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THE BEAST REAWAKENS

Fascism's Resurgence from Hitler's Spymasters to Today's Neo–Nazi Groups and Right–Wing Extremists

MARTIN A. LEE

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For the spirit of Uncle Max

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All men dream: but not equally.
Those who dream by night
in the dusky recesses of their minds,
wake in the day to find that it was vanity:
but the dreamers of the day
are dangerous men,
for they may act their dream
with open eyes, to make it possible.

T. E. LAWRENCE
Seven Pillars of Wisdom

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PREFACE

Late one night in June 1997, a disabled black man named James Byrd was chained to the back of a pickup truck in Jasper, Texas, and dragged by his ankles on a rough rural road for several miles until his head ripped off his body. This gruesome attack stunned the nation both for its cruelty and its echoes of an earlier era when racist lynchings were common in the Deep South. Twenty-four-year-old white supremacist John King and two of his friends were charged with the murder. While incarcerated for a prior burglary conviction, King had joined an Aryan prison gang. Nazi and Ku Klux Klan symbols—including a black man hanging from a tree—were tattooed across his arms and upper body, and the words "White Pride" were scribbled on the door of King's jail cell.

After he was convicted, King showed no emotion when the death sentence was handed down. He responded in court by issuing a terse statement through his lawyer that ended with haughty words from American fascist ideologue Francis Parker Yockey, who committed suicide nearly four decades earlier: "The promise of success is with the man who is determined to die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly." That Yockey's name should have surfaced in connection with the horrific racial slaying in Jasper attests to his enduring reputation as a cult figure within neofascist circles. It also highlights the link between those who promote extremist ideology and the fanatical disciples who carry it out.

A man with many aliases, Yockey was a fierce and influential anti-Semite whose book *Imperium* has become a modern-day bible of neo-Nazism. This self-styled racist philosopher and part-time gigolo traveled around the world, weaving a web of mysterious contacts. Most curious of all were Yockey's exploits behind the Iron Curtain, where he collaborated with Soviet bloc intelligence. When the FBI finally caught up with him in 1960, Yockey was carrying seven birth certificates and three passports, all bearing his photo but each with a different name. Shortly thereafter, Yockey took his own life in a San Francisco jail by swallowing a cyanide capsule.

The last person to visit Yockey before his suicide was Willis Carto, founder and godfather of the Liberty Lobby, a virulently anti-Semitic organization based in Washington, DC. An inveterate Nazi apologist, Carto has done more than anyone else to promote Yockey's writings and his posthumous reputation among fascists as an "American visionary." Thanks largely to Carto's efforts, Yockey emerged as an intellectual patron saint of neo-Nazis worldwide.

In addition to reiterating Yockey's contention that the Nazi Holocaust never happened, the Liberty Lobby's weekly newspaper, *The Spotlight,* publishes articles by unabashed fascists and white supremacists. Excerpts of Yockey's pungent prose—including an essay addressed to America's youth—have been featured in this far Right tabloid.[1]

Today the Liberty Lobby and the conspiracy-obsessed *Spotlight* are closely linked to the American militia movement and neofascist groups around the world. Oklahoma City bombers Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols were *Spotlight* readers. McVeigh actually placed a classified ad in the paper when he wanted to sell some weapons and ammunition. And it was from the *Spotlight* that McVeigh obtained the telephone calling card that he used to make long-distance calls in the months leading up the Oklahoma City massacre. Federal prosecutors used this important piece of evidence to trace and convict McVeigh and Nichols, whose range of associates included American and German white supremacists.

Like the hate crime in Jasper, Texas, the Oklahoma City bombing was not a random occurrence, but a deliberate act that flowed from a specific set of beliefs and ideas that are germane to an ongoing political movement. Fascism and ethnic cleansing have a heritage and

history in the United States of America that are explored from a particular vantage point in this book. *The Beast Reawakens* tells the story of a committed cadre of American extremists, including the mysterious Francis Parker Yockey, who teamed up with Adolf Hitler's bodyguard and other key German Nazis to carry on the struggle in the aftermath of World War II. This malignant nucleus of old guard fascists kept the ideological flame alive and mentored a new generation of "political soldiers" that is making dramatic headlines around the world today.

Since *The Beast Reawakens* was first published, fascist and right-wing extremist movements have continued their numerous activities around the world. This edition provides an update on these groups, and I have also added new material in the last two chapters and the conclusion, including the section on the Oklahoma City bombing.

While McVeigh waited on death row, there was little indication that the carnage in Oklahoma City had a deterrent effect on America's homegrown rabid Right. If anything, it appears that global economic convulsions and the approach of the turn of the Millennium combined to fire up Christian patriot passions and apocalyptic paranoia even more than usual. The number of terrorist attacks on U.S. soil rose sharply, as federal officials uncovered a multitude of plots to bomb government buildings and abortion clinics, derail trains, assassinate public figures, and violently secede from the United States. Hell-bent on raising a guerrilla army to create a religious nation for whites only, groups like the Montana Freemen, which engaged in an eighty-one-day stand-off with federal agents, were gearing up for the coming racial Armageddon.[2]

Just how crazed these true believers could get became evident when the FBI tried to interview the brother of fugitive Eric Robert Rudolf, the chief suspect in a fatal abortion clinic bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1998. Instead of cooperating with law enforcement, Eric's brother videotaped himself amputating his hand with an electric saw, and he sent the tape to the FBI as a way of telling the feds to back off. This grisly act of self-mutilation epitomized the fanatical alienation that has engulfed America's right-wing extremist fringe.

The elusive Eric Rudolf, a Holocaust-denier and militant backwoods survivalist, would also be charged in connection with three

bomb blasts in the Atlanta area, including the 1996 Olympic Park explosion that killed one woman and injured 111 people. A gay bar was among the targets of his demented wrath—one of a litany of homophobic assaults that has become an ugly fact of life across America. The torture-killing of Matthew Shephard in Laramie, Wyoming, in October 1998 was followed by the brutal murders of gay men in Buffalo and Richmond. In rural Alabama, a gay textile worker was kidnapped, castrated, beaten to death, and his body burned by an assailant who often wore a Ku Klux Klan T-shirt and taunted black people.

Hate crimes are imbued with odious political, racial, cultural, and ideological implications that amplify their impact upon individual victims and the communities in which they occur. They are offenses directed against an entire group of people—which is why hate crimes warrant special legislation. Despite the increasing frequency and viciousness of such attacks, many are not reported to the police and only rarely do hate crimes provoke significant news coverage.[3]

The three-day white supremacist shooting spree in Illinois and Indiana over Fourth of July weekend in 1999, which left two people dead and nine wounded, was exceptional in terms of the international publicity it received. Blacks, Asians, and orthodox Jews were gunned down by twenty-one-year-old Benjamin Smith, a denizen of the World Church of the Creator, whose credo is "Rahowa"—racial holy war. The rampage reached a morbid climax when Smith took his own life after a police chase on Independence Day. Several other members of this neo-Nazi church, which maintains that the U.S. government favors ethnic minorities over whites, have been linked to violent attacks in recent years. The church's web site has featured animated pictures of people firing at "Jew pigs" and the Pope.

Fueled by racial, ethnic, and religious intolerance, the hate crime epidemic is a global malady. The Fourth of July bloodbath occurred the same week that neo-Nazi car bombs severely injured a Swedish journalist, his young son, and two policemen in Stockholm. Two months earlier, a bomb blast ripped through a parking lot near the main Jewish synagogue in Moscow, not far from the Kremlin, and a second bomb detonated moments later next to another synagogue in the Russian capital. These incidents coincided with a wave of neo-Nazi nail-bomb attacks that terrorized ethnic minority neigh-

borhoods and gay pubs in London, England, killing two people and wounding more than one hundred.

The bombings in Moscow and London were overshadowed by what happened at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, on April 20, 1999, when two deranged teenagers killed themselves after shooting to death twelve students and a teacher and injuring twenty-three others. Shouting racial slurs as they opened fire, the young gunmen targeted African-American and Latino students, among others. Influenced by white supremacist rhetoric and Nazi literature, they timed their slaughter to coincide with the anniversary of Adolf Hitler's birthday.

While experts debate whether the Columbine tragedy, strictly speaking, qualifies as a hate crime, it is important to emphasize that dramatic incidents of extremist violence may actually serve to distract attention from a more insidious and far-reaching danger. Radical right-wing populist movements with openly fascist roots have made significant inroads into mainstream politics and are now a serious force to be reckoned with in several countries around the world.

For evidence of extreme Right encroachment on the American political landscape, consider the ties that bind the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC) to powerful U.S. elected officials as well as neofascist groups at home and abroad. Dubbed the "uptown" or "white collar Klan," this churlish gaggle of white supremacists was endorsed by no less a figure than U.S. Senate Majority leader Trent Lott, the highest-ranking Republican in the country. Sporting suits and ties rather than sheets and hoods, several of Lott's uncles and cousins served as local officers of the council, which equates race-mixing with genocide. "White Americans have never been in greater danger of destroying themselves through intermarriage and assimilation," warns CCC executive director Gordon Lee Baum.[4]

Known more for his antihomosexual invective than gutter racism, Lott appeared at several CCC functions and hosted its leaders at his Washington office. A photo of Lott delivering a keynote address to the council in 1992 was published in the group's newsletter. During his speech, Lott lavished praise on council members, describing them as good folk who "stand for the right principles and the right philosophy."

The "right philosophy" was driven home by CCC board member Sam Francis, who lamented in a syndicated column: "One thing you can't get at an American university is a course on Southern history that has anything good to say about slavery or slave holders." Ardent defenders of Confederate lore, the CCC described Abraham Lincoln as "surely the most evil American in history" and called Martin Luther King, Jr., a "depraved miscreant." But a CCC delegation had much kinder words for French neofascist führer Jean-Marie Le Pen when it presented him with a Confederate flag as a gift in 1998. "I certainly recognize that flag," Le Pen told his American admirers. "We are sympathetic to the Confederate cause."[5]

A few months after the love-fest with Le Pen, a flurry of U.S. news accounts brought unflattering attention to Lott's association with the council. This belated media exposure provoked shifting explanations and Clintonesque verbal contortions from the senator, who first denied speaking to the CCC, then backpedaled and pled memory lapse, insisting all the while that he had "no firsthand knowledge" of the council's ideas. Lott's response was as deceitful as President Clinton's claim that he never had sex with a White House intern. But unlike Clinton who was impeached for lying under oath, Lott escaped with his reputation largely intact as Congress failed to muster enough support to condemn the CCC for promoting racism.[6]

When all was said and done, Lott issued a tepid denunciation of prejudice in general. But the senator never explicitly rebuked the council, which remains an influential bipartisan presence among state lawmakers in Mississippi and other southern bastions. It continues to lobby for the elimination of the King Holiday, civil rights legislation, the Voting Rights Act, affirmative action, and nonwhite immigration—policies that are turning American society into a "slimy brown mass of glop," according to a CCC spokesperson.[7]

Lott's spin-controlled dalliance with the CCC underscores the extent to which American right-wing extremists have gained access to mainstream political power. It also shows why it's necessary for groups like the council to mask their racist ideology. Seeking to project a kinder, gentler face of hatred for public consumption, white power advocates often couch their arguments in coded language that recasts bigotry as racial pride. They claim to be *for* white

Americans rather than *against* people of color. They talk about preserving white identity and protecting white rights, which are allegedly under assault. Mouthing what has become the standard GOP line on "giveaway programs" and "special preferences" for minorities, white supremacists maintain that their deteriorating status in society is primarily a consequence of "reverse discrimination" aimed at white people—not the result of global economic trends and social processes that are having a negative effect on almost everyone.[8]

Veteran white power proponent DeWest Hooker summed up the challenge during a CCC gathering in December 1998: "Be a Nazi, just don't use the word." By dispensing such advice, Hooker was in effect throwing down the gauntlet to unabashed Hitlerites such as Reverend Richard Butler, the aging chief of the Aryan Nations in Idaho, whose followers still eagerly wear the swastika on their sleeves. For several years, this armed neo-Nazi enclave was "the hub of the wheel of racist revolution" in North America; by the late 1990s, however, Butler's health had declined and so had his group's status within America's violent racialist underground. Benefiting from a sizable injection of cash by two Silicon Valley millionaires, the Aryan Nations continued to invite supporters to its annual "summer conference and nigger shoot." But attendance sagged as an increasing number of white power stalwarts gravitated to other organizations.[9]

It was not by mere happenstance that David Duke, the former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, announced his decision to run for Congress in 1999 at a forum sponsored by the neo-Nazi National Alliance. Duke was then chairman of a GOP executive committee in a Louisiana parish; he was also a featured speaker at CCC meetings where books by National Alliance supremo William Pierce (who wrote *The Turner Diaries*, the hate novel that inspired Timothy McVeigh) were on sale along with copies of Duke's autobiography. Picking up the slack when the Aryan Nations began to falter, Pierce's West Virginia–based group set up thirty-five branches across the United States and developed extensive contacts with European fascist leaders. These cross-border relationships are emblematic of a radical right-wing Euro-American subculture that links white supremacist movements on both sides of the Atlantic.[10]

Rooted in a shared set of symbols, myths, and beliefs, this violent racialist subculture has its own conspiratorial lingua franca. "ZOG," or the Zionist Occupation Government, a missive coined by neo-Nazis in the United States, traversed the ocean as easily as email messages on the Internet; it is now common parlance among white nationalists in Europe, where a large influx of refugees and migrants has forced many countries to grapple with multiculturalism and questions of identity. Scapegoating ethnic minorities and asylum-seekers, ultra-right-wing demagogues have touched a raw nerve in a tumultuous post–Cold War world that is still reeling from the demise of Soviet bloc Communism, the reunification of Germany, major technological change, and economic globalization.[11]

Nobody could predict the lethal wave of neo-Nazi brutality that swept across Germany after the Berlin Wall crumbled in November 1989. Following an initial surge of post-unification violence, the frequency of hate crimes abated somewhat, partly in response to the government's decision to change the German constitution and ditch its liberal asylum policy in 1993—a move applauded by neofascists and other right-wing extremists. Several neo-Nazi organizations were banned the following year and some key rabble-rousers were jailed. By 1997, however, most of the ringleaders had been released from prison, and felonious cruelty was again sharply on the rise. Police found a neo-Nazi bomb factory in Jena and confiscated sizable amounts of dynamite, machine guns, ammunition, and military gear. The local prosecutor said the arsenal reflected "a new quality in weaponry and violent preparations" of German neo-Nazi groups.[12]

The neo-Nazi scene grew by leaps and bounds in eastern Germany, where skinhead gangs attacked visitors—including tourists from the western part of the country—with baseball bats and bullets. Embittered by staggering unemployment and lack of economic opportunity, a lost generation of ex–East German youth turned large parts of the formerly Communist German Democratic Republic into virtual no-go areas for foreigners. The situation had deteriorated to the point where several Third World diplomats posted in Bonn voiced concern about their personal safety in anticipation of the German capital moving to Berlin in 1999. In a particularly ugly

incident that year, an Algerian asylum-seeker bled to death after smashing through the glass entrance door of a building while fleeing from a band of neo-Nazi youth in Brandenburg, which has the highest rate of anti-foreigner crime in reunified Deutschland.[13]

By this time, overt sympathy for fascist views, especially among those under thirty, had become the norm in many east German villages, towns, and urban districts, where antipathy toward the new capitalist order was imbued with a brown odor. Easterners were increasingly apt to view the fall of the Berlin Wall not as a moment of liberation but as the prelude to a different kind of exploitation in which West Germans replaced the Soviets as their oppressors. "To say that one third of east German youth is now prone to the extreme right is an understatement," warned east Berlin criminologist Berndt Wagner. "The point of no return has already been reached for many. It's very depressing. It's growing. It's getting worse."[14]

While racist violence is often perpetrated by bald-shaven, leather-clad thugs, right-wing extremist tendencies are not restricted to down-and-out adolescents. "The problem here is not so much with right-wing youth, but with the center of society which thinks in a very nationalistic way," explained Günter Piening, the official responsible for foreigners' affairs in the economically depressed eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt.[15]

It was in Saxony-Anhalt that the neo-Nazi Deutsche Volksunion (DVU) scored a major breakthrough in regional elections in April 1998. Grabbing 13 percent of the vote, the DVU registered the strongest performance by an ultra-right-wing party in Germany's postwar history. Its success, along with significant grassroots penetration by the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party in other eastern states, hinged on stirring up anti-foreigner sentiment by accusing immigrants of stealing German jobs. This strategy proved efficacious even though foreigners comprised barely 1 percent of the population in the desolate east, while unemployment officially hovered around 25 percent and was actually twice that in many areas.[16]

Reacting to the neo-Nazi groundswell in the east, mainstream politicians hastened to ratchet up the nationalist rhetoric. Desperate to reverse his withering popularity, Chancellor Helmut Kohl started beating the jingoist drum during the run-up to his country's general

elections in September 1998. This, perhaps, is the most benign interpretation of chauvinist rumblings from Kohl's party, which made it increasingly difficult to discern where political expediency ended and right-wing extremism began.

After years of championing European integration as "a matter of life and death" for the twenty-first century and the only way to avoid another war, Kohl suddenly found it expedient to echo some of the arguments of neofascist organizations that derided economic globalization and a single European currency. Engaging in the time-honored tactic of politicians who run against their own record, Kohl bemoaned the bureaucratic clout of the European Union (EU). He complained that Germany was footing too much of the bill for the EU, when, in fact, the EU system favored Germany and enhanced its wealth and power relative to rest of Europe. (Germany was the chief beneficiary of "free trade" among large EU members.) Kohl's belated pot-shots at the EU coincided with growing popular opposition to European economic integration among Germans who, by a large majority, were reluctant to give up their beloved deutsche mark for an uncertain euro.[17]

Instead of focusing on the creation of a Europe in which nationality would matter far less than before, German politicians trawled the sewers of racial prejudice for votes and fretted over how to keep their country as ethnically homogenous as possible. Shrill denunciations of "criminal foreigners" became the obligatory mantra of Kohl's Christian Democratic Union and its conservative coalition partner, the Christian Social Union, which likened immigrants to rabble and disparaged refugees as if they were carriers of some incurable disease. Eager to distract attention from their own policy failures, German officials proposed cutting off foreign aid to impoverished countries that were slow to take back their deported citizens. Bavaria's right-wing state government announced plans to expel entire non-German families if their children were caught shoplifting. A fourteen-year-old Turkish juvenile delinquent, who had been born in Germany and lived there all his life, was the first to be deported by Bavarian officials under the new rules; they also sought to deport the boy's parents, who were charged with endangering public safety by failing to raise their son properly.[18]

Contrary to all the overheated rhetoric, there was no statistical difference in crime rates among native Germans and foreigners. But mainstream politicians, aware that 15 percent of the German electorate held extreme Right views, frantically sought to outbid each other on anti-immigration and law-and-order issues. Leaders of the ostensibly left-of-center Social Democratic opposition party jumped on the bandwagon and called for the swift deportation of foreigners who abused German hospitality. This incessant pandering to xenophobic bigotry reached a crescendo when joblessness throughout Germany was officially stuck at 12 percent. For the first time since the Hitler era, unemployment had risen above four million.

The Social Democrats were able to parlay widespread economic anxiety into a national election victory. But the new ruling coalition, led by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, quickly stumbled into a political minefield when it tried to alter Germany's blood-line citizenship requirements. Confronted by fierce grassroots opposition, the Schröder government scaled back its plans and pushed through a watered-down measure that made it easier for immigrants and their children to obtain German citizenship. At the same time, German cabinet officials emphasized that additional newcomers were not welcome in their country. "We have reached the limits, the point where we cannot bear any more," asserted Interior Minister Otto Schilly, a Social Democrat. "The majority of Germans agree with me: Zero immigration for now."[19]

Born in 1944, Schröder was the first modern German head-of-state without direct experience of World War II. After his election, he declared that he wanted to lead a nation that looked to the future, not one encumbered by the past. But some felt that Schröder was pushing too fast to disclaim Germany's legacy of guilt and historical debt to its victims. The chancellor's critics cited a recent survey by the Cologne Institute for Mass Communications, which indicated that almost 20 percent of Germans between the ages of fourteen and seventeen have no idea what Auschwitz was, and 18 percent of those who had heard of the concentration camp thought reports about what happened there were exaggerated.[20]

Despite these sobering figures, Schröder opposed the construction of a national Holocaust memorial—which had been discussed,

planned, revised, and debated for more than a decade—in the center of Berlin. The row over the long-delayed Holocaust memorial did not necessarily signify a reluctance to confront the crimes of the Third Reich, which many Germans readily acknowledged. Rather, this controversy, along with the highly charged dispute over citizenship criteria, shows that Germany's struggle to come to terms with its Nazi history continues to define its identity as a nation.

It has often been said that no country had done as much as Germany to make amends for its past. Since World War II, the German government paid more than $100 billion in reparations to Jews and other victims, according to calculations by the German finance ministry. When he became chancellor, Schröder announced that he wanted to resolve all outstanding financial claims against German industry related to Nazi-era injustice by the year 2000. His government moved swiftly to broker an agreement with Germany's twelve largest banks and businesses to create a fund for compensating those who were used as slave labor by private companies during the Third Reich. Schröder hoped that by settling accounts with the past, his country would inaugurate a new era of confidence and normality after a half century of postwar contrition.

The decision to join the war in the Balkans was hailed as a major milestone for Germany, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary as a democratic republic in May 1999 while NATO jets pounded Yugoslavia. No other NATO member had been so constrained by the sheer weight of historical memory as Germany. An important threshold was crossed when German military forces were sent into combat for the first time since Hitler. Chancellor Schröder defended Germany's participation in NATO air-strikes as a "historic responsibility" to redeem the Nazi legacy by fighting against the repression and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo promulgated by Serbian strongman Slobodan Milošević. Germany was a normal nation, Schröder insisted, and it would show the world what it learned from Nazism by fighting for human rights in Kosovo. Nazi atrocities during the Second World War were once considered reason enough for Germany never again to deploy military power outside its borders, particularly in an area that had been savaged by Hitler; now these same atrocities were being invoked to justify Germany's role in the NATO campaign.

Although German intervention in the Balkans was widely depicted in humanitarian terms, news reports in 1997 indicated that the German secret service had infiltrated the European Union's monitoring mission in former Yugoslavia and used it as a cover to illegally run arms and cash to Croatian and Bosnian forces. This disclosure received far less attention than a videotape that aired on German television, which showed German military officers and conscripts—some of whom had been slated for peacekeeping duties in the Balkans—acting out rapes, killings, torture sessions, and neo-Nazi skits. A senior officer was recalled from Bosnia after he and another German soldier on peacekeeping detail hurled racial epithets at Albanian troops, telling them, "Adolf Hitler would have stuck you in the gas chamber."[21]

While the German government expressed noble intentions regarding its latest foray into the Balkan war zone, there was something rather hypocritical about NATO launching a military operation to counter xenophobic violence, while it supported a Kosovo Albanian militia commanded by a ruthless Croatian mercenary who played a major role a few years earlier in the vicious expulsion of a quarter-million Serbian civilians from enclaves in Croatia. What's more, the U.S.-led NATO campaign against Yugoslavia relied on "Apache" helicopters and "Tomahawk" missiles—an Orwellian twist that prompted a reporter for *Le Monde Diplomatique* to ask: "Is it cynicism? Amnesia? Or have the Americans just not stopped to reflect that the arms they [used] to attack the Serb regime with its odious ethnic cleansing are named after the Indians exterminated last century?"[22]

Loath to confront their own demons from the past, U.S. officials have yet to own up to one of the dirtiest secrets of the Cold War: CIA and NATO use of an extensive Nazi spy network to wage a shadow war against the Soviet Union. The decision to recruit thousands of Third Reich veterans—including many war criminals—shortly after World War II had a negative impact on U.S.-Soviet relations and set the stage for Washington's tolerance of human rights abuses and other criminal acts in the name of anti-Communism. With that fateful sub rosa embrace, the die was cast for a litany of antidemocratic CIA interventions.[23]

As far as U.S. policy-makers were concerned, western integration

and economic reconstruction took precedence over aggressive de-Nazification in Germany. The survival of fascism was guaranteed by the crude demands of the East-West face-off, which provided a kind of life-raft for tens of thousands of Nazi culprits who escaped punishment by serving as anti-Communist assets. In the murky world of Cold War espionage, some of Hitler's highest fliers flourished and passed on their deadly message. Ironically, several "ex-Nazis" employed by the CIA would go on to play leading roles in neofascist organizations that despised the United States. One of the unintended consequences of the CIA's ghoulish postwar alliance with Nazi spy veterans is evident today in a resurgent right-wing extremist movement in Europe that traces its ideological lineage back to the Third Reich through fascist collaborators who worked for U.S. intelligence.

"Neofascism and neo-Nazism are gaining ground in many countries—especially in Europe," warns Maurice Glele-Ahanhanzo, special rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Of particular concern, Glele-Ahanhanzo noted in a ten-page report to the U.N. General Assembly in 1998, is the "increase in the power of the extreme right-wing parties," which are thriving in "an economic and social climate characterized by fear and despair" due to "the combined effects of globalization, identity crises, and social exclusion."[24]

In Western Europe today, there are 50 million poor, 18 million unemployed, and 3 million homeless—and post-Communist Eastern Europe is faring much worse. Such conditions are ripe for exploitation by extreme Right organizations, which range from tiny splinter groups and underground terrorist cells to sizeable political parties. While easily recognizable skinhead gangs may function as shock troops of the far Right's march through Europe, the more successful mass-based neofascist organizations have, according to Glele-Ahanhanzo, "made changes designed to make them look like radical right-wing democratic parties, softening their image while enabling them to conceal an unchanged preference for racism and xenophobia."

The post–Cold War resurgence of fascism in Europe is not orchestrated by a sieg-heiling dictator flanked by men in brown shirts and swastika armbands. Rather, a slick new breed of right-wing

extremists, epitomized by Austrian Freedom Party führer Jorg Haider, have tailored their message and manner to suit the moment. Haider—who maintains that all soldiers in World War II, regardless of which side they were on, had fought for peace and freedom—topped all contestants with 42 percent of the vote in a March 1999 state election, putting him a strong position to contend for Austria's chancellorship. Jewish groups decried the election result, calling it "a genuine disaster for Austria."

In an effort to stymie Haider's inexorable rise to power, Austrian mainstream parties have increasingly embraced the slogans and policies of the far Right. "Gradually ruling politicians are fulfilling what Haider is saying and even sometimes before he says it," observed Nikolaus Kumrath, head of a Vienna-based immigrant advocacy group. "Everybody is looking like a rabbit to the snake. It is as though they fear his opinion and feel that they have to enact it before he can."[25]

Short of actually seizing control at the national level, the significance of Haider and his European counterparts lay in the extent to which they have been able to take their mainstream rivals hostage on key policy issues. Even when they lose elections, neofascists are like a toxic chemical in the water supply of the political landscape, polluting public discourse and pressuring establishment parties to adopt heretofore extremist positions to fend off challenges from the far Right.

French political scientist Pierre-André Taguieff calls this process the "Le Pen-ization of the political debate"—an acknowledgement of the considerable influence wielded by Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the neofascist Front National, which has steadily expanded its base of support in France since it bounced out of obscurity in the early 1980s. Attracting a broad spectrum of voters, Le Pen's organization developed into a potent political force. By the mid-1990s, it had become the first choice among the French working class, second among new voters, and the third largest party nationwide. In municipalities governed by the Front National, local officials censored library books and removed the names of antifascists and left-wingers—such as South African president Nelson Mandela—from street signs. The Front National's strength at the ballot box would cause all manner of havoc within the mainstream Right, which was

bitterly divided over whether to form an alliance with Le Pen's party.

The Front National has also been hampered by serious infighting that recently split the organization in two. It would be premature, however, to write off the party given that its xenophobic populism continues to resonate with disillusioned voters. The far Right is a rooted presence in the French political psyche, as evidenced by recent surveys that show significant support for Le Pen's ideas. In a 1998 opinion poll by the French National Commission, 38 percent of all French men and women admitted they were racist, 27 percent said there were too many black people in France, and 56 percent said there were too many Arabs.[26]

Right-wing extremist parties have made considerable headway in several countries in Western Europe, polling more than 15 percent or more nationwide in France, Italy, and Norway. While this percentage may seem inconsequential in terms of America's two-party system, it can carry great weight in parliamentary balloting and determine the political make-up of the government.[27]

The neofascist Vlaams Blok has established itself as major player in Belgian politics, outpolling all rivals as it gained more than 30 percent of the vote in Antwerp, Belgium's second largest city. And in Turkey, the ultra-right-wing Nationalist Action Party captured 18 percent of the electorate in 1999, emerging as the second largest party in parliament. ("The Turkish race above all others" was the Nazi-like credo of the Nationalist Action Party founders, who were enthusiastic wartime supporters of Hitler.) The Nationalist Action Party sponsored a neo-Nazi youth group, the Grey Wolves, which has terrorized Turkish society since the 1960s. Today this party is a coalition partner in the national government.

Right-wing extremists and anti-Semitic hate-mongers stalk mainstream politicians and their parliamentary system in every nation in Eastern Europe, where high hopes and noble dreams evoked by the end of the Cold War were soon eclipsed by "the post-Communist nightmare," as Vaclav Havel put it. According to a 1998 World Bank study, Eastern European states suffered a dramatic decline in economic output and living standards since the disintegration of the Soviet bloc. "The total estimated number of poor in the 18 countries has risen twelvefold from nearly 14 million, or about four per-

cent of the population, to 168 million, or approximately 45 percent," World Bank economist Brank Milanovic reported.[28]

The ongoing economic crisis—comparable in scope to the Great Depression in the United States and Germany in the 1930s—is fodder for demagogic forces that fan simmering ethnic tensions between people who had lived together, however restively, for many years in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe without resorting to communal acts of violence. Whether instilled or remembered, hatred of the other has become a salient feature of Eastern European politics in the post–Cold War era. Much of the region is beset by "a mood of absolute demands and righteous wrath," in the words of Czech writer Ezraim Kohak, "a mood of frustration and anger, of deep and bitter anger seeking an excuse to vent itself."[29]

In Hungary the radical nationalist Life and Justice Party, led by Istvan Csurka, won parliamentary seats for the first time in 1998 after an election campaign marred by violence. An abrasive extremist who denigrates Roma (gypsies) and espouses lurid anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, Csurka exerts a pernicious influence on Hungarian politics. Prime Minister Viktor Orban once prided himself on his refusal to brandish the language of ethnocentric populism, but he has lurched rightward to accommodate Csurka's hard-core constituency.[30]

Half of all Romanians believe life was better under Communist rule and three-quarters want a strong figure to lead the country, according to a poll released by the Open Society Institute in November 1998. The same poll showed big gains in popular support for the extreme nationalist and anti-Semitic Greater Romania Party led by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, who accused the Romanian government of selling out to "a Jewish-led conspiracy." A reborn legionnaire movement, which venerates the Iron Guard (as the Nazis in Romania were known during the Hitler period), has been successfully recruiting disillusioned youth. Romanian fascists recently constructed a 40-foot-by-20-foot monument to the Iron Guard on a Black Sea beach resort. "From a civic point of view, I am delighted by their activity," said Ion Vasile, deputy mayor of Eforie Sud. "It is a tourist attraction because it arouses curiosity."[31]

Ethnic hatreds surfaced at a Waffen SS reunion in Riga, Latvia's capital, in the spring of 1998. Latvia's army commander and its

chief of police were sacked after they paraded in full uniform with veterans of the pro-Nazi Latvian Legion. A few weeks later, bomb blasts in Riga damaged a Jewish synagogue, a Soviet war memorial, and the Russian mission.[32]

In Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, a museum that documented the atrocities of the wartime Ustaše regime is closed, and throughout the country some 3,000 monuments to the antifascist resistance struggle have been destroyed by Ustaše sympathizers. Meanwhile, Ustaše-booster Franco Tudjman has parlayed his status as Croatia's political strongman into hefty personal financial gain. In 1997, an Austrian newspaper pegged him as "the richest man in Central Europe." Amid widespread poverty in Croatia, Tudjman's family controlled the lucrative duty-free enterprises and the state intelligence apparatus. Most state-owned companies and public utilities were run by officials of Tudjman's corrupt, extremist-dominated political organization, the Croatian Democratic Union, which formed a governing coalition with a small neo-Nazi party. Brooking little dissent, Tudjman refused to authorize the clear-cut victory of the Croatian opposition in a local election in Zagreb, and his chief political rival was bludgeoned unconscious by uniformed thugs during a campaign rally.[33]

As in Croatia and other Eastern European states, so too in post-Soviet Russia, where the much ballyhooed privatization process was used as a smokescreen by a small klatch of tycoons in cahoots with government bureaucrats who plundered existing national resources and enriched themselves in what amounted to a highway robbery of unprecedented proportions. Abetted by economic aid programs that greased the theft of state enterprises, Russia's so-called seven oligarchs quickly amassed huge fortunes alongside destitution unparalleled elsewhere in Europe.

In pursuit of a snake-oil free market miracle, Russia jettisoned Communism and plunged helter skelter into "savage capitalism," as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn aptly described it. No industrialized country had ever suffered such severe and prolonged economic deterioration during the twentieth century. The statistics are truly staggering: 150 million people pushed into poverty in the former Soviet Union; 70 to 80 percent of Russians living below or scarcely above the subsistence level; two million Russian children homeless;

a life expectancy of fifty-eight years that ranks with the poorest Third World nations.

The decrepit health of Russian President Boris Yeltsin could be construed as a metaphor for the overall debilitation of his country, where wages were not paid, taxes went uncollected, and old age pensioners died of starvation. Moscow and other Russian cities had the highest murder rates in the Western world. The police acted like gangsters and the judicial system was moribund. For all practical purposes, the central state apparatus had ceased to function. Russian military forces were reduced to a beggar's army with tales of conscripts eating dog food. Imagine Weimar Germany, then add thousands of nuclear weapons guarded by people earning less than five dollars a month. Demoralized post-Soviet Russia had become fertile turf for a very dangerous brand of Slavic fascism.[34]

The stage was set for the emergence of someone like Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the bombastic ultranationalist who captured the mania of the moment in Russia and led his neofascist party to victory in 1993 parliamentary elections. "Vlad the Mad" proceeded to invite members of the Duma, Russia's parliament, to drink a jar of his own urine. And he threatened to fan radioactive waste toward any uppity Baltic state that discriminated against ethnic Russians. But Zhirinovsky's role as a lightning rod for popular discontent would soon fade as he proved himself adept at converting his political capital into cash.

As the only party besides the Communists that could field candidates nationwide, Zhirinovsky's organization was wooed by a slurring Yeltsin, who often relied on Vlad's support in parliamentary balloting. Although he condemned Yeltsin's policies to gain publicity, Zhirinovsky delivered the vote for the Russian president on several occasions. After Zhirinovsky threw his weight behind Yeltsin's nomination for prime minister in April 1998, Yeltsin sent him an effusive thank-you message. "Your party has played a significant part in the establishment of political pluralism and a truly multiparty system in Russia," said Yeltsin, who also praised Zhirinovsky for protecting "the civil rights of our compatriots abroad." A few days earlier, in widely publicized press accounts, Zhirinovsky had blamed the Jews for starting World War II.[35]

A climate of terror intensified in Moscow that spring. Reveling in

violence and intimidation, some 4,000 skinheads prowled subway stations, markets, and public squares in search of non-Russian prey. These racist youth gangs were responsible for an escalating number of hate crimes in the Russian capital, including the savage beating of an African-American Marine who worked at the U.S. embassy. This came on the heels of a more shocking incident in which twenty skinheads set upon two Asian women and pummeled them in broad daylight at a major thoroughfare in central Moscow. During this period, ambassadors from South Africa, Zaire, and Sudan complained to the Russian foreign ministry about a spate of attacks on their nationals. Fifteen hundred Azerbaijanis protested in the streets of Moscow after an Azeri trader was stabbed to death by skinheads, a killing witnessed by police who did not intervene. Darker-skinned peoples were systematically abused by Russian police officers, according to Human Rights Watch, which documented rampant police brutality that involved electric shock torture, sexual assault, and murder.[36]

When in need of a multibillion-dollar fix from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Yeltsin found it expedient to warn that fascism posed "a big danger for society." But his government consistently failed to act against more than eighty neofascist groups that operated with virtual impunity in Russia, despite a criminal code that punished terrorism and a constitutional ban on ethnic and religious incitement.

The chaotic free-for-all that ensued after the collapse of the USSR strengthened the hand of Alexander Barkashov, the pony-tailed karate expert who commanded the Russian National Union (RNU), Russia's leading national socialist organization. By 1998, the RNU had expanded its network of affiliates into sixty-four of Russia's eighty-nine component regions. Wearing black uniforms and swastika-like symbols at public rallies, many of Barkashov's followers were drawn from the police, the security services, and the Russian army. RNU acolytes attended annual weapons training camps near the southern city of Stavropol, where military veterans prepared youth for combat and indoctrinated them with fascist ideology. The *barkashovtsi* were often looked upon favorably by local and regional authorities in the Russian hinterlands that operated beyond the Kremlin's control. RNU paramilitary units mounted joint

patrols with the city police in Kstovo in the Nizhny Novgorod region. And city officials in Borovichi, also in Novgorod, turned a deaf ear when the small Jewish community, which had been brutalized by Barkashov's thugs, requested police protection. "They can go around and beat someone up and no one will touch them," a Moscow-based RNU youth leader boasted of his neo-Nazi colleagues.[37]

In some ways even more disturbing than the proliferation of neofascist groups in Russia is the ultranationalist wing of the Communist Party, headed by General Albert Makashov, one of the most vitriolic anti-Semites in the Duma. In the wake of Russia's devastating financial meltdown in the summer of 1998, Makashov vowed to take revenge against the "Jewish entourage" inside Yeltsin's government that had allegedly caused his country's economic woes. "Round up all the Yids and send them to the next world," he ranted to enthusiastic crowds while barnstorming in several Russian provinces.[38]

Other members of the Communist hierarchy, including party boss Gennadi Zyuganov, expressed or hinted at similar views. Zyuganov said he had nothing against Jews per se, but he maintained that "Zionists"—long a target of Soviet propaganda—were secretly plotting to take over the world. Periodic surges of official anti-Semitism had deep roots in Russian history, harkening back to the bloody pogroms of the czarist era in which thousands of Jews were slaughtered. A prescient Lenin understood the abiding influence of noxious ethnic nationalism when he wrote disparagingly in 1919: "Scratch some Communists and you'll find Russian chauvinists."[39]

Fearful of political extremism in post-Soviet Russia, Jews once again began to flee the country in droves. Russia's chief rabbi Adolf Shayevich expressed concern about "the limp reaction of society and the inaction of the authorities" in the face of shrill anti-Semitic rhetoric and violent eruptions. "If there was a desire, they would have been able to rein in those people," he asserted. Instead, the Russian parliament resoundingly defeated a measure to censure General Makashov after the hard-line Communist deputy publicly called for the extermination of the Jews.[40]

Russia was already chafing under the humiliation of an expanded NATO stretching right up to the borders of the former Soviet

Union; then came NATO's decision to unleash the sustained bombing of Yugoslavia, a traditional Russian ally, in the spring of 1999. The U.S.-led air assault, combined with the abject failure of U.S.-crafted economic reforms, produced a strong anti-American backlash among Russians and helped swell the ranks of extreme nationalist groups. On the heels of an attempted rocket grenade attack on the U.S. embassy in Moscow, TV reports showed pictures of Russian shop workers mopping filthy floors with the Stars and Stripes. Hostility toward the United States was fast becoming an overarching national idea, a unifying theme hitherto sorely absent in a country bereft of a coherent sense of identity since the collapse of the USSR.

Russian nationalists also take umbrage at the slurry of American cultural artifacts—music, films, fast food restaurants—that have cropped up in large cities. Today a stroll along Moscow's main drag, the "Tverskaya," is much like taking a walk through a mall in Anytown, USA. The signs all have Cyrillic letters, but the corporate logos are uninspiringly familiar: McDonald's, Pizza Hut, a Marriott hotel, ubiquitous ATMs, and a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet where young Muscovites wearing NFL insignia consume hormone-inflated meat.

President Bill Clinton has spoken about "the inexorable logic of globalization" from which no country presumably can escape. While economically driven, this seemingly unstoppable phenomenon has far-reaching cultural and social consequences. Profoundly antithetical to *savoir verve* and regional distinctiveness, global commerce acts as the great homogenizer, blurring indigenous differences and smothering unique ethnic traits. People are fearful of losing not only their jobs (if they are employed), but their cultural and national identity. Where local traditions are rendered impotent, individuals tend to become atomized and uprooted psychologically. This makes them more susceptible to the lure of ultranationalists who rail against what Benjamin R. Barber fittingly describes as "the numbing and neutering uniformities" of McWorld. And globalization, let's face it, is indistinguishable in so many ways from Americanization. Global monoculture has Mickey Mouse ears, it drinks Coke and Pepsi, eats Big Macs, watches endless reruns of *Dallas* and

Melrose Place, and computes on IBM laptops with the latest version of Microsoft Windows.

The new information technologies, which paradoxically enhance communication while also deepening alienation, have created an environment especially conducive to financial speculation and the rapid growth of global commerce. Increasingly the key players in the global economy are multinational corporations, transnational lobbies, and elite trade associations—rather than popularly conscripted officials. These global forces have usurped many of the usual prerogatives of the nation-state, while also calling into question democratic notions of political power and representation. The capacity of national governments to regulate their own economies has been significantly curtailed by the globalization of financial markets.

Although free markets are supposed to guarantee maximum efficiency, instead they have magnified severe inequalities and hastened the breakdown of social structures, leading to widespread instability, impoverishment, mass migration, and ethnic strife. On the cusp of the twenty-first century, the world appears mired in a postmodern form of feudalism, where big business runs its digitized fiefdoms in feeble states, while central authority lies with the new popes—the IMF and the central bankers. At the same time, the waning power of the nation-state has triggered a harsh ultranationalist reaction, particularly in areas hard hit by economic turmoil.

In April 1999, during a difficult economic recession, Japanese voters elected Shintaro Ishihara, a fiery right-wing nationalist, as mayor of Tokyo. Whereas Japanese rightists once looked to the United States as a close ally against their sworn enemy, the USSR, Ishihara loudly castigated a handful of influential American Jews for bullying Asia and he urged Japanese leaders to take a tougher stand against Washington. Ishihara also denounced as "a lie" the Rape of Nanking, in which 300,000 Chinese civilians were massacred by the Japanese imperial army in 1937.[41]

Traumatic aftershocks from the Asian economic implosion in the summer of 1997 were felt far and wide, including in Indonesia where a currency crash sparked food riots and ethnic violence. Scapegoat-hungry mobs attacked and killed Chinese shop owners

throughout the archipelago, while gangs armed with muskets, spears, and swords roamed villages in Borneo eager to hunt down migrant workers who were also blamed for the crisis. Perceived as a threat to jobs for locals, migrants were vilified and assaulted with frightful regularity from Seoul to South Africa to Saxony and beyond.

Riding the crest of a populist backlash against globalization, far Right demagogues in Europe coupled their anti-immigrant tirades with pointed criticisms of the Maastricht Treaty and its provisions for a single continental currency. They have gotten a lot of mileage out of exploiting justifiable qualms about the European Monetary Union, which, in essence, is an attempt on the part of big business in Europe to adapt to the needs of the new global order. Full participation in the EU required painful budgetary retrenchment by member states that relinquished authority on key fiscal matters to unelected central bankers in Frankfurt. The adoption of the euro precluded the possibility for national governments to redress high unemployment and widening income disparities by adjusting their currencies and tweaking their own interest rates.[42]

Not surprisingly, voter turn-out among Europeans dropped precipitously, along with public confidence in elected representatives who apparently have little intention or means to make good on their most important promises. Disenchantment with the conventional political spectrum was reinforced by the failure of erstwhile left-of-center social democratic parties to offer an alternative agenda to rigid EU policy nostrums, which are "leading to a concentration of wealth and power that is undermining democracy," as Nicholas Hilyard, formerly of *The Ecologist,* has warned.

EU supporters have argued that economic integration is a crucial step in Europe's march toward political union, which they hope will end forever the scourge of pitiless nationalism that has ravaged the continent. But just the opposite seems to be happening. As economic globalization has accelerated in the post–Cold War era, producing definite categories of winners and losers, so too has the momentum of neofascist and right-wing extremist organizations. If anything, the process of European integration is likely to foster the continued growth of radical right-wing parties, which have successfully tapped into popular resentment against remote and unresponsive state governments. Burgeoning ultranationalist movements are

collateral damage inflicted by unfettered globalization, which breeds the very monstrosities that it purports to oppose. And the extreme Right provides an alibi for globalization while revolting against it. In effect, the big corporations and the little draculas feed off of each other; they are two sides of the same coin.[43]

A product of democratic decay, radical right-wing populism and its contemporary fascist manifestations, which vary from one country to the next, can thrive only in situations where social injustice is prevalent. Buffeted by the unforgiving winds of economic and social change, most forlorn souls who gravitate toward right-wing extremist groups are driven not by personal pathologies, but by anger, desperation, and confusion. In the United States, according to Chip Berlet of Political Research Associates, a Christian patriot subculture has coalesced, involving some five million Americans who believe the U.S. government is manipulated by secret forces and conspiratorial cliques that have supposedly been running the show for centuries. Fearing the loss of national sovereignty, which they associate with a spurious United Nations plot to tyrannize America, these self-styled patriots and their armed wing, the militias, mistake the omnipresence of global monoculture for the phantasm of one-world government. This type of delusional thinking can be dangerous as it opens the door for neofascist recruiters who advocate quick and drastic measures to right deep-seated wrongs.[44]

No one can predict with certainty those sudden, circuit-breaking moments when the free-floating anxieties and hatreds of acutely disenfranchised individuals will intensify and transmute into crazed outbursts of terror and bloodletting. But converging social, economic, and political trends suggest that increasing numbers of people in the Western democracies and elsewhere will become vulnerable to the appeals of neofascists posing as national populists, who offer simple solutions to complex problems. And simple solutions, as we know, run the risk of turning into final solutions.

Under the circumstances, it behooves us to pay heed to the late George Mosse and other scholars who argue persuasively that fascism, far from being a historical aberration, was constructed on the basis of popular consensus in Europe and arose out of deeply ingrained values and traditions that were hardly inconsistent with the dominant currents of mainstream culture and society. But the suc-

cesses and failures of interwar European fascist movements were not preordained; nor were they without key accomplices. Mussolini and Hitler might never have seized power if not for decisions by conservative and big business elites, which at a crucial juncture opted to back the Italian Fascist and the German Nazi parties as a hedge against the Left.[45]

Could a similar alliance be forged anew, even though today's opportunistic far Right leaders frequently unleash verbal volleys against globalization? Will the managers of the new global economy—like Europe's politically beleaguered businessmen in the 1930s—be tempted to support right-wing authoritarian movements in order to divert mounting social rancor away from themselves and toward scapegoats?

"It is becoming frighteningly evident that unspeakable evil can take the stage again," Swedish prime minister Goran Persson declared at a recent conference on resurgent racism and neofascism in Europe. The ghastly miscarriage of free market restructuring in much of Eastern Europe and the Third World, the abdication of the socialist Left as a vehicle for discontent in Western Europe, and the homogenizing juggernaut of soul-less transnational capitalism across the globe—all are elements of a potent witches brew that feeds the poisoned ground where flowers of evil bloom and propels mainstream governance further and further into the politics of resentment.[46]

Shortly before he died in 1987, Primo Levi, a Holocaust survivor who had been imprisoned at Auschwitz, warned of the advent of "a new fascism . . . walking on tiptoe and calling itself by other names." This new fascism is a decidedly contemporary phenomenon that looks different in many ways from its antecedents. When Hitler came to power he took the world by surprise. Those who remain fixated on images of the fascist past, and neglect the growing dangers of the present, may be taken by surprise again.[47]

Martin A. Lee
August 10, 1999

NOTES FOR PREFACE

1. Francis Parker Yockey in *The Spotlight*, p. 22, September 7, 1998. "Is American youth to wait supinely . . . for the butchers to start their bloodbath here?" Yockey wrote. "Youth of America—awake. It's your problem and your task." See, in general, the forthcoming biography of Yockey by Kevin Coogan.

2. As of December 1997, the FBI was involved in more than 900 investigations into right-wing extremist activity, compared to one hundred such cases prior to the April 1995 Oklahoma City attack. Among the incidents that surfaced in the news: a Michigan militia scheme to bomb expressways, federal property, and a TV station; a plot by seven West Virginia Mountaineer Militia members to collect and transport explosive materials weapons with the aim of destroying a federal fingerprint center; plans by four snipers involved with the heavily armed Southern California Minuteman Association, led by reserve officer of the Los Angeles Police Department, to murder illegal immigrants trying to cross the border; a plot by three members of a white supremacist group called The New Order to contaminate a large water supply with cyanide as a diversionary tactic while they embarked on an antigovernment bombing spree; three self-described "ambassadors from Yahweh" who were convicted on murder, kidnapping, and conspiracy charges stemming from plans to overthrow the federal government and create an "Aryan People's Republic," which they intended to populate energetically through polygamy; and the taking of hostages by members of the renegade Republic of Texas, which declared independence from the United States after flooding the Texas courts and banking system with bogus property claims, bad checks, liens, and petty lawsuits.

3. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported that there were 537 hate groups in the U.S. in 1998, 63 more than in 1997. At the same time, there was an almost 60 percent increase in the number of racist websites, to 254.

4. Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting, "The CCC in Its Own Words," *Extra!*, March–April 1999.

5. Michael Powell, "White Wash," *Washington Post,* January 17, 1999; Sam Francis, "Cultural Bolshevism on Campus," *The Spotlight,* December 21, 1998; Francis's weekly syndicated column is featured in the Liberty Lobby's *Spotlight,* as well as on the Council of Conservative Citizens website.

6. In March 1999, GOP congressional leaders—with Senator Trent Lott's help—killed a strongly worded resolution that reprimanded the Council of Conservative Citizens for its mean-spirited bigotry. The Republican officials said they nixed the resolution on the grounds that it was inappropriate to single out one particular organization while many other hate groups were active. Yet no such reasoning applied when Congress unanimously condemned the vicious anti-Semitic remarks of Black Muslim leader Khalid Muhammad, one of Louis Farrakhan's right-hand men.

7. Thomas B. Edsall, "GOP Chairman Denounces 'Racist' Group," *Washington Post,* January 20, 1999. Several influential GOP officials schmoozed with the Council of Conservative Citizens and spoke at its events, including Congressman Bob Barr from Georgia, a leading crusader for Clinton's impeachment; Kirk Fordice when he was governor of Mississippi; North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms; and South Carolina GOP National Committeeman Buddy Witherspoon, who remains an unrepentant member of the council.

8. For a powerful rebuttal to those who oppose affirmative action and alleged "reverse discrimination," see William G. Bowen and Derek Bok, *The Shape of the River* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

9. The Southern Poverty Law Center, "Sharks in the Mainstream," *Intelligence Report,* Winter 1999; Kim Murphy, "Last Stand of an Aging Aryan," *Los Angeles Times,* January 10, 1999. In an effort to finance their activities, some "Christian patriots" turned to drug trafficking. Profits from methamphetamine labs boosted the efforts of white supremacist groups and organized militias; one consequence of this was the rapid spread in usage of highly addictive crystal meth from cities to rural communities in the late 1990s. During this period, there was a rise in the number of right-wing extremists

nabbed for dealing drugs to bankroll the revolution. Randy Graham, a member of the northern Michigan militia, was convicted of growing marijuana to bankroll a plot to assassinate state officials, blow up the federal building in Battle Creek, and bomb an IRS building in another city.

10. The Southern Poverty Law Center, "The Alliance and Its Allies," *Intelligence Report,* Winter 1999. Duke's 1998 autobiography, *My Awakening,* is rife with conspiracy theories and derision of blacks, Jews, and gays.

11. In general, see Jeffrey Kaplan and Leonard Weinberg, *The Emergence of a Euro-American Radical Right* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998); and Jeffrey Kaplan and Tore Bjorgo, *Race and Nation* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998).

12. Erik Kirschbaum, "Germany says far-right crime surges in 1997," Reuters, May 6, 1998; "Bomb Factory Linked to neo-Nazis," AP Online, February 13, 1998; "German Police Confiscate Arms," AP Online, March 25, 1998. According to the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the number of criminal acts with a right-wing extremist orientation in Germany surged to 11,719 in 1997 from 8,730 in 1996. Figures released by the German army indicate that neo-Nazi episodes within the German military jumped fourfold during this period. The groundswell of neo-Nazi activity paralleled an increase in acts of anti-Semitic violence, which jumped by 27 percent to 790, including 13 cases of attempted manslaughter and 677 assaults. A disproportionate number of these attacks occurred in the formerly Communist eastern states, where six people were killed and more than one thousand injured in neo-Nazi assaults in 1997.

13. Amnesty International expressed concern about the abusive treatment of Aamir Ageeb, a thirty-year-old Sudanese asylum-seeker, who died in custody on May 28, 1999, as the German police were trying to forcibly deport him from the Frankfurt airport. Earlier, a Kurdish refugee about to be deported to Turkey doused himself with gasoline and burned to death. Immigration attorneys rebuked the German government for its maltreatment of ethnic Albanian

refugees from Kosovo in the months leading up to the NATO bombing campaign—a campaign that was waged, with German backing, allegedly to protect human rights in the Balkans.

14. Ray Moseley, "Specter of 'ethnic cleansing' haunts Germany," *San Francisco Examiner,* April 5, 1998; Ian Traynor, "German neo-Nazi tide creates no-go zones for foreigners," *The Guardian,* January 21, 1998; Martin A. Lee, "Germany Goosesteps to the Right," *Moment,* June 1998.

15. Roger Boyles, "Neo-Nazi poll blitz wins jobless voters," *The Times* (London), April 23, 1998.

16. The National Democratic Party (NPD) became a haven for hard-core neo-Nazis who needed a legal umbrella for their political activities. Because the NPD was recognized as a political party, its marches were rarely prohibited, thereby enabling neo-Nazis to stage public demonstrations. Three thousand neo-Nazis gathered in Leipzig on May Day 1998 for an NPD rally, which ended in rioting, looting, and burning barricades, as right-wing extremists clashed with antifascist groups. That year, according to the Verfassungsschutz (German internal security service), the number of active right-wing extremists in Germany increased to 53,600, compared with 48,400 the previous year. The number of violent fascists also grew—from around 7,600 to 8,200 in 1998.

17. Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich, *The German Predicament* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 150–182. Ironically, it was the European Union that upheld the right of member citizens to buy property and settle anywhere within its domain. Many Poles and Czechs feared that joining the European Union would make their countries vulnerable to wealthy, land-grabbing Germans who had their sights set on regaining former homes and property in contested border zones. Although the German government publicly swore off designs on Polish territory as a precondition for reunification, it still considered private land claims open. This emotive topic bubbled to the surface once again during the 1998 election campaign when the German parliament passed a resolution condemning the post–World War Two expulsion of over five million ethnic Germans from Poland as an unjust violation of

international law. Renewed calls to compensate German expellees prompted an angry rebuke from legislators in Warsaw, who decried what they saw as "dangerous tendencies, which can rightly be worrying not just for Poland." For several years the German government has been sending mixed messages about border issues. A 1973 ruling by the Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe affirmed that Germany's 1937 borders were still legitimate—and this decision has never been formally overturned. In effect, this meant that one of Germany's most respected government institutions maintains, at least theoretically, that a large chunk of Poland actually belongs to Germany.

18. Ullrich Fichtner, "Germany's Energetic Taboo-Breakers," *Frankfurter Rundschau* (English online version), April 23, 1998.

19. A number of factors, including strong anti-immigration policies advocated by the Social Democrats and their main rival, the Christian Democrats, undercut the appeal of several neofascist and extreme right-wing parties, which tallied a combined vote of 2,280,219 (or 4.6 percent of the total) in Germany's national elections in September 1998.

20. Roger Boyles, "Postwar generation seeks release from shackles of Nazi guilt," *The Times* (London), November 9, 1998.

21. Tim Judah, "German spies accused of arming Bosnian Muslims," *Daily Telegraph,* April 20, 1997; "Neo-Nazi Incident Reported in Bosnia," AP Online, February 18, 1998.

22. "Apaches and Tomahawks," *Le Monde Diplomatique,* May 1999.

23. Martin A. Lee, "The CIA's original sin," *Miami Herald,* September 21, 1997.

24. Thalif Deen, "U.N. Worried Over Alarming Rise in Xenophobia," Interpress Service, September 20, 1998.

25. Andrew Gimson and Peter Hoffer, "Austrian urged to quit over insults," *Daily Telegraph,* July 3, 1997; Tracy Wilkinson, "Rising Star of Austrian Nationalism," *Los Angeles Times,* December 11, 1997; Michael Leidig, "Hitler fan is voted back in power in Austria,"

Daily Telegraph, April 9, 1999. *Searchlight,* the London-based antifascist magazine, reports that Haider's Freedom Party is home to some of the most virulent fascists and anti-Semites in Austria, including Reinhard Gaugg, deputy mayor of Klagenfurt, who said "Nazi" stood for "New, Attractive, Zealous, Ideas-Rich," and Marcus Ertl, Freedom Party counselor in Spittal an der Drau, who claimed that those who perished at Auschwitz were killed by Anglo-American air raids.

26. Ignacio Ramonet, "Neo-fascism," *Le Monde Diplomatique,* April 1998; Thalif Deen, "U.N. Worried Over Alarming Rise in Xenophobia," Interpress Service, September 20, 1998.

27. The Progress Party, headed by Carl Hager, emerged as the second biggest political force in Norway when it won 15 percent nationwide and twenty-five parliamentary seats in 1997 elections. Norway's immigration and asylum policies were already so tight that even Hager found it difficult to propose new and more restrictive laws. But the right-wing extremist Progress Party still found it expedient to vilify Samis (native Laplanders) and other ethnic minorities, even though they comprise only a tiny portion of the Norwegian population. Elsewhere in Scandinavia, the ultranationalist Danish People's Party garnered 14 parliamentary seats in a March 1998 general election. And in Italy, the National Alliance, led by self-proclaimed "post-fascist" Gianfranco Fini, got 15.7 percent of the vote and fifty-three parliamentary representatives in national elections. The up-and-coming Fini has been angling to replace billionaire media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, who was convicted of multiple bribery and corruption charges, as the preeminent leader of the Italian Right.

28. World Bank report cited in "Ex-communist states' plight like Great Depression," Reuters, May 22, 1998.

29. Ezraim Kohak quoted in Laszlo Kurti, "The Emergence of Postcommunist Youth Identities," in Kaplan and Tore, *Race and Nation,* p. 194.

30. "Hungary's right plays nationalist card in election," *Independent* (London), May 11, 1998.

31. "Communism was better, Romanians say in poll," Reuters, November 26, 1998; "Followers of Fascist Iron Guard Build Monument on Romanian Beach," Associated Press, August 1, 1997.

32. Roger C. Paddock, "Old Ethnic Rifts Run Deep in Latvia," *Los Angeles Times,* April 6, 1998; "Bomb damages Russian mission in Latvia," UPI, April 6, 1998; "Blast damages Latvian Soviet war memorial," Reuters, May 4, 1998.

33. Tom Walker, "Hard-faced men of Balkans still doing well out of the war," *The Times* (London), May 28, 1997; Tracy Wilkinson, "Prognosis Uncertain for Croatia, Leader," *Los Angeles Times,* June 22, 1997; "Croatia's Dangerous Extremism," *New York Times,* April 28, 1997; Marinko Culic, "Croatia and Serbia—Two Sides of a Bent Penny," Interpress Service, January 25, 1998; Chris Hedges, "Rival of Croatian President Is Attacked at Rally," *New York Times,* June 7, 1997.

34. Moshe Lewin, "A Country Falling Apart," *Le Monde Diplomatique,* November 1998; Stephen F. Cohen and Katrina vanden Heuvel, "Help Russia," *The Nation,* January 11/18, 1999.

35. Mark Franchetti, "Method lurks behind Zhirinovsky's madness," *Sunday Times* (London), April 12, 1998; "Yeltsin in message of support to neo-fascist Zhirinovsky's party," *Irish Times,* April 27, 1998.

36. Nick Wadhams, "Moscow Skinhead Violence Growing," Associated Press, May 14, 1998; Mark Franchetti, "Nazi race attacks sweep Moscow," *Sunday Times* (London), May 10, 1998; "Neo-Nazis carrying out threats?" *Orange County Register,* May 8, 1998; Phil Reeves, "Russia's racist skinheads terrorize foreigners," *Independent,* May 8, 1998.

37. ITAR/TASS, Russian national press review, June 8–9, 1998; Robin Lodge, "Synagogue bomb marks sinister rise of Russia's neo-Nazis," *Daily Telegraph,* May 17, 1998; James Meek, "They wear the swastika and hate Jews but no-one dares to call them fascists," *The Observer* (London), July 5, 1998; Celestine Bohlen, "Russia's Stubborn Strains of anti-Semitism," *New York Times,* March 2, 1999; "Trial exposes Russian nazis' official links," *Searchlight,* April 1998.

38. James Meek, "Russian left descends into dark well of anti-Semitism, *Guardian,* November 5, 1998; Richard Beeston, "Russia's Jews in plea to the West," *The Times* (London), December 9, 1998.

39. Lenin quoted in Maura Reynolds, "Economic Ills Give Rise to Anti-Semitism in Russia," *Los Angeles Times,* November 22, 1998. See, in general, Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

40. "Rabbi pans indifference to anti-Semitism in Russia," Reuters, March 9, 1999; "More Jews leave Russia amid crisis, anti-Semitism," Reuters, March 15, 1999.

41. Japanese authorities are still reluctant to admit the atrocities committed by Unit 731 of the Japanese Army, which conducted gruesome chemical and biological warfare experiments on live Chinese and Korean prisoners who were deliberately infected with anthrax, cholera, plague, and other pathogens before and during World War II. The Japanese government continues to maintain a virtual blockade against telling the truth about the torture chambers of Unit 731 and other aspects of Japanese history to its younger generations. Japan's neighbors, particularly China and Korea, worry that Japanese denials of wartime atrocities make it more likely that the country will rip up its "peace" constitution in the coming years and resume its militaristic and belligerent ways.

42. As Stephen Castle reported in *The Independent* (June 22, 1999): "Confirming the suspicions of Euroskeptics that life inside the single currency could be like being stuck in a burning house with no fire escape, Brussels insisted yesterday that Italy cannot legally pull of the euro."

43. "Bioregionalism Versus Fascism," Peter Berg and Martin A. Lee, *Raise The Stakes: Planet Drum Review,* no. 28, Spring 1998. Also see, in general, Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Times Books, 1995).

44. Chip Berlet, "Dances with Devils: How Apocalyptic and Millennialist Themes Influence Right-Wing Scapegoating and Conspiracism," *The Public Eye,* Fall 1998.

45. See, in general, George Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution* (New York: Fertig, 1999). Arguing along similar lines, Mark Mazower asserts in *Dark Continent* (New York: Knopf, 1999) that National Socialism "fits into the mainstream not only of German but also of European history far more comfortably than most people like to admit." Moreover, says Mazower, "As we now know, Sweden, Switzerland and several other European countries continued to employ sterilization and other coercive measures in social policy until relatively recently. Such practices make Hitler's Germany look less exceptional and closer to the mainstream of European thought than once seemed possible."

46. Goran Persson quoted in "International effort to raise Holocaust awareness," Reuters, May 7, 1998.

47. Primo Levi cited in Roger Griffin, ed., *Fascism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 392.

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THE BEAST REAWAKENS

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INTRODUCTION

Adolf Hitler and his top military advisors had gathered at the Wolf's Lair, the Führer's headquarters in East Prussia, for an early-afternoon strategy session on July 20, 1944. They were listening to Lieutenant General Adolf Heusinger, chief of operations of the Wehrmacht (German army), deliver a bleak report about Germany's latest misfortunes on the eastern front. Suddenly a violent explosion hurled everyone onto the floor. Writhing and coughing amid thick smoke and dust, several German officers could hear Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel shout, "*Wo ist der Führer?*" ("Where is the Führer?")

Somehow unharmed, Keitel made his way through a tangle of dead and injured men until he found a groggy Hitler, his uniform shredded and bloodstained. Helped to his feet, the Führer stared at Keitel with a dazed expression before collapsing in the field marshal's arms. Hitler was carried to a hospital bed, where a doctor dressed his wounds. He had a punctured eardrum and a lacerated back, his legs were burned, his face and hair were charred, and his right arm was temporarily paralyzed. A badly shaken Hitler had barely survived the only serious assassination attempt on him.

Meanwhile, confusion reigned in Berlin, where a handful of German officers who had organized the bomb plot sought to gain control of the city. But their efforts would soon be thwarted by the fateful intervention of Major Otto Ernst Remer, a relatively obscure,

thirty-two-year-old leader of the Grossdeutschland guard battalion, which was responsible for protecting government offices in the capital.

As rumors of Hitler's death swept through the barracks, Remer was told by his commanding officer to arrest Joseph Goebbels, the top Nazi official in Berlin that day. With pistols drawn, Remer led a twenty-man contingent into the Propaganda Ministry, where Goebbels held sway. At that moment, Remer was probably the single most important military officer in Germany.

Encircled by gun-pointing soldiers, a quick-thinking Goebbels told Remer that the conspiracy had failed: Hitler was still alive. To prove his point, he picked up the phone, called the Wolf's Lair, and handed the receiver to Remer. The tall, strapping young officer breathed a sigh of relief when he heard the Führer's voice. Hitler put Remer in charge of all troops in Berlin and ordered him to crush the putsch. Anyone who resisted was to be shot immediately.

It was a heady assignment for Remer, who immediately took control and instructed his troops to establish roadblocks and patrols. They sealed off the city command center and surrounded the army buildings where some of the coup ringleaders were ensconced. Remer was posted at the entrance of the War Office when SS Colonel Otto Skorzeny, a fierce Hitler loyalist, arrived on the scene with a band of armed men.

Remer introduced himself to Skorzeny and apprised him of the crisis situation. They agreed that no one, regardless of how high in rank, would be allowed to enter or leave until they finished searching the premises. Skorzeny and his SS squadron encountered a mayhem of murder and suicide inside the building. The can-do colonel quickly put a halt to a wave of executions so that suspects could be tortured into naming others and exposing the extent of the plot before they were sent to the gallows.

With Skorzeny in charge of the War Ministry, it didn't take long before the revolt was smashed and the affairs of the High Command were once again in smooth working order. During the weeks that followed, he helped track down the remaining suspects in one of history's most gruesome manhunts. It was an occasion to settle old scores, as two thousand people, including dozens of high-ranking German officers, were killed in a paroxysm of military fratricide.

Some of the leading plotters were garroted with piano wire and impaled on meathooks, while Nazi cameramen recorded the victims' death throes so that Hitler could view the film in his personal cinema.[1]

For the colonel's invaluable support during the aftermath of the coup attempt, the Führer gratefully declared, "You, Skorzeny, saved the Third Reich." But it was Remer who stole the limelight. His decisive actions were crucial in restoring order in Berlin. Hitler showed his appreciation by promoting Remer to the rank of major general, a distinction that instantly propelled him into Nazi superstardom. Henceforth, Remer would serve as Hitler's bodyguard.

The Twentieth of July would prove to be more than just the date when an ill-prepared coup attempt, led by the one-armed Count Claus von Stauffenberg, failed to topple a mad dictator. The events that transpired that afternoon were destined to become a hot-button issue that deeply divided the German people in the years ahead. Nazi diehards and their sympathizers saw the putsch as yet another stab in the back that deprived Germany of its rightful empire. They embraced Otto Ernst Remer as the epitome of the loyal soldier, a symbol of unflinching resistance to "the traitors" who betrayed the Fatherland from within and caused Germany's defeat. For many others, the Twentieth of July became a legend of exoneration and redemption, offering a moral basis for expunging the sins of the Nazi past and beginning anew. After the war, West Germany's leaders would seize upon the anti-Hitler insurrectionists as a source of historical legitimacy. The coup plotters were touted as a shining example of the "other Germany" that had valiantly opposed the Third Reich.

Far from being a national reaction against Hitler, the July 20 conspiracy was actually the work of a relatively small number of individuals who were not necessarily inspired by lofty ideals. Evidence produced during the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg showed that one of the army officers involved in the coup plot had been the commander of an *Einsatzgruppen* mobile killing squad, which perpetrated some of the first large-scale murders of Jews on the eastern front.[2]

Some of those who belatedly turned against Hitler were motivated not by moral outrage but by fears that they were losing the

war. Theirs was a desperate attempt to restore an authoritarian order stripped of Nazi trappings, rather than a first step toward political liberalism and democracy. The complete disintegration of Germany could be prevented only, they surmised, if Hitler were overthrown. Toward this end, the conspirators were encouraged by American spymaster Allen Dulles, who intimated from his intelligence headquarters in Switzerland that a non-Nazi government might be spared the harsh terms of an unconditional surrender. Ignoring the Nuremberg data, Dulles later offered unequivocal praise for the coup plotters' efforts "to rid Germany of Hitler and his gang and establish a decent regime."[3]

The myth of the "other Germany" that was fostered by the Twentieth of July provided a convenient alibi not only for the West German government but also for various Western espionage agencies that recruited Third Reich veterans en masse during the early years of the Cold War. As far as America's intelligence chiefs were concerned, it didn't really matter where these men stood with respect to the July 20 debacle as long as they were steadfastly anti-Communist. Among those who later worked with the Central Intelligence Agency, under the directorship of Allen Dulles, was Colonel Otto Skorzeny.

The Americans also tried to recruit Skorzeny's partner from the July 20 affair, Major General Otto Ernst Remer. But Remer spurned their offers, opting instead to collaborate with the Soviets during the Cold War. Those who looked to the East after the Third Reich fell took their historical cue from Bismarck, the Prussian realpolitiker who unified Germany "by blood and iron" in 1871. Bismarck insisted that Germany must align with Russia, its proximate and mineral-rich neighbor. This was also Remer's wholehearted belief.

Yet, even as they gravitated toward rival superpowers, Skorzeny and Remer remained friends and stayed in contact over the years. Both men continued to move in the same neo-Nazi circles while trafficking in military hardware and expertise. Their shady business ventures embroiled them in high-stakes, international intrigue. Having crossed paths for the first time on the Twentieth of July, their overlapping stories embody the dual-pronged nature of postwar Nazi subterfuge. Together, they helped lay the groundwork for a

multifaceted neofascist revival that gained alarming momentum in the post–Cold War era.

The speed and ferocity with which the extreme Right asserted itself after the Berlin Wall crumbled — not only in Germany but across Europe and North America — caught nearly everyone by surprise. The growing clout of far Right political parties in Europe; the emergence of a "Red-Brown alliance" in Russia; the rise of the U.S. militia movement; the mounting pattern of violence against refugees, immigrants, guest workers, asylum seekers, and racial minorities throughout much of the Northern Hemisphere — all are manifestations of a widespread neofascist resurgence. Accentuated by the reunification of Germany, the collapse of Soviet bloc Communism, and major changes in the global economy, the sharp escalation of neofascist activity constitutes one of the most dangerous trends in international politics.

Focusing primarily on Germany, and to a lesser extent on the United States, Russia, and other countries, this book examines how and why fascism — utterly vanquished and discredited fifty years ago — has once again become a force to be reckoned with. In the ensuing pages, I attempt several extended treatments of major personalities in the postwar fascist scene. These political malefactors have demonstrated remarkable tenacity and resourcefulness as they grappled to fashion an effective strategy in an era when fascism seemed defunct as a legitimate political alternative.

During the immediate aftermath of World War II, fascists had no choice but to maintain a low profile. This was the "catacombs" period for Third Reich veterans. They were placed on the defensive by the unique scope of the Nazi horror, now indelibly associated with state terror, genocide, and mass destruction on an unprecedented scale in human history. Between 50 million and 60 million died as a direct result of World War II, which Hitler started. Many millions more suffered unfathomable cruelty and hardship. The face of global politics was irretrievably altered. With the Axis armies smashed, the Western European Allies exhausted, and their colonies on the verge of rebellion, a huge vacuum appeared in the world power structure. The United States and the Soviet Union were the only countries with sufficient military strength and political resolve to fill this lacuna.

The onset of the Cold War was triggered in part by the superpowers' struggle over how to integrate Germany into the new world order. Although it had been conquered on the battlefield and stripped of its political sovereignty, Germany remained a potentially important player in Europe. Even when divided between East and West, the two Germanys were not merely client states under someone else's thumb. "The theory of the Cold War as a Soviet-American duopoly is sometimes defended on the grounds that, after all, the United States and the Soviet Union were in full command of their respective alliances," Arthur Schlesinger notes. "But nationalism, the most potent political emotion of the age, challenged the reign of the superpowers almost from the start." De Gaulle's quarrel with NATO, Tito's break from Moscow, and the bitter Sino-Soviet conflict were among the examples cited by Schlesinger, who concludes: "The impact of clients on principals is another part of the unwritten history of the Cold War."[4]

In a different way, German nationalists also brought their influence to bear on the U.S.-Soviet conflict. A coterie of Third Reich veterans quickly reconstituted a covert network of neofascist groups, which tried to exploit the deepening rift between the two superpowers. The Cold War became a walking stick for Nazi spies who sought to parlay their overwhelming military defeat into a partial but significant victory once the guns had been silenced. Nazi espionage agents skillfully plied their trade on both sides of the East-West divide, playing one superpower off the other, proffering services to both American and Soviet intelligence. Instead of truly denazifying the German menace, the United States and Soviet Union plunged into the deep freeze of the Cold War, thereby allowing the fascist beast to acquire a new lease on life.

Many Nazi operatives, including Otto Skorzeny, curried the favor of Western secret-service agencies by touting themselves as rock-solid anti-Communists. At the same time, other Third Reich veterans, such as Otto Ernst Remer, were careful not to burn bridges to the Soviet Union in accordance with the centuries-old geopolitical imperative that beckoned for a German-Russian alliance. Whether opting for expedient relations with East or West, they never ceased dreaming of a fascist comeback. The clandestine milieu they inhabited was awash in intrigue, shifting alliances, internecine disputes,

and unexpected linkages that defied standard interpretations. It was a strange world in which the political categories of "Right" and "Left" at times seemed to blur beyond recognition.

While the Cold War raged, several scholars who wrote about fascism provided intellectual fodder for the East-West propaganda contest. But mass-based fascist organizations were never just pawns of big business, as Marxist historians have asserted; nor were they simply the totalitarian soul mates of Stalinism, as anti-Communist polemicists have argued. In addition to avoiding awkward truths about the indigenous appeal of fascism, neither theory could account for the recrudescence of fascism in the 1990s.

Over the years, academics have engaged in much debate and semantic hairsplitting without arriving at a universally accepted definition of fascism. The lack of agreement as to what constitutes the "fascist minimum" (the lowest common denominator of features found in all examples of fascism) stems in part from the protean nature of the fascist experience. Fascism during the 1920s and 1930s was an ideologically ambiguous movement that metamorphosed through several phases or sequences. Fascist parties initially attracted support among the hoi polloi by campaigning as social revolutionaries against the inequities of the free market; later, as serious contenders for power, they won over conservative elites in Italy and Germany by promising to thwart the Red Menace. In places where fascists governed, they inevitably violated their early platforms, especially their anticapitalist pretensions. Ultimately, their main political enemy was the worker Left, which placed fascism in the right-wing extremist camp.[5]

Several fascist leaders, including Benito Mussolini, started out as socialists but eventually lost faith in the revolutionary capacity of the working class. In order to mobilize an inert proletariat, they embraced nationalism. The mythos of national rebirth was germane to fascism, which assumed widely diverging forms based on a constellation of historical and social factors that differed from one country to the next.

The National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), led by Hitler, emphasized Nordic mysticism, biological racialism, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, and aggressive militarism. In its formative period, the NSDAP shared the ultranationalist stage with

several non-Nazi variants of fascism that flourished in Germany during the so-called Conservative Revolution of the 1920s. A plethora of German fascisms embraced *Volk*-ish and anti-Semitic assumptions — unlike Italian Fascism (sometimes referred to as "corporatism"), which was not inherently racialist. Mussolini's followers may have been racist in the general sense of viewing nonwhites or non-Europeans as culturally inferior, but they did not inflate their racism into an obsessive, all-encompassing ideology. Nor did Franco's hyperauthoritarian Catholics in Spain, who had little sympathy for the pagan and anti-Christian motifs that Nazis often espoused.[6]

Unfortunately, the blanket usage of the terms *fascist* and *neofascist* belies the diverse and sometimes conflicting tendencies that these labels encompass. Umberto Eco describes fascism as "a *fuzzy* totalitarianism, a collage of different philosophical and political ideas," which "had no quintessence." The word itself derives from *fasces*, a cluster of sticks with protruding axheads that symbolize the power and the glory of ancient Rome. In Latin, *fasces* is related to *fascinum*, "to fascinate or charm."[7]

The abracadabra of fascism casts a spell over people by diverting economic and social resentments toward national and racial preoccupations. Proclaiming the need for a new spirit and a new man, fascist demagogues have extolled action for its own sake and romanticized violence as regenerative and therapeutic. Although many of their ideas are a by-product of the Enlightenment, they vehemently reject egalitarian social theories that formed the basis of the French Revolution in 1789. The "anti" dimensions of fascism are manifold and well known: antidemocratic, anti-Marxist, anticapitalist, antimaterialist, anticosmopolitan, antibourgeois, antiliberal, antifeminist, and so on.

But fascism was always more than just a negative crusade. Its eclectic style incorporated elements of competing ideologies that fascist rhetoric ostensibly repudiated. Herein lay the essential paradox of fascism: its ability to embody social and political opposites, to be at once elitist and populist, traditionalist and avant-garde. ("I am a reactionary and a revolutionary," Mussolini boasted.) Within the fascist milieu, there has always been a nostalgia for preindustrial

societies and an attraction to advanced technology, a pathos for uncontrolled brutality and a fetish for obedience and order. Promising to remedy the malaise and anomie of modern life, fascist leaders manipulated deep-seated longings for a better society. The skewed utopian impulse of fascism was the basis for part of its magnetism as a political movement, which appealed to all social strata — urban and rural, young and old, poor and wealthy, the intelligentsia and the uneducated.

The massive defeat they suffered during World War II did not refute the innermost convictions of many fascists, who kept pining for the day when they might again inflict their twisted dream of a new order on much of the world. Within the neofascist scene, there has always been a residual subculture of nostalgics who clung to the heritage of the Third Reich and the Mussolini regime. Holocaust-denial literature and other racialist screeds have circulated like political pornography among the deeply devoted who cluster in small marginalized groups and clandestine cells. Others showed more resiliency as they tried to adapt to the changing realities of the postwar era. But the East-West conflict, which initially afforded a means of survival for these ideological miscreants, also stranded many of them on the farther shores of politics. They realized that sooner or later the binary logjam of the Cold War would have to be broken for revisionist forms of fascism to take hold.

The more sophisticated tacticians understood that the fascist game could be played in many ways. Some deemed it best not to advertise their allegiance to the creed. Discarding the fascist appellation was an initial step toward articulating a political discourse more in tune with modern times, one that spoke of preserving identity and cultural uniqueness instead of white supremacy. Of necessity, a second coming of fascism would look quite different from the first. Pragmatic and opportunistic, neofascist leaders reinvented themselves and crafted euphemisms into electoral platforms that concealed an abiding hatred of the democratic process. Campaigning as national populists, they managed to rack up significant vote totals in several countries and redefine the post–Cold War political landscape.

This is the saga of an underground political movement that has

reawakened after nearly half a century of hibernation. It is the history of something long hidden reappearing in a new form, a thing once forbidden that is gradually gaining influence and respectability. Most of all, it is a story about a cadre of old-guard fascists who kept the torch burning and bequeathed it to a younger generation of extremists who are carrying on the struggle today.

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