, enjoyed a measure of success, yet saw to his increasing dismay that new and more uncontrollable prisons were erected in their place. Whereas the initial ones had been socially imposed, however - resulting in minds more or less tractable in society - these replacements were the product of random, unforeseen intellectual imbalances. In a few cases the results were those of at least temporary genius. More often, however, the results were tragically self-destructive.

Anton LaVey erred in blaming the organization of the Church of Satan for this. That organization per se was not at fault; if anything it was a stabilizing influence. When he decided to exploit the organization in 1975, those working coherently within it felt wronged, said so, and formed the Temple of Set.

The Temple of Set was intended to be the perfect initiatory organization. It exploited no one; it offered every conceivable opportunity to everyone. Its most valuable inheritance from the Church of Satan was a commitment to the rejection of nonsense, occult or otherwise. The future, it seemed, was a banquet of intellectual evolution at which to feast.

Yet the Temple too began to suffer shock after shock - as often as not caused by senior initiates. At first these were explained as freak events and blamed upon the inadequacies of the individuals in question. But as the phenomenon happened again and again, this seemed more an excuse than an explanation. Finally, in the summer of XVII, a conspiracy by several senior initiates to pervert and degrade the Temple was only barely exposed and stopped in time. But the damage was devastating, if not indeed fatal - not to the structure itself, but to the assumptions concerning initiation which had formed the basis of that structure.

The Temple of Set's soaring hopes for the perfect initiatory medium, it seemed, had been dashed. In curing the symptom which Anton LaVey had attacked, it had thought to solve the essential problem. But, just as he had focused his anger and contempt on the wrong thing, so the Temple had poured its trust and confidence into an improvement of that same wrong thing. The actual culprit - the disproportionately "evolved" intellect - escaped the clear comprehension of both.

The forces that would lead to the destruction of the Church of Satan in 1975 were not set in motion by Wayne West in 1971; they were activated on Walpurgisnacht I. Similarly the Temple of Set, thinking that it had destroyed those forces in 1975, had succeeded only in closing certain doors to them so that they would have to find other means of manifestation. After an initial delay, they did.

Now, in the Hall of the Dead, I sought a solution to the dilemma of the 18-year Working. Is the lesson of I-XVIII ultimately that There Is No Way Out - that all initiation is merely Russian roulette in fancy dress?

But here the Understanding that had so far come so powerfully and clearly failed me. It was as though the Wewelshurg, having discharged a "battery" that had remained charged for 40 years, had no more current to provide.

Having drunk at this magical fountain of youth, however, I myself felt energized as I had not since the North Solstices of V and X. The Hall of the Dead now seemed an insulation against random discharge of this energy. Action must now give way to reaction; how should I direct this reaction?

In considering this, my attention came to rest on the concept of the Order of the Trapezoid. As will be recalled, this concept as employed by both the Church and the Temple has gone through many adjustments and redefinitions over the years. Yet it has endured and attracted because it seemed to "say something" that the Church and the Temple could not. What might this be?

During those periods when it was not employed as a synonym for the Priesthood, the Order has been used as a talisman to evoke a kind of diabolical *schadenfreude*, a grim enjoyment of the predicament of self-conscious humanity. "Here you are in a state of Satanic self-awareness," it seemed to say. "You cannot escape it; you cannot change it for the better - or for the worse. Therefore: Experience it; savor its taste, sense its exquisite pain and pleasure. Do not wallow in it like an animal in warm mud; rather cut it as you would a fine gem and behold the brilliance of its facets."

When singing this song of Lorelei, the Order has seemed oddly antithetical to the Church of Satan and Temple of Set, both of which incorporated the premise of self-awareness but which then promised different types of escape, change, and improvement [thus the justification for affiliation, as well as the success-barometer of the degree system]. As an "Ur-Doppelgaenger" of these creative institutions, however, the Order's name and presence has waxed with their setbacks and waned with their successes. It is not an "evil antithesis" as much as it is a mirrored image - an alternate setting for the Graal of the Prince of Darkness.

Here in the Hall of the Dead, Heinrich Himmler's Sanctum Sanctorum and "Mittelpunkt der Welt", was the Earthly focus of That which has been thus symbolized by the Order of the Trapezoid. The reality of this chamber rushed in upon me. This was no Hollywood set, no ordinary room painted and decorated to titillate the senses. 1,285 inmates of the Niederhagen concentration camp died during the reconstruction of the Wewelsburg for the SS. If the Marble Hall and the Walhalla were memorials to a certain unique quality in mankind, they also serve as grisly reminders of the penalty which mankind pays for that quality.

I saw before me the sigil of the Order of the Trapezoid as originally designed by Anton LaVey: the pentagram within a trapezoid extending slightly below the two lower points, the three curved 6s, the trident rising from the flames of Hell. I saw its later design in the Church, the 6s and the flames now gone. I saw its first design in the Temple of Set: the Tcham scepter with the head and forked tail of Set replacing the Satanic trident. I saw Ronald Barrett's subsequent concept: a simple pentagram with the four upper points connected.

So now the principle should be completed - the Law of the Trapezoid finally and completely fused into its emblem. There appeared then the Sigil of the Order as reproduced here. It is a return to the initial Sigil, with the following changes: The curved-line fires of Hell are replaced by the Black Flame, whose emanations are rays, not flickering tongues. There are nine rays, each in strict mathematical proportion to the pentagram or trapezoid. The source-point of the Black Flame completes the pentagram, as called for in the Book of Coming Forth by Night. Two of the rays of the Flame complete the inverse pentagon about the pentagram, creating a total of nine Golden Section trapezoids in the entire sigil. The three 6s are restored, but with no curved lines. The Set-headed and -tailed Tcham scepter of ancient Khem rises from the Black Flame, its head at the center of the pentagram. Its tail, against the three central rays of the Flame, forms a "W" denoting the "Walhalla" or Hall of the Dead at Schloss Wewelsburg, the Great Gate of the Powers of Darkness in our Time.

The direction of the Working's reaction seemed clear before me; I thus cast forth the full existence of the Order of the Trapezoid into the world. After 18 years the Key has been forged in the Word of Set, and the Gate of the Wewelsburg is opened.

Where the Church of Satan and Temple of Set have appeared, so has the shadow of That signified by the Order been reflected. Now it has been loosed in its full force. Whether or not the sacred Priesthood continues to exist, the Order will do so: for its release is an inevitable legacy of the I-XVIII Working. Mankind received the utopian visions of the Church of Satan and Temple of Set only as it strived to be worthy of them; it will continue to receive them only as it continues to prove itself so worthy.

But the Order of the Trapezoid, whether known by its true name or by countless others, will always exist - not as a visible institution, but as a principle in the intelligent mind. Anton Szandor LaVey's Law of the Trapezoid will endure as well: Those who recognize the principle will be able to turn it to their deliberate use [whether to their ultimate benefit or detriment]; those who do not will nonetheless be subject to it [whether to their ultimate benefit or detriment].

So It Is Done.

