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STEPHEN WAGNER

Dateline: 01/11/99

The Allies are closing in. Berlin is crumbling under the weight and impact of hundreds of Allied bombs. Deep in his fortified bunker, Adolf Hitler, once unshakable in his confidence in Nazi world domination, now admits that defeat is at hand. But Hitler is determined never to suffer the humiliation of being captured by his enemies. There is only one escape route -- one he has planned for should he ever face just such a turn of events. Suicide is out of the question. Instead, Hitler and his corps of elite traverse through an underground tunnel to an isolated airstrip. There they board an unmarked plane and fly south. South to the pole. To the opening at the South Pole where they will enter the hollow Earth and disappear from history.

This alternate scenario to history is actually accepted as fact by some proponents of the hollow Earth theory. And as incredible as it sounds, the genesis of this story lies in some facts that carry some merit: some of Hitler's top advisors -- perhaps even Hitler himself -- believed that the Earth was hollow; and there was at least one expedition by the Nazi military to exploit that belief for strategic advantage during the

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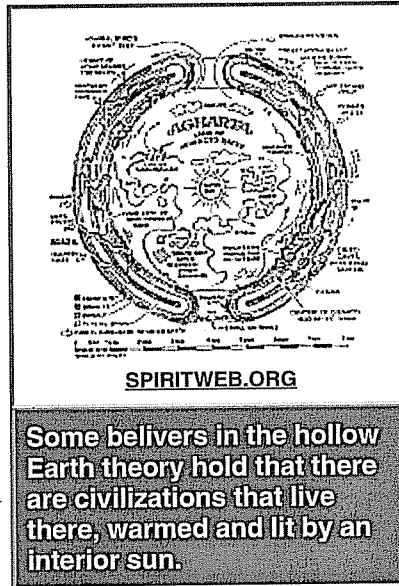
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war.

As with all such stories, it's often difficult to sort out facts, exaggerations, and outright fabrications. But it's an intriguing tale, and one that requires a little background.

There are several hollow Earth theories. The most prevalent one holds that there are great but hidden openings at both the North and South poles, and that it is possible to enter those holes. Some -- including the respected Admiral Byrd -- claimed to have entered those holes. According to the legends, other civilizations live within the Earth on it's inner surface, warmed and lit by an interior sun. The idea has inspired novels by Edgar Allen Poe (*MS Found in a Bottle*), Edgar Rice Borroughs (*At the Earth's Core*), and Jules Verne (*A Journey to the Center of the Earth*).



A second theory, call the "inverted Earth" theory, claims that we -- our civilization -- actually exists on the inside of the globe. We are held fast to the ground not by gravity, but by centrifugal force as the Earth rotates. The stars, so goes the theory, are twinkling chunks of ice suspended high in the air, and the illusion of day and night is caused by a rotating central sun that is half brilliant, half dark. Cyrus Teed, an alchemist from Utica, N.Y., was one of the first people to popularize this idea. So obsessed was he with the idea that he founded a religion based on it, changed his name to Koresh, and established a commune for Koreshanity in Chicago in 1888. In Germany, independently of the Koreshans, another group also was founded that adhered to the inverted Earth idea, and it was this concept that was accepted by some segments of the Nazi hierarchy.

The scenario told at the beginning of this article accepts one hollow Earth theory, while the facts seem to show that some Nazis actually believed in the other.

Hitler's Nazis were convinced that they were destined to rule the world, and they came to this warped conclusion through the acceptance of many occult beliefs and practices, including astrology, the prophecies of Nostradamus, and the hollow/inverted Earth theory... *hohlweltlehre*. Because they suspected that our surface is on the interior of a concave Earth, Hitler sent an expedition, including Dr. Heinz Fischer and powerful telescopic cameras, to the Baltic island of Rugen to spy on the British fleet. Fischer did so not by

aiming his cameras across the waters, but by pointing them *up* to peer across the atmosphere to the Atlantic Ocean. The expedition was a failure, of course. Fischer's cameras saw nothing but sky, and the British fleet remained safe.

Then there's the legend... that Hitler and many of his Nazi minions escaped Germany in the closing days of World War II and fled to Antarctica where at the South Pole they had discovered an entrance to the Earth's interior. According to the Hollow Earth Research Society in Ontario, Canada, they are still there. After the war, the organization claims, the Allies discovered that more than 2,000 scientists from Germany and Italy had vanished, along with almost a million people, to the land beyond the South Pole. This story gets more complicated with Nazi-designed UFOs, Nazi collaboration with the people who live in the center of the Earth, and the explanation for "Aryan-looking" UFO pilots.

While the evidence for either hollow Earth theory is close to nil (although some folks claim to have proof in the form of photos), the story involving Nazis, war, and the romance of exploratory adventure sounds like the makings of a great Indiana Jones story. In fact, it *is!* In the novel *Indiana Jones and the Hollow Earth* by Max McCoy, Indy comes into the possession of a mysterious journal hinting at the existence of an underground civilization that he and the Nazis race to find. The fate of the world -- hollow or not -- is in Indy's hands!

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