
I HATE, THEREFORE I AM

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Introduction

For many historians, the rise of fascism and subsequent World War were the defining moments of the 20th century. How and why did such barbaric cruelty take place in the "modern" world. Fascism was rooted in 19th century nationalism as well as agrarian Romantic critiques of the shallowness, dehumanization and fragmented social relationships of modern rationality and its superficial mass culture. Fascism combined the adulation of the violent hero with an orderly Nation State of "united people" whose leadership expressed their collective will -- with violence if necessary -- toward those who have thwarted their economic, cultural and political realization. Fascism was more than a political position, it held a number of psychological appeals. More specifically, fascism needs to be understood in terms of identities assaulted by political and economic frustrations. Fascism provided valorized identities, dignity and hope. While Fascism *cannot* be reduced to individual factors, there are certain character types, frequent in certain class positions, that have an elective affinity for fascist/racist/reactionary agendas. Following WWI, the Bolshevik revolution and the international crises of capital, fascism became a major political force throughout continental Europe. National Socialism moved from the marginal fringes of German politics to absolute power making inevitable the most disastrous conflagration in human history.

Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were reduced to rubble and smoldering ashes.¹ A new alignment would divide the world's

¹ Most historians suggest that Japan was a fascist power. Japanese Imperialism, while having much in common with fascism, was primarily a top down movement following the seizure of power from the Tokugawa Shogunate by Meiji reactionaries who then created a parliamentary form that was never democratic. Fascism, as will be argued, was a mobilization of the lower middle classes both contesting the liberalism of the new economic elites and the socialism of the proletariat. Fascism seized power from other parties while Japan did not really have other parties.

countries into capitalist and communist camps. The capitalists countries, including Western Germany and a pacifist Japan would quickly rebuild and prosper. The command economies of the Soviet Union that could rapidly industrialize, unable to shift to the postindustrial production of consumer goods and ludic amusements imploded.² The economics of the growth in the capitalist economies began to sputter in the late 80's. While a small few would prosper, changes in technology in the international marketplace and the mobility of capital meant that many workers would lose jobs. Those entering the job market would be especially hard hit. At the same time, as the communist monolith shattered and as its economies collapsed, new voices were heard shrieking old messages of Jewish traitors and revanchist dreams. From out of the ashes of WW II now beckon forth the phoenix of fascism. Beneath its wings dark shadows are cast and echoes of a grievous past, voices long stilled are again being heard. But in the current world of postmodern carnivals, is it a phoenix or a holographic projection?

How can we best understand contemporary reactionary movements? What are the continuities and differences with classical fascism, what qualities are invariant, what qualities are historically contingent? Marxian analyses, especially after the Second Internationale, critiqued capitalism from the standpoint of wage labor. But Fascism was far more than a response to unemployment, it was a complex political outcome of historical legacies, cultural traditions, the pre-fascist political economy, and its class structure, class relationships and class contradictions reflected in voting patterns and the kinds of social movements. Last, but not least, certain patterns of individual character structure, qua authority, and its expressions in personal identities held a cultural and psychic affinity for fascism. This was a central concern for the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory (Cf Smith 1992).

Following the capitalist crises of the 20s, the European bourgeoisie were assaulted by many of the same economic and cultural strains of the proletariat. Given their class positions and psychic orientations, they held different understandings of the problems and supported different solutions. The tenuous economic position of lower middle class merchants and burghers left them powerless in the face of monopoly capital and its crises. They experienced anxiety, insecurity

² Although right wing columnists would argue the fall was due to the lack of freedom, it was more do to the lack of goods. Had the system been able to deliver the goods and media of the West, it could have endured far longer and muted the ethnic conflicts now so evident.

and feared leftist radicalism. Lower echelon officials that derived their limited power from the State saw themselves as the guardians of social order and/or defenders of the Nation. These strata saw the socialist proletariat as a threat to their economic interests and secular modernity, especially *avant garde* art and lifestyles as an assault to their parochial cultural values. Such groups were especially prone to fervent nationalism, traditional (authoritarian) family life and dogmatic religion which attenuated differences in status and obscured their subordinated positions. Large segments of the lower middle class were thus predisposed to fascist/nationalist ideologies that would assuage the rampant individualism, social fragmentation, materialism and dehumanization wrought by modernity. Fascism would preserve traditional values, grant dignified identities and sustain power relationships both within and without the family. It would punish the 'usual culprits', restore order, and enable national greatness.

Did Fascism stem from 19th century critiques of Modernity, crises of the political economy (class structure) or was it based on psychological factors? Social psychological explanations often seem to make causal linkages and explain fascism as either an expression of childhood experiences or a form of psychopathology. Both explanations are patently absurd.³ Rather, it can be said that cultural traditions which include values and identities born of earlier epochs are buried in the psyche and endure as aspects of individual personality (Horkheimer 1972). Further, particular social psychological tendencies tend to vary by structural locations, eg class positions influence family dynamics, socialization practices, cultural exposure etc. In face of particular strains and crises, social psychological factors predispose one set of political understanding and reactions rather than others. But these "elective affinities" are 'always already' present prior to expression. A long tradition of scholarly debate has argued that fascism provides a myriad of personal gratifications -- at least to certain character types that cluster around certain class locations. I shall argue that classical fascism was an ideological reaction to what Bronner (1992) called an "identity deficit" rooted in the contradictions of capitalist culture and the anomie of modernity. As shall be argued, explanations for the rise of Fascism, rooted in classical Freudian theory offered important insights but were at the same time limited by embracing the drive theory. Eric Fromm was among the early critics of drive theory. More recent developments in what has been called object relations theory, which I shall argue informs the nature of

³ In anthropological circles this has often been termed the pisspot theory of culture, somehow toilet training or weaning give rise to culture and social institutions.

identity, can provide useful insights into a variety of social and political movements. Although Fascist movements of the 30s were taking place in most of the capitalist countries of the world, in Germany, given certain cultural traditions, political legacies (recent unification, weak parliamentary traditions) in face of capitalist contradiction, mobilized by Hitler's charismatic leadership, hatred and destruction of the Other became a central feature of National Socialism.⁴

Freud Meets Marx

Social psychological understandings of fascism were rooted in Freudian theory and his analyses of group psychology.⁵ Freud attempted to understand the "irrational mob" and the psychological allure of the leader as both embodying group ideals and cementing the unconscious bonds between followers to unite "individuals" into a mass secured by emotional cathexes. The group provided its members with powerful attachments to the leader and each other. Further, identification with the powerful leader provided a sense of empowerment. These group processes were instantiated within a civilization based on the repression of desire in which social dictates, mediated through the superego, demanded the renunciation of impulse gratification so that desire might be transformed and channeled into work and social stability. Thus the price of progress was guilt. Notwithstanding, repression based on guilt was tenuous and the repressed would inevitably return in war, hate and denigration of the Other.

Eric Fromm's importation of Freud's insights on character and civilization informed the Frankfurt School's research program. This led to the studies of authority and the family that would inform later analyses of fascist propaganda and the "Authoritarian Personality" research. These efforts moved the critique of domination from economic reductionism to an immanent critique that would locate Freudian psychodynamics within the Marxian critique of capitalist domination. Character, consciousness and desire, now seen as

⁴ There was a major debate between Adorno and Neumann over whether anti-Semitism was the dominant theme of Fascism or the totalitarian State.

⁵ Some might argue that Weber's fascination with charismatic leadership as a general response to crisis, and in the current time, a means of escape from the iron cages, anticipated fascist movements. Bataille locates the social psychological perspective in Nietzsche, or at least popularizations of his work.

historical products, mediated between political economy and individual consciousness. Since the 15th century, the dominant trope of Europe was the rise of capitalism. Fromm (1941) argued that the 16th century was a time of massive social shifts and dislocations as the society was subjected to the chaotic forces of the market. This left individuals feeling isolated, powerless, anxious and without transcendent meaning. These were assuaged by authoritarian responses. Submission to a powerful leader Fromm argued, could overcome feelings of isolation, provide a sense of empowerment, and legitimate hatred of the despicable Jew. Later, as Fromm argued, these same factors, in the bureaucratized world of "specialists without heart and technicians without feeling," prefigured fascist mobilizations of the lower middle classes and *lumpenproletariat* in face of the contradictions and crises of capitalism.

Appropriating Freudian theory and Fromm's studies of authority, Horkheimer suggested that fascism was a response to the breakdown of external and internal controls. His analysis depended on three intertwined moments. Firstly, following Freud, the child was seen as modeling his/her (but mostly *his*) superego on the basis of internalization of the father's superego. This was by and large an unconscious process. Thus values and legacies of earlier generations endured long after the demise of the political economic factors that first shaped these values. In earlier periods, the economic and political power of the father led to his idealization and obedience to his dictates. But in the modern era, his economic power waned in face of the growth of large scale economic enterprises subject to business cycles. The enormous economic dislocations of the 20's and 30s created social chaos. The breakdown of the capitalist system led to calls for a stable society. At the same time, a myriad of socialization agencies staffed by "experts" further undermined his authority. This led to an irrational need for a powerful benevolent authority in face of the enfeeblement of the actual father in confronting business cycles, large scale enterprises etc.⁶ Fascism defended the authoritarian family structure -- as the father became ever more powerless in work- he found empowerment as the dominant husband-father and soon, as a member of the Nazi party. The compensatory domination left the ego weakened and prone to sadomasochism. Nazism provided both internal and external order.

⁶ While most of the support for Fascism came from petit bourgeois elements, a number of proletarians, unemployed or disempowered by the new Taylorization of work, and/or as Reich (1933) argued, having internalized bourgeois values, supported the Fascists.

Many observers had noted the importance of obedience to authority in German cultural tradition, for example its esteem for the military. The need for authority (benevolent father) was exacerbated after WWI. The humiliation of defeat prompted rage toward the enemies from within and without. Large segments of society, especially the lower middle classes, were especially susceptible to Hitler's articulations of the "aggrieved little big man." Hitler was both the powerful "King Kong and (everyman) the corner barber." One of us, but better. He elegantly and emotionally expressed the rage and humiliation his followers felt, he promised greatness and the realization of "Germaness." (Many of his early supporters were like he, veterans).⁷ Insofar as Hitler embodied their values as an idealized exemplar of power, rage and benevolent redemption, the followers felt a narcissistic attachment to the leader, an identification through idealization. He, like they, believed that they had been first sold out by "traitors" from within and were subsequently pushed around by capitalist economic forces and loathsome Jews. Hitler would establish order and punish the culprits. Further, the cosmopolitan, sophisticated urban culture of Weimar, erotic, decadent and Jewish, insulted and affronted the traditional values of the lower middle classes. The Nazis promised to restore decency. Membership in such groups provided community, a sense of empowerment and enhanced self esteem. The follower was clearly superior to the despicable Other. The Jew, typically a conniving merchant or professional, often more affluent, educated and sophisticated, appearing as the face of domination, became an easy target and rallying cry.

Nazis were the first to use the new forms of mass media, radio and film to mobilize and sustain support for their policies. They would master the political spectacles that would begin with emotion laden late night rituals and continue in daily radio broadcasts. They intuitively understood the psychodynamics of their followers, mastered the role of drama and ritual to secure mass conversions. Membership in the party and the "new fatherland" provided solidarity, meaning and identity.⁸ They clearly understood how the denigration of the Jew, affirmed the identity and values of a group, intensified

⁷ Much of what is being said about the Nazis was also true of Mussolini's fascists, but Italy had been a winner in WWI.

⁸ While not central to our argument, at this point, Durkheim's understanding of the emotional aspects of rituals illuminates the allure of fascism far more than does the Marxian analysis of ideologies as mistaken explanations.

social bonds and enhanced collective self esteem. Hitler was a genius at intuiting and expressing the humiliations and *resentment* of the petit bourgeoisie, locating the scapegoats and promising vindication. While Machiavelli would first coach the manipulation of appearances, the Nazis were brilliant pioneers of a political propaganda and aesthetic of violence that tapped the depth of the psyche to denigrate the Other, mobilize the masses and suppress dissent.

The classical analyses of the psychosocial lure of Fascism focused on sexual repression (Reich), authoritarianism (Adorno) or phallic aggression (Bataille). Fromm, who first introduced Freud to the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory was at odds with their uncritical acceptance of Freud's drive theory.⁹ He rejected Freud's views of an ahistorical human nature and biological theory of desire. They rejected his revisionism and embraced a more orthodox psychoanalysis. This, among other things, led to their split. Fromm argued that motives as well as character were historical constructions. Fromm's insights, when located in contemporary discourses of identity politics, remains a source of illumination. The classical psychoanalytic that provide the Frankfurt School with profound insights can be considered particular instantiations of a more general problematic, securing social ties to persons and groups, that provide channels of work and play that provide a meaningful identity, grant a sense of dignity and egalitarian relationships. It is to this problematic Fromm speaks.

From Authority to Identity

Identity can be seen as a proclaimed narrative distinctive of a group. It is a reflexive story about a distinctive people, who they are, a historical (mythological) account of their origins, typically a Golden Age and utopian hopes of restoration. An identity consists of various discursive texts both from within and without that define a group and/or the images by which it represents itself to itself and to others. It is a reference point and standard of evaluation. Socialization and participation in groups provides members with an identity, sources of recognition, explanations of reality and standards of evaluation. But insofar as the constructions of identity are situated within hierarchies of power, identity constructions serve to sustain

⁹ Bronner (1994) has recently noted personal conflicts between Fromm and Horkheimer that led to Fromm's leaving the Frankfurt School and the subsequent resentment at his (Fromm) success and recognition as a public intellectual.

class domination. The ideological construction of identities, self understandings and social relationships may and typically do serve to reproduce the social order. Otherwise said, identity serves hegemonic features. Thus identity, as a locus of subjectivity is a contested realm. In any given society, competing powers, operating from a variety of often diffuse vantage points attempt to secure and maintain power. But they must secure the *willing assent of the dominated*. The ability to define identities is an intrinsic moment of domination. But with Gramsci, contra Foucault, hegemonic processes are dialectical and must always face contestations. To paraphrase Pareto, modern history is a graveyard strewn with the relics of eternal "totalitarian" states that have crumbled in face of collective refusals -- what Marcuse might have called the great "fuck you".

The recent concerns with identity politics emerged with the social changes of the 60s in which heretofore marginalized subaltern groups, post colonials, women, gays, people of color, youth, etc., began to claim power, not only political power, but the right to define themselves and give voice to their collective identity, to understand their past and formulate a destiny. Identity politics, typically understood as attempts to valorize an identity, secure recognition and voice notwithstanding constructions of Otherness imposed by dominant groups. Insofar as the cultural discourses are typically internalized by the subaltern groups and mute their voice, they are likely to be powerless and thus willingly but unwittingly sustain power relationships. Further, identities imposed by those with the power are mystified. Identity politics then seeks to discern and reject the hegemonic impositions by the Other to give agency and voice, recognition and dignity.

In these various perspectives, domination and power lie embedded within the various ideological discourses, linguistic codes and/or disciplinary practices that impose identities and in turn the subjective experiences of both the Self and the Other. In the advanced nations of the world, many of the political struggles of today are less concerned with what might be called emancipatory struggles such as abolition of slavery or suffrage that with legitimating the politics of lifestyles (Giddens 1992). Rather, for many groups the issues are less clearly economic or political, but are more likely concerns that a group define its own identity, social agendas and lifestyles.¹⁰ Thus such groups as women, gays, environmentalists, people of color, and the

¹⁰ There are many who would differ and simply note that marginalized groups are typically subject to lower wages, less job security, more hazardous conditions etc.

physically impaired are as much concerned with renegotiation of their identity as with specific bills and laws. Struggles over abortion or the environment for example are as much contestations over feminine identity or statements of concern with the world as debates over particular laws. It would at first seem as if contemporary identity politics was quite unrelated to issues of class and political economy. Identity politics has typically been concerned with progressive social movements. Given the class origins and current status of most members, agendas tend to be humanistic and progressive.

At the same time as a progressive view would valorize subjugated identities, the production of mass mediated consumer-spectator identities has flourished as mass mediated spectacles and carnivals universalize ludic consumption based identities. But while the various postmodern/post structural authors ignore political economy, these ludic identities are systematically constructed to secure class based power. For large numbers of blue collar and lower middle class workers, the migration of identity from work and politics to sports, media and the broad ranges of consumption serves insure the reproduction of class domination (Aronowitz 1992; Kellner 1992; Langman 1992). Such identities offer membership in dignity granting groups, status and empowerment within the group. These microspheres of agency seen in dress, cultural tastes, expertise in sports or fashion etc. are encapsulated and marginal to larger political questions. They foster indifference or an anti-politic. The transformations brought by a globalized capital and post Fordist production has attenuated the jobs that have allowed participation in consumption culture. Rural populations have become increasingly marginal to the global economies. There are again populations receptive to reactionary, fascist agendas that offer identity, meaning, and group ties for ever larger marginalized segments the population.

Fromm offered a historically grounded critical social psychology that yet serves as a foundation for analyzing the nature of identity. Thus he noted the changing nature of selfhood and desire. More specifically, he argued that the growth of capitalism shattered traditional social arrangements, attenuated social bonds, and challenged the identities of a stable feudal order. In the early 16th century, the urban classes felt buffeted by the changing nature of commerce, they were powerless in the face of the rich and powerful and challenged by the rabble from below. People had known who they were and this was based on relations and connections. This unfettering of the newly emergent individual now exposed to freedom was vulnerable to archaic fears of powerlessness and meaninglessness rooted in separation from the caretaker. There were three main

defenses against these anxieties, an authoritarian character structure, destructiveness, and conformity. This character structure was most typically found in the lower middle classes. Many would embrace Protestant religion that would feed upon and assuage their fears and direct their hatreds to the unbelievers. Protestantism would establish classes of saved and damned. Christians had long been taught that the Jews had killed Christ. Thus the sinners, infidels and Jews became objects of hate and as shall be noted, the denigrated Other that defined valorized identities.

For Fromm (1941) the rapid industrialization of the 19th century followed by political and economic crises of the 20th century would again upset the social order, shatter frameworks of meaning, dislodge people from their stable social anchors, attenuate communities, and problematize their identities. Fascism, like Protestantism, would now serve the psychological functions of anxiety reduction, group inclusion, offer explanations for adversity and promise to realize the superiority of *Germaness*. Besides Jews and foreigners -- there were now communists to blame and revile for the dislocations and humiliations of the people. Fromm's analysis of fascist identity, or other ideologies of hate, must also note the role of underlying desire. Identity is intimately intertwined with emotional experiences, but Fromm did not offer a theory of emotion and desire.

Desire Reconsidered

A long tradition, beginning with Darwin's theory of communications, has explored the nature of affect and emotion. The recent work of Tompkins, Ekman and Freisen, suggests an alternative to the drive theory by noting that humans are endowed with an inborn affect system that becomes subjected to social control. Affects can be seen as universal legacies of evolution. With symbolic capacities, affects become socially transformed into emotions that, as such, are subject to arbitrary codes of elicitation and social rules of expression (style and context). Some, but not all emotions enter awareness as feelings that are consciously felt by the person. Thus, society specifies what brings shame or pride, joy or sorrow, fear or security. Social norms regulate how emotions are expressed or repressed, combined or changed, and how people are expected to feel. The pursuit or avoidance of certain feelings becomes far more important than the gratification of drives. Otherwise said, subjectivity is not so much interpellated as it is impelled to seek/avoid certain experiences.

This perspective, like Fromm's, rejects the drive theory and is more compatible with recent psychoanalytic theories of attachments (object relations) and the development of the self (narcissism).¹¹ While somewhat better than that theory of sexuality, still remains a theory of drives. Yet his own work shows that people strive for self esteem through recognition by others, attachments to powerful others etc. Failures to secure same may often lead such reactions as shame, rage, or anxiety. These approaches suggest that early, proverbial stages of self development are based on relationships that provide or avoid certain emotional experiences rather than the seeking gratification of sexual or aggressive drives. Infants seek attachments, not gratifications. Thus for example Winnicott suggests that failures to provide "good enough mothering", secure attachments, typically overinvolvement or detached indifference, fosters development of a "false self" as a defense against psychic pain. Conversely, empathic recognition of selfhood becomes the basis of healthy self esteem.

By the third or fourth month, infants show the rudiments of the "feeling good" affects, interest, joy and pride, as well as the "feeling bad" affects, fear, disgust, anger and shame etc. By this time, the earliest foundations of self, what has been called a "core self", little more a dim proverbial awareness of self-other differentiation, has become a locus of affective experiences somehow different from the Other. His or her actions may lead to certain affective experiences. Slowly, as sense of intentionality emerges, the infant may learn that crying brings attention, smiles beget smiles. By the end of the second year, with rudiments of language we can now talk about self as reflected upon. At this point to return to our central concerns, we can now suggest that in early childhood, the young have learned some basic social scripts as to what brings pride and joy, shame and anger, sadness or disgust.

These approaches have important implications for a psychologically informed politics of identity. More specifically then, identity as a reflexive sense of self, oneness with others, and reflections of who the person is, can be seen as a point of intersection between memberships in groups that allocate identities and the individual personality whose normal development is based on the internalization of a variety of cultural and personal texts, nation, gender, class etc. While an identity is typically a composite of a variety of texts or

¹¹ Nathanson (1992), whose work draws on the pioneering formulations of Tompkins argues that much of self psychology still depends on Freudian assumptions of drive as motive. Kohut's notion of self depends on narcissistic libido that is independent of sexuality.

scripts, this does not mean that each segment of self, class, gender, age, lifestyle, exists in its own virtual reality, each aspect independent of the others. Rather, we can suggest that there are certain master identities that are not only most intrinsic to the self, but shape the nature of other aspects of self. More specifically, when citizen becomes such a master identity, it can influence gender, occupational choice, or even choices of friends.

Classical German Fascism

As has been argued, fascism, rooted in the 19th century, was a reaction to the strains of modernity and fears of socialism that threatened the status, values and identities of certain classes. Landowning classes, aristocratic and peasant, and traditional petit bourgeois artisans and merchants, together with lower echelon State officials, were joined together by nationalist mythologies to support various reactionary policies and "heroic" leaders who realized the collective will of the people. Often these ideologies used anti-capitalist rhetoric but there was no real critique of wage labor and private property. The promises of suppressing unionists and socialists led to support by many industrialists.

Contemporary expressions of Fascism, each case being somewhat distinct based on particular national traditions, become notable when they incorporate a central feature of German Fascism: the doctrines of racial superiority and denigration of the racially inferior. While all fascisms oppose the left, they do so on ideological grounds. Insofar as the exaltation of racial superiority was so central to German fascism, and often the basis model for certain contemporary fascist movements, we need examine its core precepts and its social roots. As we shall suggest, many "forms of fascism" are little more than groups united by hatred and perceived competition for jobs. German Fascism can be seen as the outcome of four factors, 1) cultural traditions and political legacies, 2) crises of legitimacy at political, economic, cultural and motivational levels, 3) contestations and appeals for political power and finally, 4) the variations of class based identities that have affinity for or resistance against certain political appeals. Let it again be noted that while the National Socialists were the largest party in 1933, only about a third of the voters supported them. Once in power, they used the power of the State, as well as paramilitary groups to maintain their power.

Legacies of the Past

As Marx noted, France had a political revolution, Germany had Hegel, a revolution in thought. Otherwise said, the legacy of the Enlightenment had different outcomes in Germany due in part to the relatively small size of the bourgeois class.¹² In Germany, the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia were relatively weak in comparison to the landed aristocracy. After the failed revolution of 1848 and the end of the possibilities of a liberal parliamentary system, the bourgeoisie aligned themselves with traditional land owning aristocratic elites who were nevertheless now participating in the market economy. Thus the impotent German bourgeoisie turned to the elevation of *Germaness*, a legacy of greatness. (So too would the Italians revive the glory of Rome while the Meiji restorationists enshrined the Emperor). While the Enlightenment would influence philosophy, science and sectors of administration, especially military science, rationality would remain encapsulated from the general society that was still mostly rural, traditional and in which quasi feudal relationships endured. However discrepant practice and ideology, the bourgeois revolutions of France and the US would at least proclaim freedom and equality.¹³ But the legacies of inherent Germanic superiority transmitted along blood lines, together with the spilling of blood in battle or ritual duel as an indication of manly valor, created the social conditions in which doctrines of racial superiority, the purity of blood, were easily accepted by the masses (Cf. Moore 1966). Even today German citizenship, the basis of national identity, depends far more on lineage than in most other societies (Cf. Brubaker 1992; Kristiva 1993) Further, as Anderson (1983) notes, racial doctrines are not so much aimed at foreign races or other nations as much as the repression of domestic groups. Given long standing European anti-semitism, in face of crises, Jews would become ideal scapegoats. By the end of the 19th century, anti-semitism could be found across the political spectrum.

Germany, like Italy and Japan, became a "modern" nation state somewhat later than most European countries, becoming a unified nation state only in 1872. The Junker classes and the professional

¹² For a detailed examination of the role of premodern factors shaping the movement to modernity, Barrington Moore's (1966). He argues that the relationships between the aristocracy, gentry, peasantry, and bourgeois class influence each other's later political outcomes.

¹³ But at the same time the US has had a long history of racism and anti-semitism. France has still yet to come to terms with its complicity with Germany in WWII.

military retained a great deal of political power. With an effective state bureaucracy, and the establishment of universal education, Herder's dreams of German nationalism, exalting Wilhelm and Bismarck, would take a decidedly militaristic slant, as did the Meiji restoration led by Samurai classes. (It was no accident that they modernized their military along Prussian lines). In both cases, parliamentary government was largely a fiction masking elite control. Thus it can be argued that precapitalist cultural values persisted longer in Germany than most other societies. These values of noble blood lines, military valor and the sanctity of land – e.g., glorification of the peasant, became central aspects of German identity and the nationalism that united its people into a political community.

Notwithstanding the embrace of the emancipatory agenda of Enlightenment, by intellectual elites such as Kant, Hegel, and Marx, German culture of the 19th century was far more infused with romanticism. This was the time and place where Nietzsche indicted the Enlightenment as a form of enslavement fostering *resentment*. This is not to suggest that Beethoven or Goethe fostered fascism, but the theme of the heroic individual passionately fighting the forces of bland rationality and leveling democracy was very popular. It is no accident that Beethoven would extol Napoleon, (in the third symphony) the natural tranquility of the countryside, (the sixth), moonlight (sonata) and ultimately proclaim joy (the 9th). Thus the aesthetic foundations of romanticism, together with the anti rationalism of Herder, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, would lay the groundwork for the perverted romanticism of fascism that extolled the virtues of the land and rural culture (Sternhell 1992).¹⁴

Crises

Habermas (1966) argued that crises of legitimacy of either the system (economic or rationality) or identity (motivation or legitimacy) occurred when there were failures to produce requisite outputs. But crises may be displaced from one system to another. Thus an economic crisis can and often does lead to a withdrawal of legitimacy and/or support for the political elites. Indeed, as Skocpol (1982) has argued, the fiscal costs of war so weakened the Bourbon and Tsarist

¹⁴ Again this is not to implicate any of them, indeed as elsewhere noted, Nietzsche would have deplored the massification of society by the fascists. While Nietzsche extolled the superman, Zarathustra went to the mountains - not to mass rallies.

governments, that revolution was inevitable. After WWI, the costs of the war and indeed the demands for reparations, together with the international crises of capital seriously undermined the ability of Weimar and in turn its legitimacy. There was a larger-than-average youth cohort entering the labor market at the same time as millions of veterans returned from military service while wartime industries were being shut down. In face of rising unemployment and deterioration of the economy, there was an upsurge of radical protests, left and right. In 1923, Hitler led a putsch against the government. It failed and he was put in prison. With economic recovery, there was a decline in political radicalism and the ranks of the extremist parties thinned. But soon in face of the Smoot Hawley tariffs and international crises of capital, Weimar would again be unable to cope. The rest is history. In 1933 Hitler became Fuhrer; in 1934, the enabling acts were passed.

Fascism, however, was not simply capitalism turned sour. It was an ideological reaction to capitalist culture and indeed to rationality itself. Thus for example, social ties, especially traditional relationships such as landlord-peasant, parent-child and husband-wife were transformed by the market economy. This transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* was one of the primary concerns of early sociology. Brooker (1992) saw fascism as an attempt to restore mechanical solidarity in the face of attenuated social bonds rent by the new forms of individualized selfhood (see below). Romanticism was an attempt to value the realization of self but at the same time do so outside the market place. Perhaps Weber's understanding of the downside of rationality, sterility and iron cages, was the clearest assessment of the new, secular social order and charismatic authority was the only way out of mundane routines.

At the same time the blossoming of new forms of cultural expressions in art (Blue Rider, Groz), music (Schoenberg, Berg) and theater (Brecht).¹⁵ In popular culture, there was a growing interest in the avant guard of American jazz, film and a quite risqué cabaret scene. But this was the culture of sophisticated Berlin that was shocking to the traditional sensibilities of Munich and Bavarian propriety. Fascism was both a repudiation of "decadence" and an alternative aesthetic.

¹⁵ Much of this postwar art was critical of bourgeois leadership, eg Brecht's critique of capitalist was a central theme. Similarly, Grosz caricatured the smug arrogance of the bourgeoisie and the nihilism of the military.

Habermas, in the tradition of the Frankfurt School, argued that economic crises can be displaced to aspects of motivation. In the language of the present analysis, economic, political or cultural crises can be displaced to the realms of self and identity. Crises or changes in the economy, State, or even culture, can be displaced to questions of motivation and identity and values in ways that elicit intense emotions. One of the most important consequences of modernity has been the emergence of the individualized self whose status and honor became ranked on the basis of meritorious accomplishment in work and achieved status. Otherwise said, in a society undergoing rapid changes, economic or political crises, assaults to an identity based on status become assaults to self esteem and dignity. In an agrarian society, the possibilities of downward mobility with the transition to market economies generally foster conservative to reactionary responses not only among the landed gentry, but small landowners who feared demise. To lose status is an insult and denigration of the self to which it would seem the self is responsible.

As a result, one of the major consequences of modernity has been anxiety over status which has now become an indication of the value of the self. For Weber this would inspire work, for Lipset, political extremism. The emotional reaction is then shame which in turn can foster envy or rage. Rapid downward mobility can bring shame, anxiety and/or anger to those seen as blameworthy.¹⁶ Conversely, upward mobility may bring pride, joy and esteem, but often anxiety about fitting in new class positions. But what is crucial for our argument is that reactions to crises are mediated by a class based identity in which insults to that sense of self evoke powerful emotions. If we look at modernity, the politics of hate and despair are far more typical than of love and hope. Further, individualism is based on separation from others and in turn longings for attachments and community now repressed (Slater 1972). As such, there are strong predispositions to both join together with others, and at the same time, resent those who seem to be part of cohesive communities that have the intense social bonds. Historically these have ranged from the Catholic church vilified by Protestants, communists and more recently, bohemian communities. These two impulses can be merged through membership in groups that oppose groups.

¹⁶ It is no accident that most conservative to reactionary politics are expressions of rage, anger, hate and indignation at possibilities of democratic change, cultural experimentation, alternative life styles etc.

What this analysis suggest is that one of the major themes of selfhood, surely from the romanticism of the early 19th century to the postmodernity of today, is gaining or maintaining a gratifying identity that incorporates one into a valued group that gives one recognition, meaning and a sense of empowerment. In this way, at the most basic level, there are few differences between a church, a gang, a high school or a social movement. All can be seen as a way of "being somebody" (Wexler 1992). This is one of the central problematics in modern society.

From what has been said, the historical legacies of Germany, or at least the kingdoms that would become Germany, facing a variety of short term crises and long term social changes had serious implications for personal identity. But these implications would vary by class position which in turn has a number of psycho-social consequences. Language, cognitive ability, interpersonal styles, cultural capital, talents and abilities, all contribute to one's identity or what might be called "class character" (Cf Wexler 1992). We can note how the psychosocial factors that become part of one's identity can be seen as filters which channel the individual's perceptions and act as fault lines that facilitate certain actions. This enables us to understand the differential consequences that social crises have for various strata. Further, these class based variations dispose certain truth claims that lead to the support of reactionary as well as progressive social movements.

The class based social psychological qualities that create the foundations for a sense of self become intertwined with people's actual job activities in the market. But this shows considerable variation. As Marx so elegantly argued, alienated labor produced an alienated self. As Bloch put it, being an employee does little for the mind or progressive politics. On the other hand, certain artisans, especially self employed, were more likely to identify with their work and achieve pride in doing a good job. (At the same time, they may fear displacement by mechanization). Similarly, shopkeepers could find a sense of self and self worth in the sale and distribution of goods, especially since the traditional shopkeeper was dependent on personal reputation to maintain his (her) customers. Just as Weber suggested that there were elective affinities between religion and work, there are affinities between one's work, one's identity, and political orientations. This is not necessarily based on economic factors but the kind of identity that comes from work experience.

What is being suggested is that the nature of one's identity becomes intimately involved with various feelings. Therefore, people are predisposed toward political or economic policies that they perceive will sustain their identities and self esteem as well as provide an income. This often takes the form of a reactionary politics of identity, support for programs and policies that would halt social change and preserve certain identities after the conditions of their emergence has long passed. What the left has usually failed to understand is that while people generally want a decent standard of living, they also need confirmation of self and meaning. Thus nationalism, a concern with life, death and meaning, would have broad based appeals (Anderson 1983). In face of crises, certain classes will gravitate to intense nationalisms that sacralize the nation and deify its heroic leaders. (NB! crises are often social constructions that leaders create and manipulate to serve their interests. Thus at various times Cuba, Mexico, Grenada, Panama, Nicaragua, Iran, Iraq and Libya have been daggers pointed at the heart of America, or at least as in the case of Grenada, shovels).

Contesting Power

In certain ways, the rise of fascism can be seen as a watershed of electoral politics. Fascists, many of whom were embittered artists, had flair for aesthetics. They were the pioneers of the modern political spectacle, emotion laden extravaganzas were aimed not at rationality but passion and feelings. Fascist politics was a direct attack on the Enlightenment and its sterile legacy of reason. The growth of fascism can be seen as ushering a new dimension into electoral politics, the contesting for subjectivity. Traditional electoral promises might have included lower taxes, more benefits and honest leaders. At times appeals might be based on class interests, reason and logic. Fascism, however, offered not just programs and promises, but affirmations of identities, individual and national, now under assault. It expressed the fear and rage that were becoming more intense.¹⁷

Fascism offered more than just new leaders and laws. It tapped nationalist sentiments and promised restoration of national pride and dignity, it forged a sense of belonging to nation and inclusion in the national grouping in turn promised restoration of esteem of the

¹⁷ At the 1992 Republican convention, Pat Buchanan was given time to vent his diatribes against almost everyone. Soon the pundits joked, "it sounded better in the original German".

denigrated identities of particular classes or groups. (Both Hitler and Mussolini had strong support among veterans). It had powerful rituals and inspiring symbols that would create seemingly cohesive communities. The left was generally unable to compete with the fascists. Perhaps the most important factor was the extent to which the left was fragmented. Socialists, social democrats and communists, as well as anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, could never agree on tactics and goals. This often led to rifts and fragmentations -- e.g. Luxemburg and the Spartacists. Further, and while there were many exceptions, the leaders and followers were often recruited from different classes. Hitler, came from the same kind of lower middle class background as did many of his followers.

Further, most socialist and communist leaders were unable to realize it, but the followers more often than not did not share the passions and convictions of the leadership. Not by accident was Michels study of oligarchy based on the SPD. Thus while leadership may want a just society with generous benefits and lofty goals, followers were often happy with just a pay raise, benefits or shorter hours. As the 19th century ended, the increasing wages of workers tempered revolutionary sentiments. Some cynics suggest that when Bismarck established social security, it was a cheap and effective defence against radicalism. While the socialists and communists held rallies and had their symbols, their messages appealed primarily to segments of workers and avant guard intellectuals. Otherwise said, identities based on the sacralized nation were more alluring than being members of the international working class.

The magic of fascism was to package the conservative reactionary agendas in such a way as to mobilize mass support. In its early stages, fascism competed with other political or cultural options that dialectically engaged the self. Once dominant however, it would eliminate the possibilities of contestation and possibilities for alternative identities -- especially resistance movements. Thus fascism can be seen as a political agenda that gained power by promising glorious identity.

Nationalism: Something for Everyone

The 19th century can be seen as a time when two ideologies engaged in bitter contest. With industrialization and the growth of an urban proletariat, we saw the critique of capitalism. Socialism promised to unite the workers into a self conscious universal class that would

overcome domination and move from necessity to freedom. But the bourgeoisie, committed to the Enlightenment, often as a means of contesting Absolutism, seeking alliances with other classes, embraced nationalism as a justification for their authority claims. (It was also necessary to enfranchise large masses for conscripted armies loyal to elite causes.) In the 19th century such nationalisms typically took a progressive form promising the Nation would be the political vehicle for the self determination of a people that would allow realization of their unique economic and cultural destiny (Alter, 1992) In the face of the erosion of traditional communities it created new forms of community that gave people a valorized identity, the citizen who was politically equal to all others. Nationalism was not simply a response to social fragmentation and secularism, but a means of mitigating class antagonisms by incorporating the masses into the nation. Much to the chagrin of Marxists, the proletariat more often identified with the causes of the bourgeoisie than the international proletariat. (Support or opposition to WWI split the German left and made difficult united opposition to fascism.) As bourgeois nations achieved power and status, other elites, often not committed to bourgeois democracy claimed power. Thus we see the rise of reactionary, integral nationalisms such as Germany and Japan that were created by landowning and/or military elites hostile to the emancipatory promises of the Enlightenment. Notwithstanding, both nationalisms provided imaginary community, dignity and meaning (Anderson 1983).

The political failures of the Weimar parliament's inability to cope with the reparations, the Depression, inflation and inability to pay pensions destroyed its credibility and legitimacy creating spaces for alternative political agendas. Fascism, as a form of reactionary nationalism, promised to restore dignified identities, and meanings. But let it be clearly noted, fascist nationalisms were not simply responses to economic decline, they were also cultural reactions to the shallowness of capitalist culture without heroic virtue. Its rational logic lacked passion, its fragmented social relations isolated people from each other. But perhaps most of all, it could not provide the masses with dignity, honor and meaning. Nationalism is typically a top down phenomenon through which the elites secure their hegemony. Thus nationalism will reflect the values of its elites who will typically express self interest as national causes or the general good. Thus it was not by accident that nationalism spread throughout the world in the 18th century, systematically encouraged by elites needing to sustain their legitimacy and gain the mass armies of conscripts now needed in the industrial wars of megadeaths. Once established however, the expressions of nationalism often change

depending on such things as international events or changes in domestic political power. Thus we should understand fascism in general, and National Socialism in particular used nationalism and national symbols, "populists" in Gramsci's terms, to rally support and legitimacy.

Given the historical legacies of the 19th century, the crises of the early 20th century, and the failure of leftist parties to create united fronts, the success of fascism was to a large extent facilitated by its psychological allure to large segments of the population. More specifically, the various social changes of modernity undermined traditional forms of identity. Given the various crises of culture, politics and the economy, there were a variety of assaults to the self, national humiliations and challenges to traditional identities. Thus fascism would provide a number of appeals to different stratum, these differences obscured by nationalist appeals that cut across and obscured class lines.

Perhaps the singular event was the humiliation of defeat by the French and British. As Hitler well understood, the Armistice agreements were an affront and the basis of rage. As Scheff (1994) has shown, the humiliation rage cycle, whether between individuals or nations, makes conciliation all but impossible. While for example boundaries, tariffs and navigation rights can be negotiated, denigrations of one's identity, assaults on self esteem and dignity which engender narcissistic rage are not amenable to compromise and negotiation. Thus regardless of class position, those who identified with nationalist causes felt shame and rage in face of the demands for reparations and powerlessness of the nation to control its destiny. Otherwise said, fascism sustained or provided identities that had been under assault, gave a sense of dignity and esteem to members of the nation and a sense of empowerment.

Hamilton argues that for intellectuals especially fascism turned apparent anarchy into order. In some sense, fascism was able to recover more traditional roles for the individual in society. Hamilton says, "The complacency of the despised hard-working bourgeois was accompanied by a threat which struck the intelligentsia as equally distasteful and far more frightening - the threat of anonymity, due to the speed at which industry and mechanization were advancing and the progressive rise of masses who could at least participate in the administration of a world in which they had been previously voiceless. It appeared that the role of the individual was over: he was either enslaved by the more powerful machine or was engulfed in

mass society." Fascism offered a solution to this anonymity for it "conciliated the cult of the hero with a mass movement." Fascism combined the idea of discipline with the prospect of the "new man," the elite of heroic supermen, "artist-tyrants" of Nietzsche's dreams. While Fascism had appeals to many segments of the society, it had the greatest support from the lower middle class which felt its social status threatened, they feared collapse of traditional institutions, family, religion and nation that were scorned by Marxism. "Eternal values" - particularly the family and nation - became the object of a cult guaranteeing a new world that was like the old (or at least its mythical representation).

I Hate, therefore I am

Fromm's rejection of classical psychoanalysis proved to be remarkably prescient in view of more current trends in psychoanalysis and recent concerns with identity politics¹⁸. But these concerns have generally been moments of progressive critiques of domination that would celebrate difference and deconstruct the denigrated identities of subalterns. But as has been argued, long before current debates, Fromm offered a critical social psychology that located identity at the intersection of political economy, ideology and depth psychology. Further, this analysis was based on the appeals of a reactionary agenda, how Fascism provided meaningful identities to certain class elements and central to this identity was its dependence on a hated other. As Sartre said of the anti-Semite, or Fanon of the colonist, if the despised Other did not exist, s/he would have to invent him/her.

Fromm noted that identity is derived from the individuals intense need for a "frame of orientation". This desire for an "object of 'ultimate concern' (Tillich)" is based on the existential split existing in the self. In order to relieve the frustration of this split, Fromm suggests that identity is influenced by people's suggestibility in being influenced by charismatic leaders - social, political and religious. The need for an object of devotion can be answered by the idolatry of destructive idols. Fascism, as a case in point, a response to the crisis of capital, rooted in 19th critiques of the Enlightenment, provided an identity based on the provision of a "frame of orientation" articulated by a powerful charismatic leader. Nazi rallies, or even the constant barrage

¹⁸ While the concerns with identity are quite salient, various post modern theories tend to be intellectually wanting and politically vacuous.

of its monopolization of the means of communication had become an instrument of mass conversion-and such conversion result in "true believers".

Fascism, as an ideological position that explained reality, and an identity granting community, thus gave its followers a sense of security in an insecure world. Fromm had noted the importance of belonging to groups, the need for relatedness and attachments to self (narcissism) as means of gaining security. The need for relatedness can be satisfied by dependence, sadism, masochism, destructiveness, and narcissism; But further, in his analyses of malignant aggression and necrophilia, hatred to another, expressing violent aggression can provide a sense of agency and provide security. By destroying the Other the self is saved from insecurity because there is no one to fear, in the destruction of the Other, especially a powerful Other, the rich Jew, the strong Black, one finds a sense of empowerment. Further, when the Other is immoral or a betrayer of one's culture or identity, intense violence and destruction take on a redemptive quality that restores virtue. Thus Fascism provided membership in an exalted group; valorizing the self, obeying the father and obliterating the evil Other gave profound emotional satisfactions. Appadurai (1996) has recently noted a similar phenomenon, when two or more groups are similar, the Other is seen as an imposter, a betrayer of a valorized identity. As such s/he must be brutally destroyed. Thus the German saw the acculturated Jew as an imposter who was really different, the Serb the Muslim, the Hutu the Tutsis and in India, the Hindu the Moslem.

The individual also needs to establish an identity that provides a sense of cohesion (Kohut 1973). This can be achieved by focusing identity into a singular passion such as, power, destruction or hate. Further, the awareness of self requires the individual to have an effect on or accomplish something. A feeling of powerlessness activates a desire to overcome the feeling of inferiority when one has little effect on others which then leads the self to act aggressively in order to create the desired effect of having control or power over others. Sadism and destructiveness thus empower the self.

The self also desires stimulation/excitation and consequently this can be satisfied in many ways: greed, sadism, destructiveness, narcissism, etc. The more intense the stimulation, the longer it exists within the self and the more compelled the self is to continue manipulating it to satisfy the desire. Fromm notes that it is "easier for the self to get excited by anger, rage, cruelty, or the passion to destroy than by love and productive and active interest. People can also produce

them(stimuli) in their own minds by finding reasons to hate, to destroy, and to control others. The notion of identity, as an expression of character, is crucial for the development of malignant aggression. The aggressive impulse is an inherent quality existing within the individual's character - formed by social circumstances - and acting upon whenever a situation arises that allows for its expression.

It should be noted that Fromm suggests that the conditions of modernity foster feelings of alienation, inferiority, meaninglessness and powerlessness. But in "normal" times, people typically find ways to secure frameworks of understanding and connections to groups that assuage these feelings. But when there are major social crises, typically economic, political or cultural insults, some people will preserve or accept the identities of hate spewed by reactionary charismatics.

Fascism Redux

Fascism seems to have re-emerged, or at least gained visibility in most of the industrial countries of Europe, the US and in many nations of the former Soviet Union. Fascist political parties have shown renewed strength. In Italy, Berlusconi, a neo-fascist, forged a ruling coalition to become prime minister (But Italian governments never last long). Le Pen's National Front recently got 14% of the vote in France. Zhirinovsky's Democratic Front was the second place power in Russia - a country that possesses nuclear weapons. In England, 1/3 of the population demands deportation of all foreigners and the BNP has only one issue, throw the foreigners out. In Austria, Belgium and Germany, neo-fascists are gaining in power. While the electoral system of the US does not allow proportional representation, various political realignments, and social movements reflect if not growing, more visible reactionary sympathies. The Perotista movement indicates that about 1/5 of American voters are willing to follow an authoritarian demagogue. At the same time, David Duke and Patrick Buchanan received strong support in 92 and Buchanan again in 96. Ollie North won the Republican nomination for the senate. Their message is however, largely cultural and exclusionary. By and large, they support some combination of conservative Christianity, racism and crude nationalism. Finally, as these reactionary political movements emerge, there are also variety of more or less autonomous groups of young skinheads, neo-nazis and racist adolescents. For theoretical purposes, fascism can be seen as the reactionary side of contemporary identity politics with three ideal typical forms: political, cultural and simulated.

A. Political Fascism

Fascism, while rooted in cultural traditions and intellectual legacies, emerged from the chaos and despair of the post WWI crises. Today, the economies of the industrial world are again in a state of transition and chronic low level crisis. In the current US we have high rates of employment and declining standards of living. The reasons are well known, the movement of manufacturing to the third world, computerization and automation, expansion of low wage service jobs (sales, food service, tourism), global markets and information transfers. In the 80's, the policies of Reagan, Thatcher, Kohl and Mitterand (supposedly a socialist), enabled a small group of entrepreneurs to profit from financial speculation while large numbers of workers lost jobs and in some cases, the new entrants, never found jobs. While this transformation is well known to most economists and social scientists, especially those in policy positions, the primary impact has been on blue collar factory workers and small business owners. In most European countries, the interventionist State has largely cushioned the adversity of joblessness, but large numbers remain unemployed.

To be unemployed is to assume a denigrated identity, feel shame and humiliation which then triggers compensatory rage and anger.¹⁹ It becomes much simpler to demonize others and blame them for adversity than to either consider oneself inadequate or to understand the invisible global economic forces. Not only is the Other seen stealing jobs, but representative of an inferior culture prone to crime, licentious behavior and bizarre rituals. Demonization of the Other then becomes a compensatory strategy to salvage self esteem. If I lost (don't have) a job, or work a McJob, and now have limited participation in the consumer economy, I am at least a better person than the despicable Other. As the title of this paper suggests, "I hate, therefore I am", and at minimum, I am better than the denigrated other who is markedly inferior.

During the long period of postwar growth, most of the West European countries experienced various shortages of workers and thus encouraged foreign immigration. While some jobs were for

¹⁹ Fascism per se was not only a product of modernity, but note that in many developing countries, with unemployment rates of 30% or more, fascism does emerge. Consider Latin American fascism, Peronismo. Argentina was perhaps the most Europeanized and developed county in South America (Germani 1978). While harsh and brutal military dictatorships have been frequent, Peron fashioned a popular mobilization in much the same way as Hitler or Mussolini. He however was

skilled factory workers, most were lower echelon semi-skilled or domestic service. (Immigrant domestic workers were a long tradition.) Many immigrated to countries with greater opportunity. But with the economic transformation and stagnation, the once needed workers are seen as threats and enemies. Thus a common theme for many of the neo-fascists is throw the "devils" out. The devils of course are Indians, Pakistanis and Carribeans in Britain, Turks in Germany, Algerians in France, Albanians in Italy etc. In the past few years, physical attacks on foreign born workers had increased. In this way one of the common themes of neo-fascism becomes exaltation of the nation and the removal of the foreign and inferior Others. Much the same can be said in the US where illegal immigration, typically Mexican or Asian is seen as the cause of economic distress, high taxes and crime. (With the exception of Florida and California, this has not yet reached the level of hysterical intensity.)

While each nation has its own legacies and traditions, most of the European countries had their own indigenous fascist party. Thus in each case the salient issues may vary. In Finland, fascism was a response to fears of Russia, in Spain the Flagellants ultimately defended of the Church, in Romania the Orthodox Church and in current Italy, the Fascists filled a void when the total corruption of the Socialist Party and Christian Democrats was exposed. In every case however, fascism exploits the insults to ones identity when economic stagnation and unemployment, can be blamed on foreigners. It offers a political agenda replete with goals, programs and administrative cadres, especially at the ministerial level. With authoritarian control of the society, order would be restored, the right things would be done, the nation would be purified all would prosper.

In the Eastern European countries, the collapse of the command economies has had disastrous consequences. The standards of living have fallen for most of the people while small numbers of entrepreneurs, sometimes former Communists, have been making fortunes. Western goods are widely available, but few can afford them. (Whereas under communism things were cheap but not available). Further, and a grim reminder of the past, large numbers of Russian soldiers are returning to a society without jobs or living quarters. Many of the large industrial plants have either closed or greatly reduced workers. Agricultural production has fallen to levels of the early 60's. In just a short time, Russia moved from being a superpower to a basket case. This loss of international prestige, coupled with the widespread deterioration in living standards and hyper inflation would prove fertile soil for fascist demagoguery. Once

again the emergence of fascism is more complex than just a response to unemployment. The key elements include the humiliation and anger that accrue when the self is denigrated. The inferiority of Russian goods in face of the influx from the West, the rampant crime and violence lead to clamor for the restoration of a dignified national identity.

Enter Zhirinovksy. The chilling thought is that he is today doing far better than Hitler did in 1930. Even more chilling is the extent to which many of the same conditions of Weimar are now present in Russia. His appeals to restore the glory of Mother Russia and the Orthodox Church, understood as the restoration of a dignified identity now denigrated, has a familiar sound. Further the legacy of Christianity in Russia, now being resurrected, includes a tradition of virulent anti-semitism and pogroms. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were created by the Tsar. Once again the Jew is the repository of evil, the denigration of the Other becomes a dignity granting identity.

B. Cultural Fascism

As was noted above, despite the fears of many leftists, the study of American character and culture, suggests that political fascism is unlikely. There did not exist a titled landed aristocracy, a militarist tradition nor support for a powerful state. The US is unique in that conservatives deplore the State. The long standing individualism, distrust of authority and deeply entrenched commitment to the Enlightenment are unlikely to wane. This is not to deny the one time power of the Klan and the relative growth of neo-fascist and neo-nazi groups. But nevertheless, such groups as White Aryan Resistance, Identity Church and Liberty Lobby appeal to very few people. A far greater concern is cultural fascism. While such groups would ban many books, films and television programs, they do not constitute a genuine fascist movement. Their appeals are more often based on religious convictions than appeals to nationalism. While they may become part of coalitions, as they have in the Republican party, they lack the votes and power to impose their agenda and achieve significant power. Nevertheless, the power of what is called the Christian right can be seen as a form of intolerant reactionary identity politics.

There are two major segments of cultural fascism, the neo-cons and the Christian right. While they represent different classes and have different constituencies, they often forge alliances of convenience. The essential feature of cultural fascism is its dogmatic intolerance to

critical, progressive ideas and lifestyles. While perhaps more genteel than the SS, and hardly likely to draw hundreds of thousands to nighttime rallies, they have a number of similarities and communalities with classical political fascism. Many of their agendas, patriarchy, (especially the pro-life movement), anti-gay, defense of traditional family, often justified by traditional religion, opposition to avant garde art, especially that which may reveal genitals, repeat many of the complaints of the Nazi's.

Cultural fascists are less concerned with economic power but rather attempt to use political power to sustain a rearguard action against the social and cultural changes that would erode their identities. (That their involvements in these causes often brings a degree of recognition and a decent income should be noted.) What is especially frightening is that certain segments of the intelligentsia embrace cultural fascism and universities and think tanks have become involved in bitter disputes over social policy and "political correctness" (Cf Aronowitz, 1993). Sad to say, the majority of the people care little if college students read Derrida, bell hooks or even Marx. The real battles that are going on concern abortion, gay rights, prayer in the schools, and what may be especially dangerous, the success of the Christian right in elections to control school boards. They clearly understand the importance of control of schools and curriculum in the contestations for identities that secure hegemony. The emergence of this Christian right must first consider its roots in cultural traditions. More specifically, America was colonized by religious extremists. While most other European countries became secularized, religion has had more tenacity in America. This is in part the "city on the hill" legacy, America was picked by God to shine as a beacon. While few would put it so crudely, (save perhaps Ronald Reagan or Pat Robertson), America has its civil religion that while non-denominational, gives the nation a theological justification. From victory in war, to prosperity to the fall of communism, God seems to be on the side of America, surely S/He sustains the currency. Further, and one of the reasons religion has such power, is that given the diversity of the population, far more heterogeneity than European nations, religion has long provided ideology, group membership and dignified identity. In a pluralistic society, this anchoring of identities in churches has remained important. Few politicians could win a race for dogcatcher if they publicly proclaimed atheism- a tell tale sign of immorality.

While a number of factors yet secure religious based identities, there have at the same time been a number of social forces eroding at least the more conservative religions. These would include greater levels of

education, more women in the labor force, pro-choice, feminist and gay pride movements skilled in the use of courts etc. Further, and one can easily see why media would be such an anathema, the mass media, sound, film and television, catering to the tastes of the bulk of the audiences, do have sex, nudity, homosexuality etc. Thus we can now understand the seeming power of the Christian right. In the past 25 years or so, there have been major demographic shifts and the insularity of conservative religions has waned. While once largely found in more rural small towns, many industries have come to these towns, and at the same time, many of the dwellers have moved to large cities and/or their suburbs. Further, since the late 50's when rock n'roll captured the nation, mass media has eroded the insularity of rural life in general and has been experienced as an attack and affront to traditional identities based on religious ideologies and church membership. Much as Bavaria was offended by Berlin, Tupelo Mississippi is offended by Hollywood and New York. The Christian right well understands that the social and cultural changes that have been taking place since before the Scopes trial are systematically eroding the ideological basis for an identity based on traditional (conservative) religions. Thus the various struggles to defend patriarchy, exclude homosexuals, censor textbooks, as struggles to maintain identities' takes a particularly virulent tone. There can be little compromise over these various referendums over selfhood and identity.

C. Simulated Fascism

Finally, given a variety of changes that impact youth, together with the diversity of youth subcultures, fascism can become an identity that provides a cohesive group, meaning, empowerment and a sense of dignity. But this "fascism" is not so much an alternative to the Enlightenment based on exaltation of the nation and its heroic leader. Rather one feature of German fascism, racism/anti semitism, becomes the defining feature. To understand these movements, we must look at two social transformations described above. At the same time, there has been a general migration of self from institutional roles and networks to lifestyles and personal experiences. These two trends stand as the historical context in which contemporary youth fashion their identities.

The global transformations of work have had serious consequences for blue collar youth. Whereas for most young men, after high school there had been the possibility of getting a relatively well paying job, marriage and eventually a small house. That was then and this is now. There are far fewer jobs for such youth today. Factory jobs

have disappeared or been deskilled. While some plumbers or tool and die makers (with computer skills) may still realize what had been the blue collar dream, today, many are far more likely to find what are called McJobs. These will include fast food, retail sales, semi-skilled labor, security guards etc. More often than not, such jobs pay no more than a few dollars above the minimum wage, are without benefits, security or a future. Many have commented on this end of the American dream, falling from grace and saying good bye to Horatio Alger. A growing number of young people are remaining home with parents unable to afford rents or mortgages. As the newspapers remind us, this generation will probably not live as well as their parents.

In the same period, the growth of mass media and consumerism has had a great deal of influence on youth at those very times when the establishment of identity becomes so crucial. The emergence of various youth cultures, typically centered around high schools, serves to differentiate youth by class, lifestyle and participation in diverse segments of popular culture. These youth groups are essential for providing identities, meaning and sense of self esteem. Accordingly, given class, ethnic and life style variations, at the typical high school can be found the academically oriented (sometimes nerds, sometimes bohemian), jocks and social climbers, druggies, punks, bikers, surfers, computer nerds, etc. Further, some youth are likely to gravitate specific ethnic expressions such as gangsta, salsa, or wiggers. In most cases, these various subcultures are further integrated by shared tastes in popular culture and modes of consumption. Thus the jocks are likely to watch football and wear clothes advertising shoes. The computer nerds are likely to be trekkies and buy CD ROM games like Doom and Myst (Dungeons and Dragons is now passe). Thus we can see that consumption has now become a means of establishing identity and incorporation into youth groups. But these various consumption based identities, based on media images and advertising, can be considered simulations.

These two trends, declining job opportunities and the migration of identity into realms of consumption have however, an ominous side. The sense of despair about the future is expressed in the fashions and ornamentation of punks and grunge. While punk has its roots in the English working class, the similarity of conditions meant it would be well received by American youth. But while punks that like heavy metal may be considered an expression of despair, we have also seen the emergence of various skinhead and neo-nazi youth.

The various skinhead groups are most likely recruited from blue collar backgrounds. In many ways these youths are among the most marginalized. They have been excluded not only from the traditional careers available to the working classes, but are little able to participate in the ever more expensive consumer culture. Such groups seize upon race as a status conferring attribute of self based of denigration of Others. The Other is once again the basis of personal malaise. H/she is the reason there are few jobs and even fewer that pay well. The racial Other is either the competitor for the job or living well by dubious means, criminal or welfare.

These would be Nazi's tend to identify primarily with the racist anti-semitic aspects of the Nazis. The skinhead/nazi gives us the clearest portrait of the affective nature of identity and need to define self through differentiation and denigration of the Other. Just as Durkheim found the essence of religion in totemism, the essence of fascism as an identity can be seen in the skinheads. This is clearly a simulation of the realities of fascism, devoid of its sacralization of the nation and support for the authoritarian state. But in this case, the simulation clarifies reality. Hatred of the Other becomes the basis of identity. Violence, real or imagined, becomes a solidarity ritual and racist or anti-semitic ideologies provide explanations or reality that give meaning to life. As Jack Moore describes the skinhead identity,

Clearly those within the skinhead scene feel that it provides them with an immediate, distinct and firm identity, and a sense of belonging to something like an extended family that accepts them. Moreover, the skinhead family usually exists in opposition to other institutions or groups of people. To be a skinhead is to be recognized not only by what you are strongly for, whether it be a variety of music or behavior or race, but to be known for what you are strongly or even violently against. Skinheads live in an oppositional world: they seek opposition and this stance can be a lure for adolescents who either naturally or through learned expectations frequently assert themselves through their vigorous opposition to other persons, ideas, and institutions." (1993)

The various skinhead and neo-nazi youth can be easily seen as deviants and ignored. But this would miss a significant aspect of their movements, they exist as political protests that like the various poor, are symptoms of failed State policies. While such groups are on the one hand utterly repulsive to the Enlightenment values, their life styles and identities are reflections of social dysfunctions. They can be seen as living protests and repudiations of the society that created the conditions in which they thrive, where identity can be achieved only

by hated and denigration, where violence gives the sense of empowerment.

Epilogue

Between the Putsch of 23 and the assumption of Chancellorship, there were numerous ways that political mobilizations could have stopped Hitler. One of the reasons progressives little heeded the many writings on the wall was their adherence to rationality and the expectations of human progress. From out that vilest of all moments in human history also came an understanding of the role that irrational emotional forces had in fostering certain types of characters likely to embrace certain atavistic ideologies and articulate identities based on malignant hate. The insights of Eric Fromm remain as cogent as ever, notwithstanding the deluge of postmodern critiques of identity. As long as capitalism maintains its hegemony, so too will the forces of darkness that would seek fascist solutions and enemies to hate.

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