

# The Philosophy of Life and Death: Ludwig Klages and the Rise of a Nazi Biopolitics (Palgrave Studies in Cultural and Intellectual History)

Nitzan Lebovic



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From the outset, Nazism was marked by a keen appreciation for language's important role in controlling the masses, as Hitler's *Mein Kampf* showed as early as 1924. Accordingly, one of the first political forces they conscripted in their rise to power was a battalion of rhetoricians sent to the provinces and villages to preach the power of the language of *Leben* (life) to ordinary men and women. This fascinating study of *Lebensphilosophie* reexamines it as a new vocabulary of politically potent ideology through the career of one of its most prominent exponents, Ludwig Klages. Even a short list of Klages's admirers and critics would include many famous names from the era, among them Walter Benjamin, Thomas Mann, Robert Musil, and Georg Lukacs. His tremendous popularity among readers of German prefigured a cultural and philosophical crisis made possible by the political volatility of the Weimar Republic.

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