Ideology, Politics, and
Social Science Scholarship
on the Responsibility of Intellectuals *

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In this paper I am arguing in favour of more vigilance on the part of the scholarly world and, if deemed necessary, a strong public stand when it becomes obvious that persons and institutions who should know better get themselves involved in the support of ideas that abet state-sponsored intolerance vis-à-vis identifiable groups or proclaim ideology-driven socially harmful claims that have no basis in science. The paper also suggests that the racist ideology of Nazi politics during the Third Reich, while perhaps still the prime example of the most horrendous state-sponsored crime against humanity in modern times, was by no means the only instance where a significant number of

scholars, inside and outside of academia, have lent their pens in support of social repression, racial discrimination, persecution, and even extermination of those who are identified by the political authorities as not belonging to the majority. While the argument is not made in favour of the suppression of potentially unpleasant truths, authors who evidently produce works that promote social discord among people and indeed hatred of identifiable groups should be held accountable in the public sphere.

1. On defining 'ideology'

Several years ago already, I deplored the lack of a generally accepted definition of the term 'ideology,' whose variegated, if not turbulent, 200-year-history is well-known (cf. Woolard 1998). In linguistics the topic of ideology appears to have become fashionable during the 1990s, perhaps beginning with Joseph & Taylor's collective volume *Ideologies of Language* of 1990. Five years later, Huck & Goldsmith still managed to publish a book on *Ideology and Linguistic Theory: Noam Chomsky and the deep structure debates* without defining the term (Huck & Goldsmith 1995). It was only in response to Newmeyer's (1996:127-137) critique that the authors felt the need to address the issue (Huck & Goldsmith 1998:366-368). What they came up with is at best an operational definition; they said that they had "simply [been] taking ideology to refer to the self-interest that affects both the content of one's beliefs and the tenacity with which one holds to them" (p.367).

I presume that if we have Newmeyer's (1980) depiction of "The Chomskyan Revolution" in mind, replete with expressions suggesting

military and political conflict, e.g., 'campaigner,' 'old guard,' 'rebellion,' 'revolution,' 'struggle,' 'tactic,' 'defend,' 'confront,' and 'win victories,' and in which politico-religious terms are not rare either, e.g., 'charisma,' 'convert,' 'hegemony,' 'win over' (cf. Newmeyer 1980:45 and elsewhere), we would agree that it fits Maurice Cranston's description of 'ideology,' which reads:

> It is characteristic of ideology both to exalt action and to regard action in terms of a military analogy. Some observers have pointed out that one has only to consider the prose style of the founders of most ideologies to be struck by the military and warlike language that they habitually use, including words like *struggle, resist, march, victory* and *overcome*; the literature of ideology is replete with martial expressions. In such a view, commitment to an ideology becomes a form of enlistment so that to become the adherent of an ideology is to become a combatant or partisan. (Cranston 1974:196)

I doubt, however, that this definition can be fruitfully applied to all sorts of cases where we detect 'ideology' playing a noticeable part in scholarly or perhaps not so scholarly argument. In other instances, we might adopt the concept of 'frame' or 'framing' (as used in discourse analysis) as a useful means of describing a technique which Lawson (2001) has recently shown to be at work in linguistic textbooks, but which can surely be shown to apply to works that espouse a particular theoretical or philosophical position. Take for instance the frequently and often differently made statements regarding the nature of language and, by extrapolation, the nature of linguistics. For example, the question of whether language is a biologically given thing or not, can be used to determine or, rather to impress on the reader, a particular view of linguistics as a 'science' or as something else. Compare

Edward Sapir's (1884-1939) affirmation that "Language is a cultural, and not a biologically-inherited function" (1921:v) and his view that "[i]f language can be said to be 'localized' in the brain, it is only in that general and rather useless sense that all aspects of consciousness, all human interest and activity, may be said to be 'in the brain'" (p.9), with Steven Pinker's (b.1954) assertion three generations later:

> Once you begin to look at language not as the ineffable essence of human consciousness but as a biological adaptation to communicative information [...] the complexity of language, from a scientist's point of view, is part of our biological birthright. (Pinker 1994:19)

What is interesting in both instances is that neither author provides any evidence for the correctness of his particular position. The authors make their pronouncements as if they were self-evident and in no need of justification. Once you have accepted the view espoused by either of them, all other arguments follow 'logically.' Indeed, what appears to happen next is, as Lawson (2001: 14) suggests, that "as soon as a theory achieves prominence[,] its proponents begin to insulate their viewpoint from meaningful dissent."[1]

I agree that these examples may not suffice to define our regular understanding of 'ideology,' which is usually associated with politics of a much more public sort. Indeed, there can be no doubt that there

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1) I hardly need to point out that this is what has happened most dramatically in the case of Chomskyan linguistics and its various offsprings in 20th-century linguistics. This is still evident in Sylvain Bromberger's (b.1924) defence of Chomsky in his response to John R. Searle's (b.1932) review of Chomsky's most recent collection of papers in *The New York Review of Books* 49:7.60 (25 April 2002).

are state-sponsored ideologies such as nationalism, fascism, communism, and so forth, on the one hand, and usually unspoken culturally-derived presuppositions and prejudices that may underlie more or less all opinions and all research activities, on the other. As a result, it may be desirable to distinguish between the two, although it appears that not infrequently these two kinds of 'ideology' are in some way intertwined or, at times, closely linked. I shall try to illustrate this with the help of a couple of examples in what follows.

2. Has there been a National-Socialist linguistics?

My research during the past four or so years has been concerned with the development of 19th and early 20th century historical-comparative linguistics and the question to what extent scholarly argumentation and practice in this field underwent important changes during the Nazi period, 1933-1945. A particular focus has been the use of the comparative method developed during the second half of the 19th century and its application to the search for the original homeland of the Indo-Europeans, while at the same time taking note of the arguments coming from general history, archaeology, and race theory (cf. Koerner 2000). I also asked myself to what extent these arguments had been driven by what I called 'ideology,' i.e., by preconceived ideas that came from outside the field of historical-comparative Indo-European linguistics and, in one form or other, infiltrated the scientific (and, at times, the public) discourse, influenced the interpretation, and, possibly, determined the research outcome. I am by no means finished with this subject. In fact, the more one digs into these rather complex matters, the more one finds, and more has been

written on these during the past ten or so years than ever before.

It is only in recent years that historians of linguistics with few exceptions have taken a serious interest in studying the linguistic scholarship produced during the Third Reich (e.g., Pollock 1993, Hutton 1999, Mees 2001). I am not quite sure why there has been such a delay, but we cannot help noticing the reticence, more than ten years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall, among scholars, historians, sociologists, political scientists, and others, to take a critical view of what really happened in Communist Germany from 1949 till November 1989.[2] This reticence may simply have been because, until recently, many academics have felt uncomfortable with a close examination of the Nazi period. For instance, they might have feared that their own teachers could be implicated in some way in having supported the Nazi ideology of German(ic) superiority and race in their early careers. Some have argued that they had to wait until the old generation had died off. Another reason may have been that the younger generations had accepted the whitewashing of such activities after 1945 that many scholars, not only in linguistics, had actively engaged in. Be it as it may, it is time that the often incorrect perceptions of linguistics during those twelve horrific years in German history are exploded.

In a recent paper, Clemens Knobloch has listed altogether six myths

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2) Needless to say, I don't feel that where the former East German régime and its misdeeds are concerned, we should again have to wait fifty years before we see serious analyses of what really happened. We cannot help noticing the parallel between the restoration of the positions held by many during the Nazi period soon after World War II and the reemployment of people in politics, journalism, the judiciary, and academe who had made their careers in Communist Germany, and of whom we read in the newspapers that they had allied themselves with the rgime, in some instances even to the extent of serving as secret service informers.

which surround the 'particular course' (Sonderweg) that German linguistics and not only linguistics, we should add is supposed to have taken during the Third Reich. These include, among others, the presumed isolation of the field from international developments, the politicization of the discipline, and the total worthlessness of the work done by scholars during the 1933-1945 period (Knobloch 2002). The commonly-held view has been that linguistics (and other disciplines) during the Nazi era was very different from what had been said and done before, and that the field more or less picked up after World War II where it had left off in 1933. During the Third Reich, it has been argued, linguistics (and other subjects) had ceased to be scientific, whereas it had been free from nationalist or even racist ideology before Hitler took control of Germany.

A typical example for this traditional attitude was expressed by the late Indo-Europeanist Edgar Polomé (1920-2000) in a survey of the development of Indo-European linguistics since the Neogrammarians covering the period between 1870 and the present (Polomé 1995). In Polomé's account, the Nazi period is treated very briefly and, as usual, is characterized as little more than a *faux pas* on the part of some scholars (few are mentioned by name) rather than as a line of thinking which has had precedents in 19th-century scholarship and certainly pre-1933 Indo-European studies. The subject of the Indo-European *Urheimat* is discussed, but Polomé concentrates more on recent hypotheses, notably those advanced by Gimbutas (e.g., 1985), Gamkrelidze & Ivanov (e.g., 1985a, b), and Renfrew (e.g., 1988), at least the last two of which he is quite critical about (and which I would characterize as ideologically driven;[3] cf. Koerner 2000).

The assessment Polomé offers of the search for the origins of the Indo-Europeans up to and including Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia is interesting and bears citation:

> Both linguists and archaeologists have been obsessed with the desire to pinpoint the location of the homeland of the Indo-Europeans since the beginning of our studies, and their search has unfortunately not always been devoid of political motivation: the Germany of the 1930's and 1940's was locating it within the frontiers of the Great Reich; after Stalin's discovery of "real" linguistics [in 1950], [...], some Soviet linguists placed it in the Slavic territory when dealing with the prehistory of the Russian language; [...]. (Polomé 1995:281)

As we can see, to Polomé (and we may add, to the great majotity of writers of the history of 20th-century linguistics, if they mention this period at all) it is only during the period under Nazism, Stalinism, or Fascism that politically motivated research was done and work of doubtful quality produced, and that once we got rid of the regime, the respective disciplines will resume in a kind of 'value-free,' ideologically neutral, fashion.[4]

Given this widespread perception, Hutton, in his book *Linguistics and the Third Reich*, recounts that his research had led him to the recognition that he "had a naive view of the history of German

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3) Some may hold that Gimbutas' Kurgan Hypothesis is not free from preconceived notions about the culture of the pre-Europeans and the less cultured, male-dominated, and aggressive Indo-European intruders.

4) I have recently been told by a French linguist (Sylvain Patri of Université de Lyon II, p.c. on 28 Feb. 2002) that his former teacher at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, Indo-Europeanist Françoise Bader (b.1932), does not cite any work that was published in Germany between 1933 and 1945.

linguistics, [...], and that much received wisdom about categories of race and language [...] was misleading" (p.1). His findings were that "[t]he widespread belief by linguists today that some great conceptual distance separates them both from nineteenth century German linguistics and from linguistics of the Nazi era is unfounded" (p.2). The fact is, that while there were indeed a number of scholars who held Nazi convictions and who produced work that was ideologically tainted, such as Walther Wüst's (1901-1993), even though he "repeatedly distances himself from amateurs, charlatans, and ignorant nonspecialists" (Pollock 1993:89), there were others, like Walter Porzig (1895-1961), who, like Wüst, played an active role in various National Socialist (NS) organizations, but whose scholarship, unlike Wüst's, is entirely free of any ideological colouring. In other words, membership of the Nazi party did not necessarily mean bad scholarship;[5] *pace* Mees (2001), it is not clear whether one could indeed speak of a Nazi linguistics, although certainly of linguists (and other academics) who in their work made room for NS ideology.

To offer a striking example, when studying Hutton's (1999) book, I had was surprised to discover that a scholar whom I had celebrated in a 1981 paper as a hero for having strongly argued against the use of 'Aryan' outside of its technical meaning of "Indo-Iranian" (Koerner 1989[1981]:170) at the height of World War II (Siegert 1941/42),[6]

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5) To mention just another example, in Chapter 7 (Yiddish linguistics and National Socialism) of his 1999 book, Hutton refers to a number of Germanists who, despite the fact that they were to join the Hitler Party or evinced strong pro-Nazi sympathies, facilitated in many ways the field of Yiddish studies (pp.211ff.), including supervising doctoral dissertations on Yiddish by Jewish students like Solomon Birnbaum (18911989), Jechiel Fischer (18991984), and Max Weinreich (18941969) during the 1920s and early 1930s.

was in fact someone who had been a member of the NSDAP since May 1933 and a protégé of Wüst (cf. Hutton 1999: 354n.51, for details on Siegert [b.1911]), in whose journal *Wörter und Sachen* the article was published.

By contrast, we could refer to the career of Leo Weisgerber (1899-1985), who was not a member of the Nazi party, but who dominated much of the general linguistic discourse before, during, and after the Third Reich period (until about 1970), and who knew how to use the concept of 'Muttersprache' effectively in line with the demands of the day. As Clemens Knobloch (2000) has recently demonstrated in his analysis of Weisgerber's writings from 1929 to the end of his life in 1985, 'mother tongue,' can serve different arguments at different political times, and Weisgerber exploited this possibility to the fullest. Hutton, who devoted an entire chapter to "The strange case of Sonderführer Weisgerber" (1999:106-143), had only one term to characterize Weisgerber's writings on the subject: mother-tongue fascism.[7] Those among us who live in bilingual or multilinguistic settings today with one or more languages predominating cannot help

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6) Pollock (1993:120-121n.21) could only find references to two short notices by Indo-Europeanists Herman Lommel (18851968), who translated Saussure's *Cours* in 1931, by the way, and Hans Krahe (18981965) of 1934 and 1935, respectively, who seem to raise the issue of the historical validity of the term 'arisch' [...], but avoid, or cannot conceive of, any critique.

7) Ernst Pulgram (b.1915), himself a victim of the 'Arierparagraph' instituted by the Nazis, got it wrong when he affirms that Mother-tongue fascism argues that one must be of pure Aryan race to be a true possessor of the German mother-tongue (Pulgram 2000:713). In fact, Nazi race theorists and other academics were quite clear that there was no such thing as an 'Aryan race,' whatever Nazi propaganda and popular rhetoric may have suggested, and the term 'Aryan' was dropped from a lot of official discourse quite early on (cf. Pollock 1993: 120n.17, for a somewhat different view).

noticing at least traces of ideology in present-day debates among linguists concerned with what is referred to as 'identity theory.' I cannot help feeling that certain discourses in North America, like those concerning 'English Only' arguments in the United States (cf. Tatalovich 1995) and the so-called struggle for survival of the French language in Quebec, border on at least fascistoid positions.[8]

In short, it is much more difficult to write the history of linguistics

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8) The following passage was censored by the Review Editor of *Canadian Journal of Linguistics*, who had previously invited me to write a review of Hutton (1999), which appeared (without it) in *CJL* 45:3/4.312-317 (late 2001 for Sept.Dec. 2000):

> Again, in order to illustrate 'mother-tongue fascism' to those more familiar with the present than the past, let me cite two current North American examples. I am thinking in particular of Quebec's separatist movement and the 'English only' laws which certain states of the U.S. have passed in order to appease public anxieties that their politicians created in the first place for their own agenda. There, we have been witness to the kind of subtle and not so subtle propaganda that has been advanced by the advocates of mother-tongue protection to promote their some may say 'racist' politics. People are being made to feel that someone wants to take their language away from them, and prospects like this naturally make many members of the population whose language is supposedly threatened nervous if not downright frightened since so much of daily life, identification, and whatever passes as 'culture' is wedded to language. As we will surely realize, such ideologies fly in the face of what is really happening: in Canada, the support that has been given by the federal government for the promotion of French in public institutions and schools has in fact added to the vitality and viability of French; [footnote: I recall that in 1970-1971, when I was completing my doctoral dissertation at Simon Fraser University, the strongest FM radio station broadcast in French, even though the French-speaking population in the Vancouver area was minuscule at the time.] in the United States, new immigrants are eager to learn English in order to increase their chances in advancing socially and economically.

Do I need to add that the Review Editor is a Quebecker, who has done various studies for the government-sponsored watch-dog Office de la langue française in Montreal? (When criticised, these scholars tend to assume that they occupy the moral highground.)

under the Third Reich or any other particularly oppressive regime than may appear at first blush. There was surely a Nazi ideology which was racist, xenophobic, and the like, but there was no 'Nazi linguistics.' There were definitely linguists who held Nazi convictions; a number of them were eager to align their work with the ideology of the day, others were not. As far as I know, little pressure was exercised on scholars during the Third Reich to rewrite their work in line with Nazi ideology, but there were surely a number of them who felt an urge to please the political masters of the day. How else could we explain the fact that a distinguished Indo-Europeanist like Göttingen University's Eduard Hermann (1869-1950) could write and publish, in 1937, an article entitled 'What has Indo-European linguistics to offer National Socialism?' ("Was hat die indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft dem Nationalsozialismus zu bieten?"), in which the author expresses his confidence that his field has indeed much to offer to the demands of the day. It is the historian's task not only to establish the facts as much as this is possible (on the basis of available evidence, from published works as well as archival and other sources), but also to try to explain them.

3. Present-day instances of linguistic ideology and public politics

Perhaps another example regarding Indo-European prehistory should be mentioned. This time not regarding Germany, not even Europe, but India. Its actuality may serve as a model of what can happen when politicians seize the agenda with arguments concerning language and its history. There are many more such instances where language (rather than race or religion although they could enter into a dangerous mix

in the discourses of politicians) has played a powerful role in nation building. Vivian Law (1998), for example, has offered a thorough analysis of the shaping, transformation, and maintenance of national identity in post-Soviet Georgia, and the interplay between linguists and politicians in efforts to claim ethnic identity, territorial integrity, and other nationalist aspirations.

In most, if not all hypotheses concerning the question of the Indo-European original homeland of five thousand or more years ago, it has been accepted that early in the history of the peoples, who were supposedly speakers of one and the same Indo-European *Grundsprache*, dialectal differentiation took place, and this through the movement of various groups away from the original staging area. We all know from historical linguistics that geographic separation also produces linguistic differentiation and eventually the emergence of distinct dialects and languages. The development of the Romance languages from Latin is usually taken as a schoolbook example for this process. Otto Schrader (1855-1919) in the 1880s (cf. Schrader 1883, 1890) and Marija Gimbutas (1921-1994) one hundred years later (e.g., Gimbutas 1985) placed the location of the Indo-European *Urheimat* in the Eurasian steppes or Pontic region north of the Black Sea and the Caucasus[9] regions, a view that is widely accepted among Indo-Europeanists. From there movements of the Indo -European peoples occurred in different phases (according to Gimbutas, there were three), and that while early on the Celts were the first group to move west into Europe, the Indo-Iranians or

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9) This geographical term has led to the naming of the so-called white race as 'Caucasian.'

Aryans (as they called themselves)[10] moved into (especially northern) India and Persia (cf. Mallory 1989, for a fair account, especially on the archaeological side). Looking simply at geographic maps (and not even historical and linguistic evidence), this scenario is quite plausible and, as far as India is concerned, it would suggest that the Indo-Europeans were the invaders who pushed the speakers of Dravidian (i.e., non-Indo-European) languages farther south.[11] To take a couple of recent studies, one from the archaeological side, the other from the linguistic side, that maintain this traditional view: Kuzmina (2001), surveying the various proposals concerning the Indo-European homeland (e.g., those by Gimbutas, Gamkrelidze & Ivanov, Renfrew, and others), addresses in particular the "steppe homeland of the Indo-Iranians," which has been accepted by the majority of Indo-Iranianists (p.4), and then puts forward six 'decisive arguments' "in favour of an Indo-Aryan migration into the Indian subcontinent," such as the "high level of Harappan [i.e., indigenous][12] farming civilization" in India which is "incompatible with the economy and cultural type of the pastoral Aryans depicted in Vedic

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10) Interestingly, the self-descriptive term 'Aryan' means something like the better one, i.e., it had a clear racist connotation thousands of years before it became a term associated with National Socialism.

11) The absence of common Indo-European words for 'lion,' 'camel,' and the like in contrast to words for 'wolf,' 'bear,' and others suggesting colder climes have served as strong linguistic arguments against a more southern original homeland (cf. Koerner 2000, for details).

12) Kuzimina refers only in passing to nationalist-oriented representatives of Indian intellectuals, who try to connect the Harappan culture with the Indo-Aryans in their opposition to what they see as colonialist ideas of European scholars (2001:3-4) without mentioning ideological underpinnings of such a view, referring to Bryant (1999) for further discussion instead.

[i.e., ancient Indian] literature," the indigenous "production of ceramics without the pottery wheel by the Indo-Aryans" as witnessed many times in the same texts, the "horse cult, which was of essential importance to Indo-Iranian culture and [which was] also common to Indo-European culture" generally, the horse-drawn chariot which "played a great role in describing the social group of warrior-charioteers among the Indo-Iranians" (Kuzmina 2001:4-5), to mention just several of the arguments which the author adduces as archaeological evidence for in the remainder of her paper.

Hock (2000), by contrast, responds, essentially on linguistic and philological grounds, to what he sees as Nazi-like attempts by modern South Asia identity movements to reject the traditional view of the migration of the Indo-Iranian peoples. Hock surveys the various arguments for and against the 'Aryan Invasion Theory' from Sir William Jones's often-cited presidential address to the Royal Asiatic Society in Calcutta of 1787, in which the historical kinship of European languages such as Greek and Latin with Sanskrit was enunciated, to recent scholarship on the subject of the Indo-Aryan origins. On the basis of careful analysis of the earliest Sanskritic texts, the Rig-Veda of the first millenium B.C., Hock shows that the archaeological remains of the Indus Civilization have no match in the Vedic texts. In particular, the social and religious importance the early Indo-Europeans attached to the horse is totally absent from the otherwise rich iconography of the Indus Civilization. Indeed, these texts speak of subjugating the dark-skinned peoples of the area (Hock 2000: 53), which we would identify as the indigenous Dravidian population of India (see also Sjoberg 1990).

However, those who have followed international politics attentively

(and not only since September 11th, 2001), in particular where India is concerned, cannot have failed to note the bloody conflicts between the Hindu and Muslim population in recent years, in particular following the destruction of the Muslim temple in Ayodhya by Hindu extremists in 1992. In recent months, we have been able to gather from the news that Hindu nationalists now want to build a Hindu temple in its place, something which is being strongly resisted by Muslims. On the surface of things, this appears to be just a religious conflict, but if we go back only ten years in Indian political history, we may recall that out of the Hindutva movement, which uses the Hindu religion as a means of supporting nationalism, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) "Party of the Children of the Soil"[13] was born, of which the current Prime Minister of India (since 2000), Atal Bihari Vajpayee, is the leader on the national scene.[14] In the present dispute, we must be grateful that the BJP does not have an absolute majority but requires coalition parties in order to govern, since otherwise we would probably see that Vajpayee gives public support to the Hindu extremists and their plans to build the temple on the grounds of the former Muslim mosque "Babri Masjid," erected by the Mughal emperor Bābur (1483-1530) in Ayodhya (now in the state of Uttar Pradesh). The matter is serious as the BJP is part of the governing party in the state of Uttar Pradesh,[15] the Hindu heartland and India's

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13) Literarally, *bharatiya Janata* means to be born from Barat [= India]; it is clear from this that the name is a program and an ideology. It denies that the Indic peoples were once the invaders and claims ownership.

14) See the excerpts of widely circulating, revealing article by A. P. Vajpayee of c.1997, The Sangh [see note 15 below] Is My Soul printed in Banerjee (1998:154-157).

15) However and this would be for a political scientist, not a mere intellectual

most populous state, where Vajpayee himself hails from. This state in the northern part of India is, next to the state of Gujarāt, which is situated in the northeast of India and bordering on Pakistan, the main stronghold of nationalist Hindu ideology. Gujarāt has a BJP-run government which, as we read in the news, has encouraged attacks by militia and police on the lives and properties of the Muslim population. We can only hope that the Congress Party, founded by Nehru in 1947, which is still the main opposition party in the Indian parliament, can effectively counter-act these recent aggressive acts against the non-Hindu population condoned, if not encouraged, by the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Now, why do I mention all this? Well, like all ideologically-driven parties, the BJP is in the business of rewriting history, and in the present instance where the BJP is trying to assert power over the whole of India, their leaders would like to demonstrate that the Hindu population has always resided on the Subcontinent. As a result, the traditional view that the Indians (and the Iranians) had in fact migrated into the Indian Subcontinent some 4,000 years ago (cf. Leach 1990),

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historian whose speciality is linguistics, to account for in detail the BJP is not acting alone. There is the Vishva Hindu Parishad Assembly of All Hindus (VHP), a largely academic Hindu nationalist organization, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Nucleus of the Servants of the Country or National Volunteer Union, as Goodrick-Clarke (1998:43) translates it, an extreme nationalist militia, a brown-shirt-like organization similar to the SA, founded in the 1930s in a response to Muslim ascendancy. The RSS, inspired early on by Nazi ideology of race (cf. Golwalkar 1939), is largely to blame for the attacks on the Muslim population; indeed, Partha Banerjee, a former member of the RSS for fifteen years, draws a rather scary picture of the increasing power of the organization and the support it receives from the BJP leadership (Banerjee 1998; see also Basu et al. 1993:12-55). Perhaps the definitive study of the later history of the RSS and the Hindu nationalist movement is Jaffrelot (1996).

and had not been part of the original population, must be bothersome to the ideologues, who want to lead their followers to believe that India means Hinduism (cf. Banerjee 1998, which reproduces excerpts from a recent article by Vajpayee arguing in favour of this view [154-157]). As a result, scholars who, like Andree F. Sjoberg, try to show the important historical role of the Dravidian population of India and their cultural contribution, find themselves increasingly under attack in recent years (cf. Sjoberg 1990).

While it is easy for a nationalist party to hold certain views, to deny historically established facts and replace them with a new myth, it seems very helpful, if not important, to have scholars ready to come forward to argue its case. Native scholarship devoted to 'Aryan origins' is not new but in fact has a long tradition (e.g., Golwalkar 1939), though in most instances the research results of Europeans in comparative philology, historical linguistics, archaeology, and material culture have largely been accepted, including the traditional view of 'Indian invasion' had been regarded by Indian scholars as in agreement with the evidence. However, what appears to have been more of a minority view, such as the one expressed in K. D. Sethna's *The Problem of Aryan Origins: From an Indian point of view* of 1980, which denies what he characterizes as the 'invasion myth' created by Westerners, has in recent years found a considerable number of adherents (e.g., Rajaram 1995, Talageri 1993a,b). Interestingly, some European scholars, like the 42-year-old Belgian anthropologist Koenraad Elst (e.g., Elst 1999, 2002) and the American David Frawley (e.g., Frawley 1994), apparently seeking what Clemens Knobloch calls "außerfachliche Resonanz" (resonance outside of one's professional domain), have weighed in in favour of the denial of the Aryan

invasion of the South Asia region, and Frawley even co-authored a book with one of the native Indian advocates (Rajaram & Frawley 1997). It is not an accident that Sethna's 1980 book was reprinted by one of the publishers in New Delhi in 1992 which also published books by Elst and Talageri.[16]

Noticing the growing number of scholars willing to lend their support to Hindu supremicist ideology, we may ask, what leads them to do this. This question brings me to the next point of my paper, the issue of 'Resonanzbedarf.'

4. Explicating 'Resonanzbedarf'

In line with the task of the historian to also explain, not only record events, the present paper tries to consider some of the underpinnings that seem to motivate such work whose authors appear to offer their services to the ideology of the day, not just in Nazi Germany (or Austria, for that matter). Indeed, if we were to analyze recent scholarship in linguistics or other social sciences, it could be shown that academic work has never been 'value-neutral' (as may have generally been assumed or has been claimed by some practitioners), though the consequences in so-called 'normal' times may be less severe than under other circumstances. We cannot help noticing, however, how quickly public discourses, including those among scholars, can change. For instance, we have been able to witness this in recent months following the events of September 11th, 2001, in the

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16) The other important publisher of those invasion deniers is The Voice of India (see the books by Frawley and Rajaram).

United States, when 'patriotism' became the watchword of the day.

In order to illustrate that ideology of a public nature can have serious consequences, we may mention the fact that a great number of distinguished Russian linguistic scholars lost their lives during the Stalinist Purge of the 1930s, like Baudouin de Courtenay's former pupil Evgenij Dmitri'evič Polivanov (1891-1938) and Valentin Nikola'evič Vološinov (1895-1936) of the so-called Baxtin Circle, for criticizing Marrism[17] or not upholding the 'right' Marxist view in their linguistic work.[18] In Nazi Germany, academics may have lost their jobs but, as far as I know, none lost his life because he was not upholding Nazi ideology in his scholarly work. (Of course, many people lost their lives for other reasons, including political ones.)[19] Given the fact that while there was no official Nazi linguistics which everyone had to conform to, it remains surprising how many scholars, in linguistics and many other disciplines, had what Sheldon Pollock (1993:78) called the "motivating impulse" to open up toward a National Socialist ideology or at least make some sort of overtures

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17) I am referring to the theories about the stadial development of languages propounded by Nikolaj Jakovlevič Marr (1864-1934), Georgian-born like Stalin, which from the late 1920s until Stalin's official debunking in 1950, had reigned supreme in the Soviet Union as representing Marxist linguistics.

18) It may be interesting to note that apart from the short book by Alpatov (1991) on the 'myth' of Marrist linguistics in the Soviet Union, I don't know of any other book devoted to the history of Russian linguistics between 1917 and 1989 that has dealt with linguistics and political ideology.

19) In particular Jewish scholars, many of them elderly, who had remained in Germany and Austria after 1938, like the Anglicist Philipp Aronstein (1862-1942), the classical philologist Alfred Gudeman (1862-1942), the Germanist Sigmund Feist (1865-1943), the orientalist Norbert Jokl (1877-1942) and the Romance philologist Elise Richter (1865-1943), lost their lives in Theresienstadt or other Nazi concentration camps.

toward it.[20]

In order to explain this tendency among scholars (and other people like artists, writers, and *Kulturträger* of various kinds), the historian would have to become aware of what Clemens Knobloch has recently termed *Resonanzbedarf*, i.e., the desire, whether conscious or not, of scholars and probably scientists, too to have their work recognized by the educated public and that, in so doing, their discourses tend to pick up on contemporary popular notions. These efforts may be relatively harmless if everyone was to recognize these allusions and the adoption of certain lexical items (buzz words) as props or what Germans call *Versatzstücke* ("replacement pieces"), but history tells us that this has not always been the case.

When studying language (and linguistics) and ideology, the focus of attention has usually been placed on the particular use of language and often for some kind of 'political' ends, not on linguistic or other scholarship which might have been driven by some sort of ideology, i.e., a bundle of assumptions which themselves were taken as given. Yet at least since Edward Said's 1978 book *Orientalism*, it has been clear to everyone that scholars construct their conceptualization of things in line with their understanding of the cultural, social, and political world in which they live, and that this often unreflected 'pre-understanding' affects their view of cultures that are different from theirs and more often than not geographically and temporally distant from theirs. This recognition has had a sobering effect no doubt, and Said's book has long since become 'mainstream.' Indeed, thereafter

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20) Something very similar could be observed in many scholarly writings during the communist reign in East Germany, too.

others undertook searching investigations of the development of a field such as Indology, notably in Germany (e.g., Pollock 1993; Bryant 1999, 2001[21])).

That ideologically motivated work continues to be produced in our own times should be obvious to everybody whose reading habits go a bit farther than his or her specialist domain. To remain within the subject of Orientalism for the moment, no doubt much more disturbing to the scholarly profession than Said's book must have been the publication of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* in 1987 and 1991,[22] since it went much further than what Edward Said and others had said about the subject of Western prejudice. Bernal, a professor of political science at Cornell University, who reads hieroglyphics and Greek and who claims to know other ancient languages, went well beyond accusations of colonialism and cultural bias, in suggesting that the Western representation of Classical Greece over the past two hundred years was false and self-serving and that what had been accepted until now about occidental antiquity must now be seen as derived from African-Asiatic cultures of the Near East, in particular that of the Ancient Egyptians and, to a lesser extent, the Phoenicians. Bernal stops short of saying that none other than Socrates must have been a black man, though his work has been read by not a few in that way. While

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21) Although one cannot escape noticing Bryant's surprisingly sympathetic view of the 'out of India' theory which he sees as a kind of postcolonial counter-discourse.

22) When asked about the choice of the book's title in a colloquium at the 1989 American Philological Association meeting, Bernal said that his original title had been *African Athena*, but that his publisher had insisted on *Black Athena*, because the combination of blacks and women would 'sell' (cf. Muhly 1990:105, for a demurrer on Bernal's claim).

we may understand the intellectual climate in the United States that has led academics to present 'myth as history' (Lefkowitz 1996), it is clear that lines of regular scholarly principles of investigation have been crossed. It is obvious not only to me that Bernal started out with this rather radical idea, and then went about selecting, even misinterpreting or misrepresenting, his sources in order to fit his preconceived notions. To mention only those areas about which I happen to know something about, Bernal's use of etymology and the scholarship concerning Johann Gottfried Herder (1741-1803), whom he has selected as the villain who stood at the beginning of what he calls, with characteristic innuendo, 'the Aryan Model.'

As we know, it is not enough to have a smattering of various languages in order to come up with good etymologies; the use of similarity of sounds has, since the insights pioneered during the mid-19th century, no longer been taken as a reliable guide. However, throughout his two books (though never systematically) Bernal offers linguistic approximations between Egyptian and Greek words, personal names and place names that are supposed to suggest 'African' origins of Ancient Greek civilization. None of these "etymologies" stands up to scrutiny however. As Jasanoff & Nussbaum (1996) have shown, Bernal has no idea of the comparative method and of etymological principles. Likewise, in his paper "The Tyranny of Germany over Greece? Bernal, Herder, and the German appropriation of Greece," Robert E. Norton (1996) has demonstrated that Bernal does not cite a single primary source — he does not seem to read German — to support his claims against Herder as a 'racist,' and that indeed the sources he refers to say exactly the opposite of what he contends.

In short, upon closer inspection, *Black Athena* engages in arguments

and discourses that turn out to be much like those of ideology-driven scholars in nationalistic environments that have tended to select their 'facts' to prove their particular hypothesis or, rather, preconceived notions. That such supposedly scholarly work is produced without external, political pressures is hardly less disturbing than the many distortions of the work of others that Bernal has produced. One can only speculate about what has driven him to undertake this massive work, which has certainly impressed the uninformed and semi-informed members of the academic world.

5. Concluding remarks

Of course, we could be smug and say that bad scholarship will be found out in due course. But if we think of the consequences that books like Bernal's could and do have on the public mind, I think that those who are in the know should do more than simply wait until the 'experts' (cf., e.g., Lefkowitz & Rogers 1996 in Bernal's case) have exposed it. Personally, I find that the time between the publication of a seriously flawed, if not fraudulent, book and its exposure is often much too long, and I'd argue that it is up to the scholarly community to take a more vigorous, perhaps even pro-active, public stand than usually has been the case. We may laugh at some of the grotesque results that *Black Athena* may have produced, but their effects on the minds of ill-informed people can be serious indeed. Let me cite what seems, initially at least, a seemingly light-hearted example that Mary Lefkowitz relates in her Introduction to the 1996 volume of scholarly articles refuting the various aspects of Bernal's work. As a professor of classics at Wellesley College, she and her colleagues had organized

a Bad Ancient History Film series in which, among others, the Hollywood film *Cleopatra*, starring Elizabeth Taylor, was shown. One of her students lodged a complaint, and Lefkowitz thought that there were grounds for a complaint. She writes:

> Taylor's sexpot Cleopatra certainly had little in common with the charming, manipulative queen that Plutarch describes, the woman who spoke many languages and captivated everyone she knew with her conversation. But no, this student was indignant for a different reason: Elizabeth Taylor is, after all, a white person, whereas Cleopatra was black. We did our best to persuade this student, on the basis of Cleopatra's ancestry (on her name), that Cleopatra was a member of the Macedonian Greek dynasty that had imposed itself on Egypt, and that despite her fluency in the Egyptian language, the style of her dress, and the luxury of her court, she was in origin a Greek. (Lefkowitz & Rogers 1996:4)

I am sure that there have been more serious consequences as a result of the prevailing ideologies in the United States and elsewhere, especially since so little teaching goes into critical thinking these days, and so much of the time into amassing often half-digested information from the internet.

If I may venture beyond linguistic, philological or archaeological historical scholarship for a moment, let me refer briefly to works such as Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1995) and David I. Kertzer's *Popes against the Jews* (2001) in order to illustrate what I mean when talking about the responsibility of scholars who should know better. I will merely refer to Chadwick's review of the latter in *The New York Review of Books* in which he shows that Kertzer's claim that the Vatican bore a heavy responsibility for the long-standing anti-Semitism in Europe and, eventually, the Holocaust is not borne

out by the facts (Chadwick 2002:15-16). Although the Vatican has made available thousands of documents in recent years which scholars have access to, Kertzer does not seem to have spent any time in its archives but instead relied on published sources from which he selected what he needed for his preconceived idea of the absolute guilt of the Church of Rome.[23]

In the case of Goldhagen's book, I wonder where the regular controls were on the side of historians who should have known better. How is it possible that Harvard professors hail it as "truly revolutionary" and describe it as an "astonishing, disturbing, and riveting book, the fruit of phenomenal scholarship and absolute integrity" (Neuhaus 1996:36). Did these historians read what they praised? What were the members of the American Political Science Association doing when they extended its 1994 book award to the dissertation on which the 1995 book was based? And last, but not least, how was it possible that Goldhagen received a Democracy Prize[24] in Bonn in 1997 (Goldhagen 1997) for what one of the reviewers characterized as "the incoherent, hateful, and dishonest tract that is *Hitler's Willing Executioners*" (Neuhaus 1996: 41)?[25]

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23) Like Goldhagen's book, Kertzer's was published by Alfred A. Knopf, a New York publisher with an until fairly recently excellent reputation, but it seems that editorial control has been cast aside in favour of books that get big publicity and sell a large number of copies.

24) As Clemens Knobloch informs me (p.c. of 20 March 2002), this prize was handed out by the left-leaning journal *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* in express recognition of the public debate which Goldhagen's book had initiated, with the philosopher Jürgen Habermas and the tobacco-company heir Jan-Philipp Reemtsma offering the official encomia. Given the doubtful historical substance of Goldhagen's work, one wonders whether Habermas and Reemtsma were not themselves subject to *Resonanzbedarf*.

If historians and would-be historians go about their business in the way a number of them seem to have done in recent years, we cannot but conclude that there is a reversal in what 19th century orientalists liked to believe and which many of them spent their careers on trying to illustrate. Instead of extolling *ex Oriente lux*, we now seem to be on the best way of dealing with *ex Occidente nox*.

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25) Since Neuhaus may be regarded as being on the conservative side, I refer to a review authored by David North, national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States, at Michigan State University in East Lansing (North 1997), who provides many examples that would contradict Goldhagen's assertions.

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Abstract

The 1990s have seen the publication of many books devoted to Language and Ideology (cf. Joseph & Taylor 1990, for one of the early ones) even though the term 'ideology' itself has remained ill-defined (Woolard 1998). The focus of attention has usually been placed on the particular use of language and often for some kind of 'political' ends, not on linguistic or other scholarship which might have been driven by some sort of ideology, i.e., a bundle of assumptions which themselves were taken as given. At least since Edward Said's 1978 book *Orientalism*, it has been clear to everyone that scholars construct their conceptualization of things in line with their understanding of the cultural, social, and political world in which they live, and that this often unreflected 'pre-understanding' effects their view of cultures that are different from theirs and more often than not geographically and temporally distant from theirs. This recognition has had a sobering effect no doubt, and Said's book has long since become 'mainstream.' Much more disturbing to the scholarly profession has been the publication of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* in 1987, since it went much

further, going beyond accusations of colonialism and cultural bias, in suggesting that the Western representation of Classical Greece over the past two hundred years was false and that what had been accepted until now about occidental antiquity must now be seen derived from African-Asiatic cultures of the Near East, notably that of the Ancient Egyptians, and that no other than Socrates should be seen as black man. While we may understand the intellectual climate in the United States that led academics to present 'myth as history' (Lefkowitz 1996), it is obvious that lines of regular scholarly principles of investigation have been crossed (cf Lefkowitz & Rogers 1996). The present paper investigates what may be seen as the ideological underpinnings of such work. After reviewing some recent scholarship in the area of linguistic historiography that have shown that academic work has never been 'value-neutral' (as may have been assumed or has been claimed by some practitioners), it is argued that in effect one must be aware of what Clemens Knobloch has recently termed *Resonanzbedarf*, i.e., the desire, whether conscious or not, of scholars — and probably scientists, too — to have their work recognized by the educated public and that, in so so doing, their discourses tend to pick up on contemporary popular notions. These efforts may be harmless if everyone was to recognize these allusions and adoption of certain lexical items (buzz words) as props or what Germans call *Versatzstücke*, but history tells us that this has not always been the case. Still, as Hutton (1999) has shown, not all scholarship during the Third Reich for example can simply be dismissed as worthless because it was conducted in under a prevailing political ideology. Indeed, in seemingly innocent times, linguists can be shown to frame their argument in a way that makes them appear so utterly superior to their predecessors (cf. Lawson 2001). Upon closer inspection, those discourses turn out to be much like those of scholars in nationalistic environments that have tended to select their 'facts' to prove a particular hypothesis (cf., e.g., Koerner 2001). The article argues for scholars to take a more active role in exploding myths, scientifically unfounded claims, and ideologically driven distortions, especially those that are socially and politically harmful.