



THE RUNESTONE

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 F U T H A R K G W H N I J I P Z S T B E M L N G O D

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THE RUNESTONE is a journal of the ancient Norse religion and is dedicated to the revival of that religion as epitomized during the Viking Age, and to the values of courage, freedom and individuality which are associated with it.

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☉ The Runestone 1978



CALENDAR



SEPTEMBER thru NOVEMBER, 1978

September 21 -- The Autumn Equinox. Though our own seasonal celebration is conducted later, at Winter Night, many Odinists celebrate this day as well in thanks for the harvest and plenty, and to mark the end of summer. It is one of the greatest of the traditional pagan holidays.

October 8 -- Erik the Red Day. Erik the Red, father of Leif Erikson, was the family patriarch who clung to the religion of his ancestors despite the alleged defection of his son and the conversion of his wife, who promptly cut off her heathen husband's conjugal rights. On this day we honor Erik, our co-religionist, with a Day of Remembrance.

October 9 -- Civil holiday in the United States honoring Leif Erikson, the Norse colonizer of America and son of Erik the Red.

October 14 -- Winter Nights, one of the four Great Festivals of Ásatrú. Winter Nights marked the beginning of winter in the Norse calendar, and always fell on the Saturday between October 11 and October 17. This day is sacred to the Dfsir, those beings led by Freya.

November 11 -- Feast of the Einherjar. On this day we honor the members of the clan and of the faith who have died, and most especially those who have fallen in battle. (The Einherjar, of course, are the chosen warriors who feast with Odin in Valhalla). Remember your ancestors on this day.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE NEED ARTWORK -- Yes, we at THE RUNESTONE are soliciting appropriate artwork for publication. "Appropriate artwork" means things like drawings of Norse gods and goddesses, scenes from Viking life (battle scenes and others), and Celtic/Norse-style interweaving borders and decorations. We can't pay you any cash, but we'll send you extra copies for your portfolio and we'll extend your subscription.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (continued)

BAD NEWS and GOOD NEWS -- We have some of each. Here's the bad news first: The new postage rates hit us pretty hard, and we're having to increase subscriptions to \$5.00 per year in the U.S. and Canada, and \$6.00 overseas (airmail). We held the line at \$3.00 for five or six years, but that position is now untenable. We trust you'll understand.

The good news is this-- we're letting all our present subscribers renew for one year at the old rate. So send us \$3.00 immediately and we'll add four issues to the present balance of your subscription.

NEW SIZE and ADDED FEATURES -- We are adding several pages to each future issue to accommodate some new and important features. Odinists in other countries have agreed to write a short summary of activity in their nations on a regular basis, as our "foreign correspondents." Eventually we hope to have such reporters in every country where Ásatrú is being revived. This feature will help keep us informed of developments elsewhere and remind us that we are part of a widespread movement.

A second innovation is the "Moot Point" -- a sort of forum in which we'll print some of the letters we receive. We can't promise to print everything we are sent, because space is just too limited, but we think we can add considerably to your reading pleasure with this new feature.

AND TWO NEW BOOKS -- Finally, if you look at the list of literature available from us, you'll see two new additions. *THE SAGA MIND* by M. I. Steblin-Kaminskii (one of the required texts in the correspondence course) is a study of the mental, moral and spiritual context of the sagas. The other title, *GRADED READINGS AND EXERCISES IN OLD ICELANDIC*, is a practical guide to Old Norse, something we've long needed.

FLASH -- Have you seen the "Viking Mission to Mars" commemorative postage stamp? These are good carriers of subliminal propaganda because they link the Viking concept to ideas of exploration, great endeavor, challenge, etc. Use them!

The Challenge of Thor

I am the god Thor,
I am the war god,
I am the Thunderer!
Here in my Northland,
My fastness and fortress,
Reign I forever!

These are the gauntlets
Wherewith I wield it
and hurl it afar off;
This is my girdle,
Whenever I brace it
Strength is redoubled!

Jove is my brother;
Mine eyes are the lightning;
The wheels of my chariot
Roll in the thunder,
The blows of my hammer
Ring in the earthquake!

Here amid icebergs
Rule I the nations;
This is my hammer,
Mjolner, the mighty
Giants and sorcerers
cannot withstand it!

The light thou beholdest
Stream through the heavens,
In flashes of crimson,
Is but my red beard
Blown by the night-wind,
Affrighting the nations.

Force rules the world still,
Has ruled it, shall rule it;
Meekness is weakness,
Strength is triumphant;
Over the whole earth
Still is Thor's-day!

-Longfellow

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SKEPPSLAG NEWS AND CONTACTS

Robert P. Hopkins, of P.O. Box 92, Orchard Park, N.Y. 14127, would like to contact other Norse pagans, especially those in his vicinity. He's also into collecting and trading military relics of all nations and eras, especially German.

Isaac Moll is a sworn gothi in the process of forming a skeppslag in Washington state. His address is 607 North State Street, Bellingham, WA, 98225. Anyone who wants to get involved in this skeppslag should write him--and we hope you'll do so; he deserves support. Also, any genuine heathens traveling through the area should drop in for a visit. Isaac is selling Thor's hammer amulets for \$6.00 each, postpaid. Here's your chance to get one!

Shawn O'Riley has got a functioning skeppslag going in San Diego. Any of you people in Southern California who want to get in touch with him can do so by writing to him at 1808 - 3rd Ave., Apt. #12, San Diego, CA 92101. Shawn has really been working hard on this, and now the results are starting to show.

Greg Steiner still wants to establish contact with Norse heathens. Write to him at 443 South Courts, U.N.I., Cedar Falls, IA 50613.

We've noticed that we have a LOT of subscribers up around Chicago. Any one up there want to take the initiative and volunteer to start a skeppslag or several??

NOW AVAILABLE FROM THE RUNESTONE

Skeppslag Organizational Kit	\$2.00
The Prose Edda trans. by Jean I. Young	3.00 ea. (paper)
The Elder Edda trans. by Taylor & Auden	2.00 ea. (paper)
The Saga Mind by M. I. Steblin-Kaminskii	3.00 ea.
Graded Readings & Exercises in Old Icelandic by Kenneth Chapman	7.00 ea.
Text of Odin-Blót	.20 ea.
Leaflet "What is the Norse Religion?"	.05 ea.*

*single copies free

Write for information on Associate Membership in the AFA or for details on our Correspondence Course.

Rituals of our Faith (weddings, funerals, etc.) performed for AFA members anywhere in the world, if transportation is provided, at no additional fee.

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Satanism

by George Saunders

Strange things happen when the natural religious instincts of a people are repressed by an alien creed, and Satanism is a perfect example. Since your Christian acquaintances are going to accuse you of traffic with the Devil anyway, you might as well know where Satanism originated, and why. Here's the first of a two-part article: --Editor

Satanism and occult matters closely related to Satanic practice have in the last few years received a great deal of attention. Grisly rites conducted by fanatic groups of cultists make particularly good newspaper copy and can be guaranteed to excite the popular imagination. At first glance, Satanism would seem to be a body of belief diametrically opposed to Christianity, and on a surface level it is, up to a point. In conducting research on this subject, I was continually struck by the close relationship between Satanism and the Christian Church, until the conclusions I reached herein became inescapable. As Odinists, we must continually re-evaluate the ideas and beliefs around us in an effort to live the Norse way. We must realize that much of what we have been taught to believe is simply not true, and if we are to regain our heritage we must be able to identify not only the easy targets of our wrath, but those perhaps not so easily identified. In the rush to throw off the yoke of Christian dementia we must take care that we do not become ensnared by its handmaiden, Satanism.

The concept of Satan or omnipotent Devil can be shown to have originated in the Middle East. The first appearance of Satan is dated to the sixth century B.C. in Persia. Known to the Zoroastrians as Angra Mainyu, Satan appeared as a creature part lion, part snake, and was said to represent the Principle of Darkness against which was arrayed Ahura Mazda, the Principle of Light. In the course of their constant battle, both sides employed a series of subsidiary spirits in a military organization, demons and deities which became formidable in their scope and who would clash one day in a Day of Judgement. This outlook was to have a profound influence on later Judaic thought.

In 586 B.C. Jerusalem fell to King Nebuchadnezzar, and the Jews were deported to Babylon. Babylon in turn was invaded and conquered by Cyrus the Great of Persia in 538, thus exposing Judaic thought to the influence of Zoroastrianism. Prior to this time, the concept of the Devil for Jews was that of an individual whose function it was to accuse men before God of their sins, thus allowing Yahweh to impose punishment himself. The after-life of the Jews was conceived to be Sheol, a place of eternal peace and sleep. Under the influence of Zoroastrianism, Sheol became Hell, and the Devil assumed proportions we are familiar with as the Director of all Evil and the eternal opponent of Good, etc. The Jews also

"borrowed" other tales from the Babylonians, such as Utnapishtim, who built a boat to escape a titanic flood wherein he kept two of each animal's species. To the Jews he became Noah of the Old Testament flood tale. Other themes can be seen to have been taken from another ancient tale, the epic of Gilgamesh, however space does not allow a fuller discussion of these matters. The vision of Satan as the epitome of evil produced its own mythology, since in Satan's service there was created a formalized retinue of demons, fiends and semi-human ghouls, produced by the coupling of humans and demons (Lilith and Samael for instance). Thus it can be seen that the personification of Evil into a simplistic deity or entity is essentially Hebraic or Middle Eastern in its influence and which also influenced Islamic thought. To our Northern ancestors, Evil was never very convenient or distant as the stories involving Loki attest. Each man had the ability to choose his path for himself and the Vikings had no difficulty in perceiving the difference. Certainly no evidence archaeological or otherwise exists to show that Loki received any veneration whatever. Such perversions and mind-distortions came later under Christian influence.

Obviously Christianity adopted this Hebraic concept of Satan. The New Testament speaks of the Devil at great length. Later goat images of Satan resulted from Christian contact with existing religious forms they found when they began to conquer the minds of the Pagan peoples in Europe and Scandinavia. Christian writings and its focus (at least until the year 800) were more concerned with aggression (conversion efforts) and in surviving the onslaught of those they considered barbarians. As a matter of fact, St. Augustine, in his treatise "The City of God" ascribed the creation of demons to God, that he might thereby separate the elect from the rest of humanity!

Medieval Christianity began to change the focus and direction of previous belief. The hold of this alien religion was not always strong on the peoples of the North, even though the cruelest of means were often used to provide conversions. Pagan practices and objects of worship crept into Christian rites. Interestingly, in the beginning even the penalties attached to the practice of witchcraft were remarkably lenient, in light of later developments. Under the laws of King Athelstan, a convicted witch might face 120 days in prison, but certainly not death or torture! However, this state of affairs did not remain so for long.

The pressures created by the resistance to Christianity as a belief and to the body of the Church as a whole created a situation that demanded the later grim episodes when people were executed for Pagan practices. Numerous sects and local beliefs splintered off from the Church, and the fear became great that this would destroy the Church entirely. The trend was also increased due to the influence of asceticism by the clergy which began to view things of nature as evil, vile, or corrupt. Sex was viewed as possessing the sole function of producing Christian children and therefore emotions of the flesh and the entire scope of the majesty of nature was condemned to Satan. The common man was appalled by this other-worldly sickness and was repelled by the hypocrisy of a clergy gone mad, who more frequently than not disobeyed their own precepts and used their religion as a means to further their own financial standing (the outrageous fees charged for baptism, for example). The excesses of Feudal lords, supported by the Church, even to the demand that a virgin bride spend her wedding night with the Lord of the Manor created great anger in the peasantry--to whom could they go for solace? The answer was provided by an identification with the Devil. In addition to the pressure of outright Satanism and in response to the corruption of the Church many break-away sects were formed; the Church became frantic.

Para-Christian sects, such as the Manichaens, were ordered exterminated by a series of Papal Bulls which first established the Inquisition under the Dominican Order. The killings which began with the first witchcraft execution in 1275 in Toulouse increased rapidly. In the end, the ultimate effect of these draconian persecutions was the emergence of a viable Satanic Movement in Europe.

Rooted in the common soul and focused on fertility and sexuality, the new Satanism expressed itself in identifying with a horned image of Satan; goat or ram depictions were used extensively. Since a great deal of the motivation of the movement involved opposition to Christianity, many essentially Christian practices were parodied or imitated for evil purposes. Great meetings, called Sabbats, were held on such days as Roodmas Day or Walpurgisnacht, All Hallow's Eve or Candlemas. These were meetings attended by many and involved the "presence" of the Devil who sat on a black throne (in actuality a Grand Master who wore a goat's head mask and displayed a warty phallic member as part of the rites). New members were required to disavow Christianity, make a pact with the Devil, and perhaps receive a "witches mark" or tattoo on some part of their body to signify their belonging to the group. Mircea Eliade speculates on the practice of submission as being a psychological means of obtaining new blood; a symbol of fertility and as a parody of a bisexual deity in the wound created. Sacrifices were made to Satan followed by ritual kissing of Satan's buttocks ("Kiss of Shame"), a self-debasement ritual similar to those used even in recent times by groups such as the Mau-Mau. Following this activity a feast began, dancing, and then an orgiastic frenzy, allowing the participants to indulge in frantic sexuality they could not express freely elsewhere. It is obvious that this entire activity was prompted by the utter rejection of Christianity by the common people, who indulged in these practices even in the midst of the activities of the dreaded Inquisition, when even to be accused as a Satanist meant certain death. This level of activity continued until the end of the Seventeenth Century, when the advent of the "Age of Reason" began to seriously erode the status of the Christian religion. The ending of Inquisition-style activities and the emergence of science in conjunction with the increase of freedom for peasants resulted in a falling away of Satanic loyalties among this group of people. This absence of rural or extensive peasant participation in Satanism is a circumstance that has continued to the present day.

The Black Mass is another essential element in conventional Satanism, however it did not begin its popularity as an entity unto itself until its adoption by the aristocracy. Used as only part of a peasant sabbat, the practice was adopted by aristocratic adherents eager to indulge in something exciting--and there is also evidence to suggest that some of the traditions of the Mass emerged from popular horror fiction a la Marquis de Sade's writings. At this point, an increasing trend appeared, for acts of deliberate horror and homicide were sometimes incorporated into these rites. The tradition of Mass magic curiously enough began earlier and came directly from the Church itself. In 1343 the Bishop of Coventry was accused of paying homage to the Devil and in the tenth century Pope Sylvester II was allegedly a sorcerer. By the 16th century the practice of sorcery was very widespread in the Church, especially since larger bodies of people such as the mercantile class, now had money to pay for the services of priests eager to perform these rites for money. Thus, until recent times the tradition of the Satanic rite had a dual nature. Not only did it oftentimes involve murder and recreation (a means to institutionalize aristocratic sexual perversity such as the Hellfire Clubs in the 1700's); it also was part of the established Church.

Therefore the concept of Satan and Satan worship springs from Judeo-Christian frames of reference. Much of what is conceived today as black magic, sorcery and the rites of the Devil in fact came from the Church, as did the Mass of Death (later forbidden). It began as a middle-Eastern belief and accompanied Christianity at every step to its current level of popularity. Without Christianity, without a world-view that denied Nature and natural Man, that was essentially perverted in its asceticism and Judaic in its hostility to the Northern spirit so admirably expressed in *Ásatrú*, no Satan could have existed! The more hysterically Christians rave against the Devil, the more stubborn becomes the presence of such an entity. The two belief systems literally feed on one another. It is a symbiotic relationship, for Satan feeds on the doctrine of the Christian God and without Satan the Church would be destroyed. In a deeper sense the mores of the Church create Satan, and sin as a concept creates the Church. Nietzsche realized this relationship when in "The Antichrist" he stated: "Psychologically considered, 'sins' become indispensable in any society organized by priests; they are the real handles of power. The priest lives on sins, it is essential for him that people 'sin'." One calls to mind the insanity of the Inquisition torturers, who when in bed at night were tormented by visions of the sexuality they subconsciously desired. In light of the evidence, it is accurate to say that Satan is Christian!

(To be Concluded)



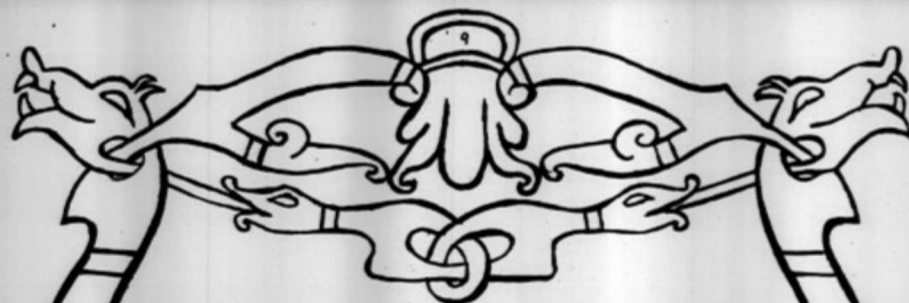
KULTURE KOMMENTS

Hollywood has proven in the past that it can turn out a decent Viking movie, but the new release *The Norseman* is not one of them. Somehow one expects more of Lee Majors. And one should definitely expect more from anyone claiming to be a writer, producer or director.

I can overlook the horned helmets; they're so much a part of the stereotype that we might as well exploit the powerful image they evoke. The use of Greco-Roman armor and cheap Spanish-style swords could even be forgiven. The sloppy acting and corny dialogue are harder to ignore, though, and any observant viewer is going to wonder how a shallow-draught Viking ship has a hold deep enough for an actor to stand upright. And Vikings with crossbows?

Perhaps the most ludicrous element of all was the presence of a black Viking. While the Vikings met blacks in North Africa and are said to have taken a few of them to Ireland as slaves, it is a bit far-fetched to see one as a full-fledged member of a Norse crew in Vinland. The sight was so incongruous that I wonder if it wasn't someone's idea of a joke on the whole "affirmative action" routine--but such irony would be a little deeper than the shallow intellectual level of this film would allow.

Actually, the story plot isn't all that bad, and there are scenes near the end which are credible and, in comparison with the rest of the movie, exciting. The Vikings come across as the "good guys" and one could get the idea of a tough seafaring people with a high degree of loyalty to each other. Hopefully the public will be able to ignore the emotionless delivery of corny lines and pick up on those more positive elements.



A DRINKING SONG

The song or poem below was sent to us by a subscriber who explained, "As a writer I enjoy creating that which mirrors my own beliefs and emotions. I sat down to write a serious work or poem about Odin and the gods. I suffered from a lack of material and yet my urge to write produced...well, a drinking song if you will. Somehow its contents rang true to me both with regard to the gods themselves and with the human emotions and characteristics shown. I seemed to see many heathens, mead horn in hand, chanting a song such as this round a huge table. Feel free to use it in *The Runestone* or wherever; it has an emotional side to it which the Assembly could well use in fostering its social aspect." Without further introduction, then, here is a small piece which we feel says a lot about the Viking attitude.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <i>Quaff thy mead and hearken now,
Of Gods and men I speak;
Of Valhalla and a hero's life,
Which those of strong heart seek.</i> | 4. <i>Swill your ale my hearties!
And raise a lusty cheer,
Our gods we now salute them;
No master do we fear.</i> |
| 2. <i>Odin's breath is in us all,
Men of the West have pride;
So raise thy horn and shining blade,
To fame or Hel we ride.</i> | 5. <i>No bended knee you'll see from us
No favors do we beg;
For freemen all with sword in hand,
Stands best with straightened leg.</i> |
| 3. <i>Odin fills our souls with fire.
Our throats with song and rune
We drink to friends and foemen
Beneath the frosty moon.</i> | 6. <i>We will not crawl or sue for peace
Our freedom is our life;
For such is human destiny,
That we partake of strife.</i> |
| | 7. <i>Now tap the beer and pass along,
Another mighty round;
Three cheers to Odin one-eye,
Let Asgard hear the sound!</i> |

(George Saunders, 1978)



YOGA

of the West



There are many highly educated and intelligent people who believe that there is no spiritual discipline of the West. They would concede that we had a religion in ancient times, and even that we had an established system of morals and ethics. But an actual spiritual discipline--say, the equivalent of Yoga in the East? There they would balk. Our ancestors in the North, they would say, were lacking in such finesse and sophistication.

We most heartily disagree. Their point of view is about as accurate as saying Ragnar Hairy-Breeks was a choirboy!

To be sure, the spiritual discipline of the West is not easily recognized, precisely because we have been taught to accept a definition of spirituality which is biased against our culture. We are taught to expect that our native equivalent to yoga would resemble Eastern practice. This is not only not necessarily so, it is even highly unlikely. The East and the West differ in basic psychology and to some extent in nervous system functioning as well (or is that to say the same thing?), and it would be unrealistic to expect two wholly different world-views to take the same expression (Note, this is not to say that yoga is "bad" any more than karate, for example, is "bad". We can find much of use in such systems without deceiving ourselves that they are universally applicable in their entirety).

Even people who should know better, don't. This author once took a Scandinavian literature class taught by a Norwegian professor who was undeniably brilliant and well-informed. The discussion centered around Knut Hamsun's Growth of the Soil, and a particular incident in the book was under examination.

A character in the book had become pinned beneath a fallen telegraph pole, and while he lay there snowflakes began to fall. Faster and faster they came, until a full-scale blizzard was in progress. The trapped man realized that he was going to die. Despite this certain knowledge he retained perfect control over his senses and emotions; there was not a whimper or a tear, but merely a very nonchalant, almost embarrassed, acceptance. Not a fatalism as that word is generally understood, for he tried every means of escape which was available to him. But once there was no more that could be done, he refused to allow it to disturb his dignity or his demeanor.

Our professor compared this stoic attitude with the virtues of the saga heroes, quite rightly. The siege of Gunnar's house in Njals Saga was recalled, where one of the attackers takes a mortal wound from Gunnar's spear, yet jokes as he dies. Similar anecdotes from saga literature were brought up, and soon the conversation spilled over into daily life. Many of the students were of Scandinavian descent, and they told how old Uncle Jens or Grandpa Hans refused to show pain when they were injured in household accidents and the like. A link between this attitude and the saga ethics was obvious, as the professor noted.

But then it all fell apart. Allow me to paraphrase the good doctor's words: "It was then that I realized that these guys in the sagas were a little peculiar--in fact, downright batty. Any system that teaches a repression of emotion, of feeling--of humanity--is crazy. These people had no feelings!"

A more total failure to comprehend the harsh Northern ethic, or to recognize it for what it was, would not be conceivable!

The doctor was wrong on a crucial point. Far from being insensitive or devoid of feelings, the Norsemen felt pain and sorrow as poignantly as we do today. How can one read Sonatorrek, the poem written by Egil Skallagrimsson in lament for his dead sons, and believe otherwise? Can we forget Gudrun's anguish over the body of Sigurd? No, the agony and loss were there, in these cases and all the others. Had there been none, there would be no virtue in controlling it, in exerting mastery over it. It was there in abundance--and in the supreme act of will, of control despite the pain, one could triumph even in adversity.

Here we depart from the way of the East. The student of the Oriental way is taught first to control visible expression of the emotion, and then to extinguish the impulse which prompted the emotional reaction in the first place. But we see no virtue in controlling nothing. No strength is needed to ride a stuffed horse, but strength and skill aplenty are needed to stay on a wildly bucking bronco! Likewise, our spiritual discipline is one of using the will to control and direct emotions of incredible magnitude, not to abolish them and declare that we have conquered. We have chosen Valhalla over Nirvana.

Please don't think it is merely hyperbole, only fanciful exaggeration, that makes us refer to this unnamed ethic as a spiritual discipline. It was unorganized, to be sure, for that is the Norse way of doing things. But it was an attainment of the highest spiritual order, and one which permeated the entire Viking Age, cutting across cult lines. It was practiced by devotees of Odin and followers of Thor, by those true to Freya and those who pledged allegiance to Frey. Indeed, as we have seen, it has survived unbroken to this day, and the repressions of the traitor-kings and their clergy touched it not at all, as the sagas of the Norwegian kings show (remember the part where Olaf, foul fiend that he was, set fire to a pile of wood shavings in his hand?).

There is, however, an assault against this discipline today, and we must beware of it and combat it where we can. It masquerades under the cover of sensitivity sessions and "men's liberation" raps. The former, very generally, teaches people to express their emotions, and whatever the intrinsic value of the original concept, it has become a popular promulgator of emotional mish-mash. The latter, the "men's liberation" angle, is supposed to teach men that they don't have to be "manly"--that they shouldn't try to be the traditional pillar-of-strength, that they should not be ashamed of weaknesses, and that they should be able to have a good cry just like the women. The reasoning runs like this: men have degraded women by stereotyping them as weak, dependent, and easily overawed by difficult situations, therefore we must degrade men as well, and allow them to share the role as weak, dependent, overawed--and emasculated--"men."

This would have never worked in Viking times because Vikings didn't think of their women as helpless little things to be protected from all harm. Viking females were competent, shrewd, and forceful; the reduced status of women didn't really arrive until Christianity came on the scene and the old gods--and goddesses--were forced into hiding. But that's a subject for another article. Suffice to say that Christianity, by depicting women as weak, set the stage for the current castration of the man. And both phases undercut the old ethic of the North and its spiritual discipline.

That's the problem. And considering the absolutely immense propaganda effort trying to convince us that weakness and vulnerability are not only acceptable but laudatory, it is a large problem indeed. Here's what we can do about it:

1. We must train ourselves, as individuals, in this stringent code. Do you mutter complaints when you're fatigued? Are you the kind who gets a self-pitying pleasure out of exhibiting your discomfort, your illness, or your injury? Do you allow yourself to become nervous and irritable under stress? Are you the one who moans about how cold your feet are, or how you wish chow would be served? Steel yourself! This doesn't mean to be grim and straight-faced, plowing humorlessly through life. On the contrary, remember the light-hearted rejoinders of heroes even as they died!

2. We must salvage our children from the philosophical ruins of the modern ethic. We must teach them to be strong and independent. Don't overreact every time they scrape a knee or bump a head, your love can be expressed better in so many other ways. This writer suspects that children have a higher tolerance for pain than we give them credit for, and that to a certain extent we teach them to feel pain. Give children credit for some guts.

Provide your children at an early age--long before they're exposed to an "education" at school--to wholesome and heroic literature. This doesn't mean it should be rammed down their throats, but there are few children who will not be captivated by stories of gods, heroes, and adventure. Read to them as soon as they are old enough to understand. (Actually, psychologists have discovered that children whose parents read to them almost from birth develop better than children who do not receive this stimulation--so start as early as you like). Most importantly of all, set a good example.

3. There isn't a lot that you as an individual can do to stop the attack on the ethic of our spiritual discipline, but you can do something. You can refuse to support the philosophy of weakness where it impinges upon your daily life. If your favorite magazine runs an article promoting the weakness-is-virtue theme or the O.K.guys-let's-have-a-good-cry malarky you can fire off a letter to the editor just to let him or her know how you feel about the topic.

Don't forget that you influence the world not only by what you do but by what you are--by setting the example you can touch the lives of many people.

The very fact that we have recognized our native spiritual discipline for what it is means that it will be preserved for as long as we exist. Now we must practice it, that our own strengths and capabilities may be increased, and that we may spread our faith and our ethic to those who are prepared to receive it.

NAZI EXPLOITATION BLOCKED!

We were shocked to learn recently that a Nazi group based in San Francisco was holding private meetings under the name of the "Odinist Society." We resent the use of our religion as a cover for meetings of totalitarian political groups and we consider this act on the part of the Nazis to be an insult to the name of Odin as well as an act which could do great discredit to our faith.

We have put an end to the exploitation of Odinism in this particular case, and we will be on the alert for any recurrence.

For too long our ancestral religion has been associated with Naziism in the minds of many people. We must emphasize that our movement does not consider itself allied with National Socialism any more than it considers itself in partnership with the totalitarian Left. The principles of Asatru are opposed to dictatorship of any sort.

This does not mean that we are devoid of an identification with our culture or our people--on the contrary, we rate ourselves highly on those traits. The history of the peoples of Northern Europe is one of freedom, not of slavery, and to support an all-powerful State is to betray the very Folk-group in whose interest National Socialism claims to act.

Reproduced below is a portion of a statement prepared for release to the press. Copies of relevant documents are available upon request.

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Some days ago I received in the mail a letter from the National Socialist White Workers' Party in San Francisco, led by Allen Vincent. Copies of this letter have been given to you. As you can see from this highly confidential memorandum, the NSWWP used a false name, "The Odinist Society", to obtain facilities for private monthly meetings at a Bay Area savings and loan association. The covert nature of this scheme is revealed by the statement that these meetings are for "the select and Party faithful" and the fact that uniforms are not allowed, nor "any display of our cherished Nazi symbols or standards." This despicable masquerade is one more slur against our faith, one more besmirching of a religion which was thousands of years old before Hitler was conceived in his mother's womb. It is blasphemy against the name of Odin. If Mr. Vincent and his comrades had even the most elementary knowledge of--or respect for--Odinism, this charade with its potential for blackening the name of an already misunderstood religion would have been unthinkable to them. It is being charitable indeed to describe them as thoughtless.

The swastika was a symbol sacred to the god Thor a thousand years before its usurpation by the Nazi movement. It is a matter of regret to us that the average person is aware of the use of that mighty symbol only in its pirated form. We hope to right that wrong.

We too are concerned for the future of the people and culture of Northern Europe. But we believe the heritage of the West to be one of freedom, not slavery. Certainly Odinism is based on the ideals of liberty, courage, honor, and the family. The Nazis make a great deal of their regard for their Nordic ancestors,

and identify with the myth and the religion of the ancient Northlands, yet the fact is that those very ancestors whom they revere would have been the last to live under the bond of National Socialism.

Personal liberty and freedom of speech were the birthright of every freeman in early Germanic society, and these rights were jealously guarded. The settlement of Iceland owes much to the refusal of hardy Norsemen to accept favors which could only be had by subordinating themselves to the authority of King Harald Fairhair of Norway. Once in Iceland, these rebels established a republic and the first European parliament in the form of the Icelandic Althing.

It was the Vikings under Hrolf Ganger who boasted to the emissary of the Frankish king that they had no masters, and that they would never cleave to the servitude of King Charles in return for his favor.

Every chronicler of pre-Christian Scandinavia notes that, despite a deep feeling of family and clan kinship, the Norsemen were among the most colorful and obstreperous individualists of all time. Can anyone seriously imagine these bold men and strong women, who refused to grovel even before their gods, submitting to the regimentation of any totalitarian system? No, the collective mind of the National Socialist state is as alien to the cold, clear atmosphere of Northern heathenism as is the turgid mass mentality of Marxism. Those who would follow the religion of Odinism must realize that we believe in the individual and in the family, not in the all-powerful state, regardless of the political label that state wears.

We realize and sympathize with the legitimate frustrations of white men who are concerned for their kind and their culture. These concerns are fully justified. It is a tragedy that these men are driven to radical groups such as the NSWWP simply because there is no well-known, responsible organization working for white ethnic awareness and identity. We support any legitimate attempts to promote white rights and interests, and we think that pride in self and in people should be the right of all races--whites certainly included. But we reject as inconsistent with the tenets of our faith any movement which would trammel the freedom of the individual, and we will not stoop to the spreading of hatred.

The Ásatrú Free Assembly repudiates National Socialism in general and expresses its outrage with the leadership of the NSWWP in particular for using the faith of our forefathers as a cover for political meetings. This day marks a turning point, and we who follow Odin and Thor and the other deities of Odinism will conclusively prove our independence from those who would co-opt our movement and our faith.

ODIN LIVES!

On our cover is a drawing of one of the Hallelus horns of Denmark, cast in gold around 500 C.E. Above this drawing is the runic inscription seen around the rim of the horn, and below is the particular futhork, or runic alpha set used. The inscription on the horn says: "I, Hlewagast, Holt's son, made the horn."



MOOT POINT

Stephen,

I received your letter some months ago and have done much searching for information on the Norse religion. I put it that way because that was all I could do, was search. It seems there is little or no information to be found.

I have a few questions. Is Odin in your religion a god or a focal entity, or idea? If he is a god can you give me some proof of his existence or of his work?

I don't mean to sound so skeptical but it seems that everybody in the world has an all powerful deity but I've never seen or heard of anyone who has spoken to or seen one of these omnipresent beings.

I'm a soldier by trade and when the chips were down I've always put my faith in me and a good weapon. So far so good. I've also seen three men in the same foxhole praying to three different gods and I didn't see help from any of them. It sure sounds fishy to me. I consider myself open minded and have studied most major religions. So far none meet my standards. They all say pray for help and when it doesn't come you are to lead a better life so it will come next time. Sorry fellas, but you may not get that second chance.

If you find time, write me a letter. Tell me what is going on from the word go. Your letter and paper are very pleasant but not very specific.

I hope you can forgive my penmanship but I'm a soldier, not a scholar.

Thank you.

-J.S.

P.S. Should you know someone close enough to contact me, my number is 314/336-4448.

NOTE: My answer to J.S. was much too long to reprint here. I sent him a copy of *Gods and Worlds: Another Look at Reality* and explained my belief that reality is a process, not a thing. We don't live in a universe--we live in a multiverse. Thus, Odin and any other deities are quite real, and on many different levels, at that.

I mentioned that the early Christian kings of Norway are alleged to have directly encountered Odin and Thor, and that Odin's presence at the battle of Lena, in Sweden, was recorded both by heathen and by Christian chronicles.

Further, I commented on how his own attitude--of which I heartily approve--resembled that of the men in the old days who didn't deny the existence of the gods, but who trusted in their own strength to get them out of a tight spot. My own feeling is that such an outlook is morally superior to the view of those who whine to their gods--whatever gods those may be--to deliver them.

Sirs:

In your letter you stated that Odin is the god of war and that Thor while being a great warrior is mainly the god of yeomen and toilers rather than the hard-core viking. Now, from my readings I have gained the impression that both Odin and Thor were worshipped by the viking warrior, the difference being that Odin was the god of the leaders, while Thor was for the followers. Would you comment on this for me?

Yours, S.S.

Dear S.S.,

These are two ways of saying the same thing. Most Vikings--in the strict sense of the word--followed that profession on a seasonal basis only. The rest of the year they were farmers or followers of other non-violent vocations. The people who usually went a-viking on a full-time basis were the aristocracy, the leaders to whom I was referring as "hard core vikings." Odin was the aristocratic god, and was a war god in the sense of being an inciter and strategist. His was a staff and command function, so to speak, whereas Thor was more involved in the physical prowess end of things. Thor was generally a freeman's god.

Of course it would be hasty to draw a sharp line of demarcation here--these are generalizations that surely had their exceptions in different times and places.

Mr. McHallen,

The perspective which you have achieved--and which you defend in your periodical--is splendid, in that it is a rejection of the emasculating trends of modern, hive-civilization. I know learned and good men who consider the warrior-faith in the self-sufficient and self-defending man to be arrogant. But my own heart can accept no alternatives. Neither can yours. You have accomplished a marvelous ideological awakening, and I am with you in your rebellion.

The point you press home is also an insight that I share. Petty individuals have pre-empted the use of the most effective modern media, and with disastrous results. Weaklings incapable of faith in themselves or in life, itself, have united to produce a defeatist counter to that faith. One which masks itself currently as religion and as social ideology (socialism). A supernatural god, sin & salvation, and heaven are nothing more than a cowardly effort to deny the value of nature, human nature, and the very earth.

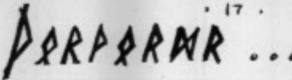
If you wish to arm your mind even more against these villains, I recommend Nietzsche's Twilight of the Idols, on the Genealogy of Morals & The Antichrist, in that order. They are all short enough for handling, and have been newly and beautifully translated by Walter Kaufmann of Princeton. From some of your remarks, I guess that you've already touched on Nietzsche, but you may have missed one of the books mentioned. He is pure fire. And he is on our side...

Remember:

"Cattle die,
Kinsmen die,
I myself shall die
--But one thing not:
The fair fame of the brave!"

Praise the brave!

W.J.M.

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ENGLAND

By P. L. Seymour.

The Þorvordr (Thorguard) Pagan Viking Show Team has been in existence for just over a year now. Its meagre beginnings came together out of my undying interest in English - Norse Heritage and the Old Religion.

After my final departure from activity with the Odin Guard I realised that I had learnt a lot from my years with them, like who are not your real friends, how not to treat people and the art of undeserved sarcasm.... These not altogether wasted years were something I thought I might try a reversal on and picking up the pieces, I linked them up with new faces and new ideas, uncluttered with rules, regulations, fees, official doctrine, procedure and obligations, compulsory meetings or viewpoints or exclusive elitist sanctity.... all the usual frighteners that curb interest for reasonable and intelligent folk. At first, things moved slowly with just myself and John, a solid Odinist comrade who had stuck by me since we met through his reading an illustrated newspaper article about my Viking activities. Our first season's hopes were dashed by jealous or scared of big brother NFPS revenge, combat groups putting the block on our participation in their events, but the following season's customer enquiries from show organisers caused me to put an ad' in a local newspaper for participants and to dash into weapons and equipment production so as to outfit twenty men in two months!(I decided to let the Ladies arrange their own costumes as long as it remained authentic to the period depicted) - There has been no looking back, a few veterans who had previously fought in earlier shows and now shared the same opinion of the other groups as I also rallied to my banner giving me some experienced back-up material. I now have a team of enthusiastic men and women who can take part in the Viking/Saxon way of life to the depth of their personal wishes without pressure or obligation and for the first time in my experience with similar groups, everybody seems to be happy and very helpful. Our members will find that we have an inner core that caters for the serious Odinist and Nature worshipper whose life principles I aim to run the outfit by, whatever the temptations to be otherwise are that present themselves in the guise of business, efficiency, formality etc... It will be interesting to see how the theory of Odinism applied to this historic re-enactment of a former mode of life and activity works out in practice.....

May the strength of Thor be with you...

DENMARK

...I don't think there is much serious pagan activity going on here in Denmark or other parts of Scandinavia for that matter. I compare with England and I'm trying to find out why...I have been trying hard to contact with other pagans or like-minded people by advertising in the newspapers and occult mags and putting small bumper stickers here and there--got very few positive contacts, as expected a lot of answers from wierdos and nuts like satanists, lesbian so-called "witches", homosexual all-male groups, leftwing radical feminist "witches", Great Mother cult, etc., etc. but sorry to say no contact from the people I was looking for, the serious pagans of the Norse tradition. I'm sure they are out there somewhere, they must be. Now the question is how to get in touch--an idea might be to start up a periodical/newsletter and spread it among the alternative/occult bookshops and/or start an advertising campaign. Both will take time and cost quite some money--we'll see!

Helge

Helge welcomes contacts and can be reached by writing to

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