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MODERN FASCISM: LIQUIDATING THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

by Gene Edward Veith, Jr.

Concordia Publishing House - St. Louis. A review with a brief summary and comments by Pastor R.A. Fisk.

In a day of hazy thinking and simplistic slogans it is refreshing to find a book on this subject that seeks to give some thoughtful analysis of Fascist ideology. In this work we not only discover the thinking of Hitler's day, but are made conscious of the fact that these ideas are still floating around in our world.

The book begins with an interesting introduction and then fills out eight chapters on different aspects of fascism. In the introduction we are forcefully reminded that this is still a disease of our time. Fascism, Veith tells us, is not merely the seizure of power by madmen nor conservatism. It cannot be understood simply as racism, totalitarianism or *right wing extremism*. These are symptoms, but they are not the essence of the disease. Fascism is a worldview.

This worldview, claims our author, defined itself against the existing spiritual framework — that of the Jews and their Bible. It was an attack on the transcendent God, and the absolute standards of the Scriptures. Veith states that Fascist anti-Semitism was not merely racial despite the biological race theory that dominated National Socialism. The rationale for anti-Semitism was the ideas of the Jews. According to fascist theorists, the Jewish

influence — that is, the idea of a transcendent religion and a transcendent moral law - was responsible for the ills of Western culture. The target of the fascists was not only the Jews, but the Judeo-Christian tradition.

In his chapter on *The Fascist Tradition* the author asserts that its assumptions reach deep into the intellectual history of the West, and that it still continues to permeate modern culture, in the Left as well as the Right, among the avant-garde as well as conservatives, in popular culture as well as the lunatic fringe. Veith shows us how these views were held by many of the intellectual elite in Hitler's time, and were not merely the notions of those of the jackboot mentality. He mentions Heidegger the philosopher as an example.

Veith shows how the alienation that many felt after the period of the so called *Enlightenment* led to what is called *Romanticism* which was characterized by nostalgia for the past and admiration for the primitive. Out of this developed what he called *Romantic Materialism*. This embraced a Darwinian view of science and a philosophical irrationalism under the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche. Here was a basis for a new morality and new social order. The aftermath of World War I, and the eco-

nomie collapse enabled this new movement of thought and morality to develop into a political movement. Hitler's ideal was to replace what he considered a lifeless, alienated Western civilization with a new organic society.

This critique of Modern Fascism leads us into some fascinating insights. Fascism is against what they call the *Hebrew disease*. This disease was Hebrew monotheism. It is for the same reason that Biblical Christianity was disdained. It also believed in a transcendent God and in absolute moral standards. Fascists hated the Jews not merely because of their race, but because of their ideas and their worldview. Fascists disliked the concept of monotheism, and it was a common complaint of fascist intellectuals that the Jews invented the idea of one God. The followers of National Socialism abhorred the idea of a transcendent God and absolute moral principles. They blamed Hebraic concepts for breeding individualism and revolution, and wanted rather a religion that would produce a collective and organic society.

Christianity that was based on the Bible was also hated by the fascists and they claimed that it was an invention of

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the Jews. Hitler called the Apostle Paul a bolshevik, and blamed Christianity for terrorizing people spiritually and restricting pagan freedom. Other fascist theorists blamed the objective moral laws of Scripture for creating guilt and restricting natural passions. Some of the fascist teachers wanted Christianity without the Old Testament because it was Jewish. Friedrich Delitzsch, a Biblical scholar from the University of Berlin, went so far as to try and argue that Jesus was not Jewish. An interesting observation is that many of the most enthusiastic supporters of Nazism were found among the theologians of the so called broad and tolerant school of theology. Those who scorned orthodoxy and credal subscription. Those who down played the supernatural and emphasized the mere human qualities of the Saviour.

While much has been written about the conflict in Europe in the *Second World War*, one area has been neglected, and that is the Church struggle in Nazi Germany. Veith gives a glimpse of some of the things that took place. Hitler negotiated a *concordat* with Rome. This limited the political involvement of Rome, and her influence in Germany, but did help curb to some extent Nazi control and manipulation. Among the Protestant Churches there was what was called the *German Christian movement*. This was mainly in the State Church, and was to help towards the Nazification of that Church. She became controlled and manipulated by fascists. In November 1933 a mass German Christian rally was held in Berlin. One resolution demanded the purging

of all pastors who rejected the *spirit of National Socialism*. It insisted that the *Aryan paragraph*, the policy of excluding people of Jewish descent from office, be applied within the Church. Pastors with Jewish ancestry, as well as baptized Jewish converts, were to be expelled from the ministry. The shame of it all was the number of intellectuals and university academics who went along with all this. The silence of many leading lights can only be described as horrifying. The theology of unbelief readily accepted Nazism. The same theology is still around, and one wonders what tyrannical system it will embrace this time?

Not all German Christians went along with National Socialism. The *Confessing Church* was organized to counter and combat the *German Christian* movement. There was an amazing return at this time to the old reformation confessions of faith. These believers held to the transcendence of God. They took their stand upon the Scriptures, and confessed Jesus Christ as Lord. Their respect for the Bible is found in their *Barmen Declaration*, a document of six articles, all beginning with a Biblical quotation, and on the one hand affirming certain essential truths of the Bible, and on the other rejecting the false doctrines taught by the *German Christian* movement. The *Confessing Church* was to suffer greatly for her stand, and some of her leaders were to find themselves taken to concentration camps. Later there were to be martyrs. The first martyr of the *Confessing Church* was a Jew, Friedrich Weissler, a doctor of law and a Protestant Christian of Jewish descent. In the darkest night of Hitler's regime the witness of the *Confessing Church* spluttered and flickered and almost went out apart from a small remnant.

The *Third Reich* did not simply fall out of the sky on a dark day. It was the egg that was hatched from the ideas and philosophies that captivated German culture. Some of the ideas stemming from the philosophers and thinkers took decades to filter down to the grass roots levels.

Soon after the end of World War II, the Jewish scholar Max Weinreich published *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish people*. This exhaustive study

Beating the Foreigners

Illegal migrants have been in the news again because of the high number of Chinese who have been paying for a boat ride to Australia's shores. On boats that are not well equipped, not built for long voyages, Chinese are willing to pay high prices to try to get into Australia. Having been frustrated at the official level, they are seeking asylum in Australia. Their desire to leave their existing circumstances is so great that they will risk everything they have for a new life 'down under'.

The reaction in Australia has been expected. Foreigners are not welcome — at least not if they are hard working, diligent, and independent. The Chinese are some of the hardest workers in Australian society. Recently, a 14-year old Chinese girl was placed in third year at Monash University, having skipped over second year — and after having skipped her way over several school grades. Seems she can keep up with the men in advanced mathematics, and then some.

Australia is not the only country that has trouble with illegal immigrants. California is a well-known refuge, as is Florida, for Mexicans, Cubans, Panamanians, and others. California, because of its proximity to Mexico, has troubles of a special kind. Mexicans not only move into California, but some actually move to California to live while they work back over the border. The reason for this is simple: American welfare programs. These are available to all, citizens and illegal aliens as well.

Tax payers in California, however, have become fed up with funding foreigners, many of whom move there only to live off welfare. And California has a governmental system that allows citizens to place proposals before the electorate. Hence, Proposition 187, which is an attempt to restrict welfare to legal citizens.

Not surprisingly, those who have been most active against Prop. 187 have been Mexicans. Even the Mexican government has spoken out against it. The Mexican government seems to have some kind of interest in seeing its citizens either leave the country or live off the welfare of US citizens. Perhaps this is because Mexico does not have a welfare system that com-

of the complicity of German intellectuals with the Nazi regime, documents how the scholarship of the time provided the intellectual justification and the conceptual framework for the Holocaust. The German Philosopher, Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844-1900), must be regarded as a forerunner and major contributor to the development of Fascist ideology.

Nietzsche stressed the importance of individualism and intuitive thought against the dominant philosophical trends of his day, which emphasized reason, science, Christian ethics and liberal democracy. Nietzsche held that all great human achievements stem from the individual's instinctive will to power and desire to dominate others. He believed that, ideally, this instinct is accompanied by pride, courage and other heroic virtues. However, Nietzsche held that the will to power was frustrated in Western society by Christian moral values that stressed humility, pity and meekness. He violently attacked Christianity for teaching what he called a slave morality. He also attacked liberal democracy as a herd movement that glorified mediocrity of the masses.

Nietzsche believed that the West could be saved from decadence only by a transvaluation or reversal of values, that would enable the creative talents of the *Übermensch* (overman or superior individual) to be liberated for Heroic achievements. It was this concept that the Nazi movement took over with its own particular distortion to uphold its idea of a superior Aryan race. Nietzsche wrote "Christianity, sprung from Jewish roots and comprehensible only as a growth on this soil, represents the counter-movement to any morality of breeding, of race, of privilege: it is the anti-Aryan religion par excellence.

Closer to Hitler's day was the influential philosopher, M. Heidegger (1889-1976) who was a Nazi sympathiser. Heidegger is considered one of the founders of modern Existentialism, a philosophy which holds that the fact of existence is more fundamental than the essence, or nature of existing things. His thought has become part of modern Existentialist psychology.

Heidegger maintained man is filled with fear and anguish because in mak-

ing most decisions he must choose among endless possibilities. Fear and anguish cause man to fall into the inauthentic world of people who strive for security and material gain. Heidegger taught that by making resolute decisions and carrying them out each person can regain his or her authenticity and can develop their individual nature. Modern Existentialism today still has this emphasis on choice. This is what matters! Choice is the centre of human existence. Self-conscious being is being which chooses. We are what we choose. We make ourselves by our choices. Not to choose is itself a choice. Choices have no rational basis or purpose, so it does not matter what we choose, only that we choose. Heidegger emphasized the human will rather than the mind. He not only referred to the will of the individual but also to a *common* or collective will. As Rousseau had also emphasized, those who will the same thing constitute a community, which takes on a life and will of its own. In his book *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues that individuals can achieve full authenticity only by participation in such a community, which does not erase personal identity but gives fulfilment: Authentic existence becomes secure within the context of a communal life, from which the loss of personal identity is entirely excluded.

The existentialists' emphasis upon the will, and thus human freedom, seems to fly in the face of fascist totalitarianism. Yet this is not the case when we note that fascists believed in communalism, in which the individual's will and freedom finds fulfilment in the will and freedom of the group. The goal was not mindless conformity, but the masses of individuals all actively willing the same thing. Although painful for philosophers the evidence is that both Hitler and Heidegger shared a common world view in seeking to return German culture to pagan roots by rupturing the fusion between Hellenism and Hebraism that constituted European humanism. Heidegger's philosophy sought the demise of those ethical values that had their roots in the transcendent God.

Hitler put the ideas of the philosophers into the common language and thought of the people through propaganda films such as Leni Riefen-

stals with that of its neighbour. Welfare or unemployment benefits are not available to foreigners in Mexico.

In fact, Mexico generally does not have a good record on human rights. According to US journalist K.L. Billingsley (*Washington Times*, 17/11/94), "since the 1970s thousands of Mexican citizens have been expelled from the Chamul region because of their Protestant beliefs. Militant villagers killed three who returned home in early October."

A number of immigrants reaching the shores of the United States, one arriving on a raft from Cuba, have told stories of police brutality in Mexico as people attempted to pass through Mexico on their way to the United States. The migrant who arrived on the raft last August, Lazaro Banos, had tried going through Mexico, but had been beaten by Mexican police. More than \$US1,000 and other possessions were stolen from him, and he was jailed for four months before being returned to the Guatemalan side of the Suchiate River.

Banos is not alone in telling this story. An Armenian who tried to enter the US after an arduous journey from Azerbaijan found the Mexican experience the worst of his life. Apparently unable to get through Mexico, he is stuck in Guatemala with bitter memories of Mexican police brutality, the loss of all his possession, including his passport. Now he cannot travel anywhere.

In a confused age it is difficult for nations to know what to do with the influx of foreigners who wish to stay permanently. Most of them want to move because the conditions back home are worse than the new country. In this, the countries of the Christian West stand out from the rest. Not too many wish to relocate to China, or India, or a number of other countries that have little to offer for those citizens in Western civilization.

In Australia, the government will certainly make it more difficult for the boat people to enter the country. And unfortunately the churches remain silent. What a remarkable opportunity for evangelism! What a great opportunity is missed to explain to the foreigners that these things in the country they desire, peace, prosperity, and liberty are not here by chance, but are the direct outworking of the Sovereign God, whose people throughout the centuries have built a civilization that, although imperfect, is sought after by many in the world.

stahl's brilliant documentary *The Triumph of the Will*. Riefenstahl, a Nazi sympathizer is still alive and at ninety very healthy, active, and interestingly a member now of Green Peace. Like much of our present society the Nazis had a false confidence in the abilities and powers of the human will, and mockingly despised those weak creatures in their view who spoke of reliance on the grace of God. The triumph of the fallen and sinful will can only be an utter disaster. The history of the *Third Reich* is proof of that!

In two brilliant chapters concerning Fascist ethics with the titles *Life Unworthy of Life* and *The Beautiful Ideas which Kill* our author brings home to us that these awful ideas are still lurking around in our midst. Quoting from Robert Jay Lifton's Book *The Nazi Doctors* he gives us details of the fascist tactics in this field. We read as follows:

Of the five identifiable steps by which the Nazis carried out the principle of *life unworthy of life*, coercive sterilization was the first. There followed the killing of *impaired* children in hospitals; then the killing of *impaired adults*, mostly collected from mental hospitals, in centres especially equipped with carbon monoxide gas. This project was extended (in the same killing centers) to *impaired* inmates of concentration and extermination camps, and finally, to mass killings, mostly of Jews, in the extermination camps themselves.

Veith notes that the rejection of the Judeo-Christian ethic of transcendent moral absolutes meant that concepts such as justice and mercy no longer had a conceptual foundation. Hitler had said that *conscience is a Jewish invention*. The Reichsminister Alfred Rosenberg merely blurted out that *Justice is what the Aryan man deems just. Unjust is what he so deems*. The ethic adopted was similar to the *existential ethic* dominating much of our present day society. Such an ethical system rejects moral absolutes, and emphasizes the choice alone. In the third Reich following the views of Nietzsche and Heidegger there was more than the individual will, but the collective will, and this will dominated, and was the final authority in the land.

Following the Nazi ethic, so called 'mercy killing' was introduced into the third Reich. On September 1, 1939, Hitler wrote a letter authorizing that patients whose illness, according to the most critical application of human judgement, is incurable, can be granted release by euthanasia. This was not an order to kill, but granted the doctors power to kill.

A program known only as T4 was set up which applied procedures for euthanizing both children and adults. Psychiatrists and physicians were required to fill out questionnaires about their patients. The forms were forwarded to an expert panel, which decided which patients should be euthanized. Patients in mental hospitals, long-term care facilities, and nursing homes were the main targets. In 1939, there were over 300,000 patients in mental hospitals. In 1940, there were only 40,000. At least 275,000 mental patients of all ages were killed. Elderly people plagued with senility were euthanized. Many of the aged and infirm in nursing homes were killed. Euthanasia was then extended to those with merely physical, non-genetic handicaps. The next victims were the crippled (including those who lost a limb in World War I) and the deaf. Attention was next turned to behavioural problems: social misfits and children in reform schools were eliminated.

In response to the public outcry, the T4 program was officially cancelled in 1941, although killings continued in secret. This all prepared the way ultimately for the Holocaust. It was not long before thousands upon thousands of Jews and others were being taken to extermination camps to face death in gas chambers. In the Third Reich it became legitimate in their eyes to kill *life unworthy of life*. Could it happen again? Where the transcendent God and moral absolutes are rejected anything can happen!

In his last two chapters Veith looks at contemporary ideology, and traces links with Nazi Fascism. The same *relativism* is still around only now parading in a new dress. There are those who still assert that there are no moral absolutes valid for everyone, and consequently if

morality is either a privately chosen code or the imposition of power over someone else, then *moral issues* dissolve.

Veith states that the *concept of deconstruction* has its philosophical roots in Heidegger, who first used the term, although the contemporary theory goes far beyond Heidegger in its dissolution of language and transcendence. He shows how the same tool employed by the Nazi fascists of the Third Reich to demolish the ideas and values of Western civilization is still being used by the *deconstructionists* of our day. Dr. Veith names some of these deconstructionists such as Paul De Man who was a professor at Yale and a key figure in contemporary literary criticism. He unveils his fascist connections, and presses home this relationship between deconstructionism and fascism.

The last chapter of the book tells of the Nazi use of the mass media, and speaks of fascism and the mass mind. He shows how Hitler made great use of the film media as a propaganda tool for his ideas. Goebbels, a leading Nazi was an expert in the use of the visual arts as an instrument of propaganda. The Third Reich produced 1,363 films. Veith shows how our culture today is also manipulated by the visual media which has the power to create a mass mind.

Veith does not conclude by saying that a Fourth Reich in some form is just around the corner, but warns of a fascism with a human face. Our society could also be forced today to yield to a common will with social engineering directing the birth and education of our children. Natural religions could replace Christianity and Judaism. Euthanasia may be used to eliminate misfits and the unwanted. We need to be vigilant to avoid both the old form of fascism or a new mode. Dr. Veith closes with these words:

Fascism is the modern world's nostalgia for paganism. It is a sophisticated culture's revolt against God.