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# Aleister Crowley and the Temptation of Politics

*By Marco Pasi*



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## Aleister Crowley and the Temptation of Politics By Marco Pasi

Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) is one of the most famous and significant authors in the history of western esotericism. Crowley has been long ignored by scholars of religion whilst the stories of magical and sexual practice which circulate about him continue to attract popular interest. "Aleister Crowley and the Temptation of Politics" looks at the man behind the myth - by setting him firmly within the politics of his time - and the development of his ideas through his extensive and extraordinarily varied writings. Crowley was a rationalist, sympathetic to the values of the Enlightenment, but also a romantic and a reactionary. His search for an alternative way to express his religious feelings led him to elaborate his own vision of social and political change. Crowley's complex politics led to his involvement with many key individuals, organisations and groups of his day - the secret service of various countries, the German Nazi party, Russian political activists, journalists and politicians of various persuasions, as well as other writers - both in Europe and America. "Aleister Crowley and the Temptation of Politics" presents a life of ideas, an examination of a man shaped by and shaping the politics of his times.



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## Editorial Review

### Review

"As Pasi shows, the occultist, magician and writer was a gadfly, an ironist, an ambitious radical and always a controversialist in his flirtation with the main currents of 20th-century thought... Pasi's book proves an admirable introduction to the complex magical and political connections of this most elusive of figures." - *Times Higher Education*

"A pioneering study of Crowley's relationship to politics. Marco Pasi's brilliant analysis of events, facts and ideas refutes many of the preconceived notions of the relationship between occultism and politics. This is a groundbreaking book not only for the study of Crowley, but also for 20th century occultism." - *Henrik Bogdan, author of Western Esotericism and Rituals of Initiation, and co-editor of Aleister Crowley and Western Esotericism*

"In this sweeping survey, Marco Pasi deftly reconstructs the political tapestries of Britain, Germany, Italy, France, the United States and Soviet Union, providing valuable context for the settings which influenced Crowley's political thought, and against which that thought played out. Putting tired and inaccurate tropes about its subject to bed while opening doors to fresh areas of inquiry, this book should be on the shelf of anyone with an interest in Crowley or in the intersection of political and esoteric thought in the Twentieth Century." - *Richard Kaczynski, author of Forgotten Templars: The Untold Origins of Ordo Templi Orientis and Perdurabo: The Life of Aleister Crowley*

"This must be the most anticipated of all esotericism-related publications that have appeared in 2013." - *Heterodoxology blog*

### About the Author

**Marco Pasi** is Assistant Professor of History of Hermetic Philosophy at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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