

Springtime for Carlyle

INTEREST IN THE WORK AND PHILOSOPHY OF THOMAS CARLYLE REACHED its apogee soon after his death in 1881, from which point his influence has steadily declined. Over the ensuing century and a quarter, some of it unspeakably horrific, the lot of common humankind—literacy, suffrage, spendable income, technology, health, and welfare—has been elevated while class barriers have become less rigid. Vassal states of colonial powers have been liberated. The world's history and culture is no longer weighed and taught from a strictly Eurocentric perspective. The biographies of "Heroes" are no longer limited to lives of "dead white men." And, with regard to Carlyle's alleged philosophy of Might Makes Right—a doctrine that he insisted was without his endorsement—great totalitarian regimes have risen only to tumble into chaos and extinction. To whatever degree the observations of "the Sage of Chelsea" might have run true in his own time, his prognostications for our own times are like the wisdom of the proverbial "owl in the desert."

Perhaps the most damning anecdote, the one that finally cast Carlyle into the dustbin of history, is the story of Goebbels and Hitler, deep in the bunker during the final days of the Third Reich, reading his *History of Frederick the Great* and taking great hope and comfort from it. Several references to this are revealed in Hugh Trevor-Roper's edition of Goebbel's diary, *Final Entries 1945* (New York: Putnams, 1978), and the story has been repeated frequently as if to drive home a pointed stake.

In a lecture recently delivered to the Edinburgh Carlyle Society, "'The Great Pioneer of National Socialism'?: Carlyle and Hitler Revisited," David R. Sorensen challenged the notion of Carlyle as a proto-fascist, juxtaposing salient quotations from long-neglected studies by Herbert J. C. Grierson (1866–1960; *ODNB*) and by Frank A. Lea (1915–77), an English pacifist and educator. To the conclusions of Grierson and Lea, Sorensen contrasted arguments drawn from Nazi propaganda and from German dissertations of the 1930s. He then asked what edition of *Frederick* we are to believe Hitler was supposed to be reading: the English original or the German translation? The latter was almost entirely the work of Carlyle's tireless amanuensis

Joseph Neuberg, a retired businessman and a Jew originally from Heidingsfeld near Würzburg in Bavaria.

Though at least 274 letters from the Carlyles to Neuberg have survived with dozens from him to the Carlyles in return, we knew until lately little about Neuberg beyond a few facts in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* and a few more in Townsend Scudder's introduction to his edition of *Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle to Joseph Neuberg 1848–1862* (Oxford UP, 1931). The late Kenneth J. Fielding's entry for Neuberg in the *Carlyle Encyclopedia* (2004) adds a valuable bibliography, and Todd Endelman's "The Frankaus of London: a Study in Radical Assimilation, 1837–1967" (*Jewish History* 8.1–2 [1994]: 117–54) has significantly extended our knowledge of Neuberg and his Frankau inlaws, also from Bavaria. This recent scholarship prompts us to investigate further the lost Jewish heritage of Heidingsfeld, traditional seat of the Neubergs. The idea of über-Nazis Hitler and Goebbels desperately reinforcing their Aryan vision from Joseph Neuberg's translation—if they were, in fact, reading from any of the first five volumes of *Frederick* in the German translation—adds new layers of complexity and disturbs easy conclusions.

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Tobacco

NANNIE MAE TILLEY (1899–1988) WAS BORN ON A TOBACCO FARM NEAR Bahama, a small village in Durham county, North Carolina, about fifteen miles from the city of Durham and Duke University. In 1935, she entered the history graduate program at Duke while directing the library's manuscript division, a job she held until 1947 when she joined the faculty of East Texas State Teachers College. Her doctoral dissertation was enlarged into a book, *The Bright-Tobacco Industry, 1860–1929* (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 1948), and she noted the far-flung popularity of the Bull Durham brand of loose, unrolled cigarette tobacco. Aggressively advertised, the Bull Durham trademark soon became famous world-wide, and the manufacturer received