

Fascism

I. Introduction

- A. When most people think of fascism today they think of an egomaniacal fuehrer, or possibly an ideology that was defeated in WWII and more recently espoused by uneducated skinheads. The most common, but largely false and simplistic answer given to the question, What is fascism? is: *The extreme right wing of the political spectrum*, or, *The polar opposite of marxism*.

Fascism is difficult to recognize because it is so poorly understood and because its nature is masked behind collective denial. MODERN FASCISM, by Gene Edward Veith, Jr., p.25.

- B. Much to the consternation of WWII survivors, fascism remains alive and well and could be poised for a dangerous re-awakening. Gene Edward Veith, Jr. says:

The defeat of Hitler and the Axis powers in World War II meant the military defeat of fascism, but an ideology cannot be defeated by military power alone. Ideas linger. They are reborn when the time is right again, or they come out of hiding in strange new shapes. The major scandal of contemporary thought is that, despite World War and Holocaust, the intellectual heritage of fascism has never been repudiated. (MODERN FASCISM, p.16.).

- C. The implosion of communism at the end of this century and the current popular culture offers a fertile breeding ground for the revival of fascism.
- D. Today the word *fascist* is mostly a popular pejorative used to describe someone who is extremely patriotic, a racist, one who advocates less government or non-socialist economic policies, or one adhering to fundamentalist religion (*fundamentalist* meaning a belief in a transcendent deity and ethical absolutes). Calling someone a fascist is a common way of insulting or vilifying an opponent in political debate. It is almost always what people ascribe to their enemies, never to themselves. What is ironic is that those today who do adhere to the major beliefs of fascism would be extremely belligerent if referred to as a *fascist*.

This briefing outline will explore the core beliefs of one of the most powerful

worldviews of the Twentieth Century and give evidence for its modern revival.

II. The Origin and Roots of Fascism

A. It's rudimentary ideas were formulated around the turn of the century. These early advocates were the avant garde, the intellectual elite: poets, writers, artists, and philosophers.

B. It arose out of the following milieu:

1. Alienation: This came largely as a response to the industrial revolution of the 19th Century. Science, technology, political changes, the philosophy of the enlightenment, and economic realities created a barrier to man's unity with the natural world. The philosophy of the 19th Century described the cosmos as a giant machine. That man was machine-like and part of a greater machine led to the feeling of not only being isolated from his fellow man but also from nature.
2. Romanticism: This was a reaction to the above alienation. Romanticism reasserted the value of the natural world in that it was seen not as a machine but as a living organism. Nature must not be approached with reason and intellect but by experience and emotions, irrationalism as opposed to rationalism. The immanence of God (or gods) was emphasized while transcendence denied. Romanticism was also characterized by a nostalgia for the past and an admiration for the primitive. It was believed that primitive cultures were morally superior because they were more in tune with the natural world.
3. Darwinism: In a sense Darwinism was a refutation of romanticism which held that by observing the beauty and harmony of nature one could be taught lessons of harmony and peace. Darwinism, however, saw the other side of nature, i.e., struggle, violence and cruelty. The law of nature is the survival of the fittest. Progress comes from ruthless competition, the strong destroying the weak. Darwinists theorized that if progress comes from struggle on the natural level it must also come about that way on the social level (Social Darwinism). Darwinism gave new notions of heredity, race and environment. The Nazis took Darwinism to its natural conclusion: *If you can breed better sheep by selective breeding why not human beings (eugenics)?*
4. Existentialism: Friedrich Nietzsche, perhaps the most influential person

in the 20th Century because of his ideas, combined the passion and irrationalism of romanticism with Darwinian science. In addition, he mounted a full-scale intellectual assault on the Judeo-Christian tradition that was the foundation of Western Civilization. We are not saying here that existentialism (particularly the French version) is compatible with fascism. The former gloried in individual identity, the latter in group identity. Both however, were advocates for the eradication of morality based on transcendence, and both opposed philosophical rationalism. The Nazi attempt to eliminate the weak and unfit can be traced directly to the writings of Nietzsche. Hitler's plan for the Aryan race was only an application of Nietzsche's Superman. The famed Nazi cruelty can likewise be traced to Nietzsche's criticism of Christ's teaching of loving the downtrodden. One of the greatest books in the German heritage, and one of the foremost books of the reformation was Luther's **BONDAGE OF THE WILL**. It was no accident that the great existentialist and Fascist theme was **THE TRIUMPH OF THE WILL**.

III. The Major Tenets of Fascism

- A. What it is: It is a worldview in that it attempts to speak to all of life. Fascism was not just a political or economic system but a worldview, i.e., a new religion.
- B. What it is not: It is not the polar opposite of the left wing. While there are differences between communism and fascism there are also similarities, e.g., both abhor the transcendent and elevate the state. J. Edgar Hoover was not entirely wrong to refer to communism as *Red Fascism*. Fascism is not reactionary. The fascists did not want to cling to the status quo or return to the past; they wanted to create something new (We could qualify this by saying that they did want to see the return of the ancient pagan religions, however.).
- C. The major difference between marxism and fascism: Marxist socialism stresses international class struggle whereas national socialism stresses national solidarity where everyone cooperates for the national good. Therefore, fascist economic theory stresses competition between nations, i.e., groups, or races. Fascists criticize marxists for minimizing cultural and community ties that unite a nation, for being grounded in scientific rationalism, and for defining human life only in economic terms. One other note: the fascists opposed both marxism and banking capitalism as inventions of the Jews. (This is ironic in that it can be proved that Western

banks had a large part in bank-rolling Hitler's Third Reich. See ***WALL STREET AND THE RISE OF HITLER*** by Anthony C. Sutton.)

- D. Four major ideas of a fascist worldview: (Note: one is not a fascist unless he adheres to the entire corpus of ideas.)
1. Immanence. The reason the Nazis so hated the Jews was the belief that they had poisoned western civilization with the idea of a transcendent god who reveals a transcendent moral law. The fascists argued that such transcendence alienates human beings from nature and themselves. One writer, defined fascism as *the practical and violent resistance to transcendence*. (Eric Nolte). Fascists seek an organic, neomythological unity of nature, the community, and the self. Historic Christianity holds that God is a) separate from from His creation and not part of it (i.e., transcendent), and b) within it (i.e., immanent) but without being a part of it. While the Nazi regime was adamantly opposed to confessional Christianity (those stressing biblical doctrine) they tolerated a modernist Christianity which stressed immanence, the here and now, a this-worldly agenda. Many liberal theologians sympathized with the Nazis and agreed to work to de-hebraize Christianity.
 2. Paganism: The goal was to purge the idea of a transcendent god and replace it with a form of pre-christian consciousness. The Nazi spiritual leaders wanted to revive belief in the ancient germanic tribal deities, e.g. Wotan. This accounts for the immense popularity of composers like Wagner with his pagan operas, and the music and ballet of Stravinsky. Hitler himself studied deeply in the occult and mystery religions (Gnosticism). The German calender was de-christianized and holidays were replaced with the pagan cycles of nature. Pagan shrines and ancient ritual sites in Germany were officially recognized.
 3. Group identity: Individual worth and identity was another poisonous doctrine perpetrated by the Jews who believed man's worth was based on the *IMAGO DEI*. According to fascist ideology, individual identity comes only from the group, and since culture determines the individual, the needs of the culture have priority. Fascism opposes human autonomy. Culture, therefore, takes on a mystical, almost god-like status. Civilization, according to fascists was the result of Jewish abstraction and reason. Culture is everything--it is organic and ethnic. Civilization is mechanical and rational and brings on alienation. This glorification of culture and ethnicity of course led to virulent racism the Nazis have been

most noted for.

4. Unity with nature: As with primitive and animistic cultures, fascism sees man as one with nature. What is generally not known is the fact that this doctrine led the fascists to hold a very zealous view of environmentalism. They enacted significant environmental protection programs. Health and physical fitness was stressed. The state not only was to bring about this unity (hence the tolerance of totalitarianism) but the state itself was conceived as the embodiment of culture. The state was to be a living organism in which each individual would find fulfillment and purpose like cells in the greater body. Its political and economic program grew out of this belief and was known as National Socialism. Note: The word *Nazi* comes from a shortened form of the German word for *national socialism*.

IV. Fascism Today

A. Questions:

1. Are there movements today that strongly oppose the idea of a transcendent God and absolute moral values derived from God?
2. Is there an extreme emphasis today on culture and ethnicity?
3. Is there a desire to return to ancient mystery religions? Are there any pagan holidays being emphasized?
4. Is there a movement today to base human value on something other than inherent worth?
5. Is there a glorification of violence in movies and media?
6. Is there a strong trend away from the emphasis of biblical doctrine toward a unity centered around experience?
7. Are there any extreme environmental movements?

B. Note the following quotes from Veith:

In the 1930s, avant-garde artists shocked the bourgeoisie with their aesthetic theories that glorified violence and the release of primitive emotions. Today, if you like examples of early fascist aesthetics, simply go to the latest

Hollywood blockbuster, turn on MTV, or go to a Heavy Metal concert. Here you will see realized the fascists' artistic ideals: pleasure from violence; the thrill of moral rebellion; the cult of the Aryan body. The grisly blood-letting of a slasher movie; the body-builder who takes the law into his own hands by machine-gunning his enemies; the masses of teenagers slam-dancing as Metallica sings 'Scream, as I'm killing you!'--such art is the quintessence of the fascist aesthetic. P. 12.

Contemporary mass politics is very different from the democratic ideals of Madison and Jefferson. Instead of rational analysis of issues and reasoned debate, our political discourse turns on image manipulation through the mass media. The electronic media has created a genuine mass culture. Visual images take the place of language; emotionalism takes the place of logic. Politics is trivialized; citizens are manipulated, but they are molded into a common will. This was Goebbels's dream. P. 12,13.

Moral issues are today almost impossible to discuss in objective terms. Euthanasia is back. People clamor for their right to die. One out of four pregnancies ends in abortion, amounting to millions and millions. In discussing such issues, it becomes evident that perhaps the majority of people today have no concept of an objective morality that transcends the individual and the culture. Morality is reduced to social utility or the assertion of the will. This was precisely the Nazi ethic. P.13.

Those who assault Western Civilization in favor of ethnicity, primitivism, environmentalism, and subjectivism should realize that their critiques and the alternatives they present are almost identical to those made by the theorists of fascism. ...[The]fascists of the 1930s also sought to dismantle Western Civilization and human-centered values. They too attacked the concept of individual identity and taught that reality is socially constructed; They too insisted that underlying all institutions is naked power. They too prized ethnicity. They too were environmentalists. They too questioned the objectivity of meaning. p.22

V. Conclusion

With a society that is cynical about democracy and has a yearning for charismatic leadership, a longing for group identity, a continuing economic disaffection, a moral skepticism, an increasing popularity of paganism with a new face (New Age Movement), where is the Christian church with its beacons of Light to dispel the darkness?

Because they are intolerant they cannot be tolerated. Hitler

For Further Reading:

(Note: Much of this outline was gleaned from the below mentioned book by Veith)

Angebert, Jean-Michael. ***THE OCCULT AND THE THIRD REICH.***

Hamilton, Alastair. ***THE APPEAL OF FASCISM: A STUDY OF INTELLECTUALS AND FASCISM, 1919-1945.***

Laqueur, Walter. ed. ***FASCISM: A READER'S GUIDE.*** See especially the articles by Zeev Sternhell

Levenda, Peter. ***UNHOLY ALLIANCE: A HISTORY OF NAZI INVOLVEMENT WITH THE OCCULT.***

Sklar, D. ***THE NAZIS AND THE OCCULT.***

Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. ***MODERN FASCISM: LIQUIDATING THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW.***