

of ancient Greece and India. Swastika is also found engraved upon the funeral urns which have been dug up in northern Italy.”

This shows that the use of the swastika was widespread throughout the most ancient cultures, but is it certain that the swastika traveled with the Hittites as the Rev. Walker supposes? Or did it originate with the Aryans, as Michael Zmigrodski, a Polish librarian and swastika-hunter suggested in 1889.

After meeting with Aryanists and swastikaphiles from around the globe, Zmigrodski concluded that the swastika was “a way of claiming kinship and assuming race identity [for the Aryans].” [Quinn, p.24] But it should be remembered that this is coming from a man whose self-appointed duty was to “promote the swastika as the heraldic device of the Aryo-Germanic family” [Quinn, p.23]. And, being as many who attended the 1889 conferences were anti-Semites, their opinions on the origin of this symbol may have been skewed.

W. Norman Brown, professor of Sanskrit at the University of Pennsylvania, tried, as did Walker, to free the swastika from the grasp of the Aryans. Brown claimed the swastika belonged to a peaceful and more advanced Indian culture called the Dravidians, which was destroyed by the invading Aryans. In a 1933 pamphlet, he wrote: “The present Nazi claims are untenable. Just as their theory of Aryan racial purity is fanciful, so, too, their use of the swastika as an Aryo-Christian symbol, with aspects of anti-Judaism, anti-pacifism and anti-Marxism, is entirely arbitrary.”

[Brown, Norman, *The Swastika, A Study of Nazi Claims of its Aryan Origin*, New York, 1933]

Who were the Aryans? The dictionary defines Aryans as the speakers of the languages ancestral to the Indo-Iranian languages, but does a common language suppose a common race as the Nazis would have us believe? Isn't it also possible that the language traveled nomadically and the native population learned it from travelers? Not trying to confuse history with legend, but “in the *Rigveda*, the Aryas lay siege to and conquer the forts of another tribe, the forts being interpreted as the defences of an indigenous people conquered by the chariot-riding Aryas, who had, it was supposed, advanced from their mysterious European *Urheimat*.” [Renfrew, Colin, *Archaeology and Language: The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins*, Harmondsworth, 1987, pp.178-190]

“The right-handed Swastika is associated with the Sun, and hence an emblem of the Vedic cosmic possession and evolution thereof, around a fixed centre.”

-Gautam Chatterjee

“The parallel [of WWII] with the Vedic battles of the Aryas should not be ignored, and nor should the linking metaphor of invasion, destruction and genocide. ... Half a century before the advent of Nazism, the image of the swastika was being associated with narratives of invasion and the

sudden disappearance of an entire population.” [Quinn, pp.43-44]

It appears to me, from the works of Walker, Brown and other debunkers of Aryan claims to the swastika, we can conclude that the swastika has its real origin with the indigenous populace that was destroyed by invading Aryans. The data provided by Zmigrodski and others like him on the Aryan side of the debate appear to be falsified by later archaeological evidence.

It also seems to me that the Aryans did in fact use the swastika as a means of promoting race identity, a sort of ancient graffiti claiming kinship. This is shown by the writings of Walker and Brown, as well as by the Indian scriptures which provide a seemingly easy definition for the swastika as part of primitive Sun-worshipping cults and later symbolizing the arms of Vishnu.

Hitler and Nazi Germany took some ill-researched ideas about the origin of their ‘racial purity’ and adopted a symbol which was believed to be of their own pure Aryan origin. Because of the atrocities performed in that brief decade in history, the original meaning of the swastika may be lost forever to the hatred of the Nazis. But there is hope. In Woody Allen's *Sleeper*, a film set mostly in the future United States, a man is seen at a party wearing a shirt with a huge black swastika emblazoned on the front. The fact that no one at the party has any reaction to the symbol seems to suggest that Allen believes time can heal all wounds (Woody Allen being a Jew himself) and that a symbol means, culturally, just what you want it to mean. 卐