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## Roots of the Conservative Revolution

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# Why we must call Newt Gingrich 'a fascist'

by Michael J. Minnicino

There is an old saying that "history is written by the winning side." A supreme example of that truism is the analysis of the rise of fascism in the 1920s and '30s. Thousands of pages have been expended over the last 70 years, purporting that Nazism was an outgrowth of anti-Semitism, of anti-trade unionism, or of the racial characteristics of the Germans themselves. Almost all of this scholarship has been a coverup of the essential nature and sponsorship of the movement that murdered millions.

In the mid-1960s, Lyndon LaRouche publicized his unique analysis of fascism. Rejecting the "common knowledge" views, LaRouche identified that fascism started as the concatenation of several radical movements—left and right, populist and aristocratic, workerist and anti-industrial agrarian—all linked by a violent hatred of the modern nation-state, and a complete disregard for the sanctity of the human rights of the individual. Thirty years ago, LaRouche warned that there could easily be new "Nazis without swastikas": that radical ecologists and New Left populists could combine with "post-industrial age" budget-cutters of the nominal Right to create a movement for Nazi economic structures without the outward manifestations of anti-Semitism or jackboot militarism.

It is illustrative, that the very first attacks on LaRouche organized by the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith consistently highlighted his anti-fascist thesis; a LaRouche article from the late 1970s titled "Nazis without Swastikas" was (and still is) repeatedly misquoted to allege that LaRouche, because he maintained that anti-Semitism is not the *cause* of Nazism, must really be "soft" on fascism. Similarly, various varieties of Old Left and New Left groups—which historically have called anybody who disagreed with them, "fascists"—were enraged that LaRouche could identify their own economic theories with those of Nazi Economics Minister Hjalmar Schacht. The violence of these attacks derives in part from the fact that LaRouche had fundamentally exposed the fraudulent history that these groups have used for years to recruit and raise funds.

The real history of fascism makes it clear that the "revolution" signalled by the rise of Newt Gingrich and his allies—

with their attacks upon individual human rights and the philosophical core of our own industry-based republic—is the one warned of by LaRouche. Calling these men and women "fascists," must not be thought to be some exaggerated pejorative; it is the technically correct term.

Over the last 30 years, LaRouche's analysis has been confirmed, and enriched in its detail, by several historical studies. One of these is Armin Mohler's *The Conservative Revolution*, a book originally published in 1949, never translated from German, and only discovered by the LaRouche movement in the 1980s. Mohler was a Swiss who volunteered for the foreign division of the Nazi SS; after the war he rose to head the Siemens Foundation, a major philanthropic institution in Germany. Mohler's purpose was to explain Nazism as the most successful product of a much broader and longer-term cultural development. He does this task with some insight, but it is an insight fed by the fervor of the apologist: Mohler wants to show that what he calls "the Conservative Revolution"—purged of the unfortunate excesses interposed by the Nazis—remains a valid goal. Indeed, Mohler's book, now in a recent fourth edition, is still read as a textbook in some circles. His description of the ideologies of the first "Conservative Revolution" so well fits certain recent pronouncements in America, that Newt Gingrich, Rush Limbaugh, Ollie North, and their co-thinkers can, with equal precision, be called either Conservative Revolutionaries, or fascists.

### The 'Third Reich' and the 'Third Wave'

One hundred years ago, it was widely believed that Europe and America were on the verge of a radical transition to a new era. At that time, there were hundreds of groups publicly committed to what was generally called "the New Age revolution." In fact, the leading English-language journal of these ideas was titled *New Age*. It is almost humorous to note that today's "New Age"—which puts such a great store in its hyper-modernism—is an exact replica of the first "New Age": As today, the revolutionaries of a century ago included a broad range of leftists and rightists, anti-Semitic racial nationalists and "new world order" internationalists, occult-



Throughout the twentieth century, the Conservative Revolution has been trying to devolve society back to feudalism. Before World War I, Adolf Hitler was an avid reader of *Ostara*, the journal of the anti-Semitic, neo-feudalist Order of the New Templars (left). Twenty years later, Hitler became the shining knight of the new medieval oligarchy.

ists and nominal Christians, plus a good number of practitioners of new psychologies whose psycho-babble would put Shirley Maclaine or Arianna Huffington to shame.

All of these groups had their roots firmly in the earlier Romantic movement which had been sponsored by Britain, as a philosophical counterweight to the effects of the American Revolution. All of these groups maintained that the modern nation-state based upon scientific and technological progress—the model uniquely exemplified by the American Republic up through the Civil War—had become spiritually obsolete. One very influential version of this thesis was the idea that western society had to replace the nation-state with a supranational “Third Empire”—the first and second empires being Rome and Byzantium. Like Alvin Toffler’s Third Wave nonsense of today, the Third Empire thesis claimed that while people had been brought closer together by modern technology, society had, for the same reason, lost its spiritual unity, which had to be regained.

This idea was first popularized by Dmitri Merezhkovsky, a mystical Russian who became an influential writer in Germany; Sigmund Freud’s slanderous “psychoanalysis” of Leonardo da Vinci, for instance, is based on a Merezhkovsky study of that artist. Merezhkovsky thought that the capital of the New Age “Third Empire” would be Moscow. Merezhkovsky’s close friend, the Anthroposophist Moeller van den Bruck, thought the headquarters should be in Germany, and wrote a book on that subject, *Das Dritte Reich* (“The Third Reich”—the German translation of “The Third Empire”).

When the Nazis later proclaimed their own Third Reich, the reference was lost on no one.

These groups also shared a hatred of the intellectual and moral self-sufficiency of the individual—the idea of man in the image of the living God—which had characterized western civilization since the time of the Renaissance, and which was elevated to public law in the U.S. Constitution. Rather, they claimed, the individual derives identity by submerging him- or herself in the higher spirituality represented (depending upon one’s specific orientation) by the race, by the international working class, or by the secret occult knowledge of the chosen few adepts, etc. One striking characteristic of this shared ideology was an intense public nostalgia for the medieval period, the time before the development of nation-states, when 95% of the population lived in virtual slavery, and society was held together by the unquestioned authority of the church in its alliance with the knightly oligarchy. On this point, these groups were following the lead of Friedrich Nietzsche, the insane philosopher of the end of the nineteenth century, whom Mohler correctly identifies as the godfather of the Conservative Revolution.

Nietzsche’s goal was to create what he called “inverted Platonism”: to turn back the course of philosophy since the time of Plato and Socrates, and return to a more primordial form of mental life characterized by the irrationalism and ecstatic orgies of the ancient cult of Dionysus. In this way, said Nietzsche, man reestablishes his lost unity with nature, abandons the useless overlays of Judeo-Christian morality,

and creates anew his moral values based on his own individual "will to power." Nietzsche made it very clear that the model for his "will to power" was the bloody tyranny of the medieval aristocracy. In his 1887 *Genealogy of Morals*, he asks: "What is the real etymological significance for 'good' coined in various languages?" He answers that "the good" originally meant "the noble," or the "aristocratic"; on the other hand, he claimed, our words for "bad" originally meant "common, plebeian, simple." What we really mean by "the good," concluded Nietzsche, are the values of the old knightly oligarchs—the illiterate, armored thugs who were trained only for violence and instant gratification of their needs—before they were beaten down by Christian morality. These oligarchical values, he says, are the truly free ones: "The knightly-aristocratic value judgments presupposed a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing, war games, and in general all that involve vigorous, free, joyful activity. . . . For fundamentally, it is the same active force that is at work on a grander scale in those artists of violence and organizers who build states . . . namely, *the instinct for freedom* (in my language, *the will to power*)" (emphasis in original).

It is a tragic sign of our times that we are now in the second decade of a major revival of the ideas of Nietzsche on American and European campuses; a month-long Nietzsche symposium was just held at a university in Maryland, for instance. The Nietzsche revivalists say that Nietzsche is misunderstood, and try to prove that, although Nietzsche became a hero to the Nazis, the philosopher himself would never have supported Hitler. They usually point to the most often-quoted section of Nietzsche's work, also from *Genealogy of Morals*: "I employed the word 'state': It is obvious what is meant—some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror- and master-race which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad. This is, after all, how the state began on earth." The apologists claim that, when Nietzsche is talking here about "blond beasts" and the "master-race," he is not thinking of Nazi Stormtroopers; Nietzsche's other statements denouncing Aryanism and German nationalism, plus the contextual evidence of his extravagantly polemical German, they suggest, show that he is actually talking about "lions." And, oddly enough, the apologists are right here. Nietzsche is talking about lions—and that is the point! Nietzsche thought that his new oligarchy should be as "free" as a noble lion, instinctually tearing the throat out of some plebeian prey on the African veldt.

Thus, it becomes clear that, while Hitler liked to present himself as the heir of Nietzsche, the better claim to that title is held by today's Prince Philip of England and his anti-human followers in the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Nietzsche's longing for a revived feudal oligarchy be-

came quite popular after his death in 1900. One of the principal groups involved in this revival in Germany was the Order of the New Templars, founded by Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels. The ONT was modelled on the Knights of the Temple, a chivalric order of noblemen founded in the twelfth century by the Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux, as an international crusading army of monk-knights committed to the massacre of Muslims and other "enemies of the Faith." Weaving together Bernard's mystical writings with occult Aryan racism, von Liebenfels created an organization committed to a Germany to be ruled by a new racial aristocracy. The first time that the swastika flag flew over Germany was in 1907, when it was hoisted over a Bavarian castle which von Liebenfels had purchased as the headquarters of his order. The ONT recruited several notables, including the Swedish dramatist August Strindberg, and a large number of German noblemen, including its primary funder, Prince Hans-Heinrich XV of Pless. Von Liebenfels himself claimed to be of an ancient family of German knights, but was really born Adolf Lanz, of solidly middle-class parents. Before World War I, when Adolf Hitler was a starving artist living in flop-houses, one of his few possessions was a complete set of *Ostara*, the journal of the Order of the New Templars.

### 'The same side of the barricades'

It must not be thought that the Conservative Revolution's medieval revivalism was limited to rightists and renegade Christians. It was also shared by people like Georg Lukacs, the Hungarian Bolshevik who later became head of cultural warfare for the Communist International and one of the founders of the so-called Frankfurt School of neo-Marxists. In Lukacs's view, the success of Bolshevism in the West depended on the subversion of the philosophical core of western Judeo-Christian civilization; to accomplish this, Marxism must be made to "possess the religious power which is capable of filling the entire soul," and become, said Lukacs, "the most unrelenting and rigorous synthesis since medieval Christianity." It should be obvious that Lukacs and his atheist friends were not talking about real Christianity, but were simply trying to adapt the unfortunate, authoritarian aspects of the Christianity of the period of the Inquisition into a new, corrosive ideology; in this, they were harking back to the proto-socialist ideas of the nineteenth-century positivists like J.S. Mill and August Comte, who tried to institute a dictatorial new world order based on what was then called "Catholicism without Christianity."

Thus, by the time of World War I, it was impossible to analyze the Conservative Revolution by using the commonplace categories of "left" or "right." We get a flavor of the situation by looking at the case of Lukacs's friend Paul Ernst. Like Benito Mussolini, Ernst started his career as a fire-brand Marxist, and was a correspondent of Friedrich Engels in the 1880s. He became famous at the turn of the century as a poet and writer of several plays with medieval themes, and came



*The swastika emblem of the Thule Society. The society, which included the most important noble families of southern Germany, was a primary sponsor of the Nazis.*

to the opinion that technological civilization had alienated man from his true cultural roots. "We must free ourselves from the link between the conceptions of culture and the conquests of civilization," he wrote. "Barbarians use electricity and navigate the skies, but only cultured men have deep feelings and lofty thoughts." After World War I, Ernst became an outspoken neo-feudalist close to Nazi Party circles.

For two years during his transitional period, Ernst lived with Georg Simmel. Simmel is best known today as one of the founders of modern sociology, along with his close friend Max Weber; Simmel was also the president of the Berlin Lodge of the B'nai B'rith and was the nominal head of that organization in Germany. Simmel held no academic position in Germany, but accepted private students, among them José Ortega y Gasset, later the theoretician of Spanish Falangism; Bela Balacz, later the Soviet Union's chief film theorist; the sociologist of culture Karl Mannheim; and Lukacs, to whom he introduced Ernst. Lukacs became close friends with Ernst, and even became the legal guardian of Ernst's illegitimate son; Ernst and Simmel were pivotal in establishing Lukacs's early intellectual credentials. From 1910 to 1927, Lukacs dutifully maintained a correspondence with his sponsor Ernst, even though he was becoming a high-ranking Communist, and his mentor was going Nazi. In one of his last letters to Ernst, Lukacs wrote: "However much our ideas may differ, discussion is possible as long as our judgments of capitalism are similar. I believe that you are mistaken on nearly every question, but you are not on the other side of the barricades."

Communists and fascists, men who called themselves Jews or Christians—all bound together by the desire to bring down Western civilization.

The early Nazi movement was similarly a Conservative

Revolution hodge-podge, defying category. Heinrich Himmler was a member of several occult racist groups who joined a "back-to-nature" chicken-farming commune; when he later became head of the infamous SS, he adapted von Liebenfel's Templar ravings to create the rituals for his fanatical new "Aryan order of chivalry." The brothers Gregor and Otto Strasser, who later headed Hitler's SA Stormtroopers, were originally leaders of the working class-based National Bolshevik organization. The upper-class Albert Speer, later Hitler's architect and wartime armaments czar, was a member of Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-European Union. Several men who would become leaders of the Third Reich—including Alfred Rosenberg, Gottfried Feder, Dietrich Eckart, and Rudolf Hess—were members of the secret Thule Society, founded by Baron Rudolf von Sebottendorf. Baron Rudolf was a follower of von Liebenfels, and like the New Templar, a fraud: He was born Adam Glauer, the son of a locomotive driver.

Notwithstanding, Sebottendorf's Thule Society became a haven for oligarchs and the major behind-the-scenes power in Bavaria after Germany surrendered in 1918; when a Thule Society assassin, Count Arco-Valley, murdered the socialist President of Bavaria in early 1919, the socialists retaliated by executing four real aristocrats who belonged to Thule, including Prince Gustav von Thurn und Taxis. The Thurn und Taxis family, one of the most influential noble houses in Europe, later became pivotal in sponsoring the Nazis. Also in 1919, the Thule Society set up the German Workers Party as a recruitment front to attract workers who could not be allowed to socialize with the princes and barons of Thule. It was this party that Adolf Hitler, then a minor informant for German Military Intelligence, joined, and transformed into the National Socialist German Workers Party—the Nazis.

When Hitler came to power, the mass of the Conservative Revolution rejoiced, and there were many books and articles written by people who claimed that they were the sponsors of Nazism; Sebottendorf, for instance, published his *Before Hitler Came* in 1933, claiming to have taught the Führer everything he knew. But, Hitler began making alliances with much more powerful Conservative Revolution sponsors. Starting in 1934, the more "inconvenient" early supporters of Hitler suddenly found themselves in prison, in exile, or dead. Sebottendorf, for instance, was arrested in 1934 and all copies of his book confiscated; he was pensioned off as a minor diplomat in Turkey, and committed suicide when Germany surrendered in 1945.

### **Heidegger's seduction of the intellectuals**

In the late 1930s, there was a very popular thesis that the Third Reich was "the gutter come to power"—that Hitler and his followers were just common gangsters who, by an unfortunate combination of circumstances, rose to rule. The thesis conveniently ignores why high-level financial interests

in Europe and America sponsored Hitler, and actively neutralized any alternatives to a Nazi government in 1933. It also does not explain why Germany's students and intellectuals—with notable courageous exceptions—so quickly fell into the Nazi lock-step. Bluntly put, the intellectuals were seduced, and chief seducer was the Conservative Revolution's resident philosopher, Martin Heidegger. In the 1920s, Heidegger announced an intellectual revolution to complete Nietzsche's task of destroying the last vestiges of "Platonic metaphysics," in Heidegger's words. The influence of Plato and Socrates—the source of the Renaissance, of the Christianity of Augustine and the Judaism of Philo—was the real problem, said Heidegger; it meant the growth of science and the complication of life, such that man could no longer live an "authentic" existence. By the end of the 1920s, Heidegger had become the most influential intellectual in Germany, and it was "politically correct" on German campuses to parrot his denunciation of republican Germany as a decadent nation which had lost its values.

When Heidegger himself joined the Nazi Party in 1933 and replaced the liberal rector of Freiburg University who had refused to implement Nazi decrees, it was an unmistakable message to Germany's students and intellectuals that they should suppress their disgust at Hitler's anti-Semitism and war-mongering, and support his movement as the first phase of the much-needed spiritual revival of Germany. A good appreciation of Heidegger's effect is an anecdote from Georg Picht, after the war a Lutheran theologian, who studied with Heidegger in 1933: "In the fall of 1933, I walked down the Kaiserstrasse with two members of Heidegger's seminar—on the right a beanpole of an SS man; on the left an SA man; I, a civilian, in the middle. Naturally we discussed politics. I said something about one of the most recent atrocities. The SS man thereupon shouted so loud that people on the other side of the street turned around: 'There is one thing that is, of course, obvious to us all. Now, in the first phase of the revolution, we are ruled by a gang of criminals.' That was not uncharacteristic of the mood of that part of the student body who, under Heidegger's influence, was obsessed with the idea that the true revolution had to come from the university."

The philosophical blindness which Heidegger caused among German intellectuals can be seen in another, more poignant, story from Picht about Felix Jacoby, a leading professor of classics and a follower of Heidegger. In 1933, Jacoby was to give a lecture on the Roman poet Horace. He began with the following words: "As a Jew, I am in a difficult situation. But, as a historian, I have learned not to consider historical events from a personal perspective. I have voted for Adolf Hitler since 1927, and consider myself lucky to be able to give a lecture on [the Roman Emperor] Augustus's poet in the year of the national uprising. For Augustus is the only figure in world history who can be compared to Adolf Hitler."

## Genocide as 'welfare reform'

When Hitler came to power, he made no attempt to hide his contempt for the majority of the human race and all modern civilization. In other words, he sounded very much like the new Conservative Revolution's Lord William Rees-Mogg. But, most people at the time simply convinced themselves that Hitler's statements were exaggerations to get votes and pacify the radicals in his own party. If you know anything about the Third Reich, it is what the Nazis did in 1943—global war, genocide, and Europe turned into a free-trade zone of looting and slavery. But, the horrors of 1943 were the necessary product of the Nazi "Conservative Revolution" of 1933. Those earlier measures are not so well remembered, but they were quite popular at the time, and they ring a chilling resonance with certain policies being discussed today.

Among the first items on the Nazi agenda, was a thoroughgoing legal reform to end the Weimar Republic's alleged "welfare socialism" and its "softness on crime." The death penalty was mandated for a wide range of offenses, while a vastly expanded police force rounded up gypsies, trade union leaders, and other "trouble-makers" without proper "Aryan values." Vigilantism was officially encouraged, primarily against Jews; the government justified this, by claiming that the Jews were criminal parasites who were responsible for the rotten shape of local economies. Soon, the Nuremberg Laws mandated a racially pure Aryan Reich, and the Jews were classified, in effect, as "illegal immigrants"—even if their families had lived in Germany for centuries—who could no longer be given legal rights. Ultimately, the Jews were arrested en masse. Such a large portion of the population ended up in prison, that the regime started a program to put prisoners to work, and hired them out as slave labor to several major private firms.

Early in the regime, Hitler also authorized a program code-named T-4, which legalized euthanasia for "lives not worthy to be lived," in the official jargon. The retarded, the congenitally and terminally ill were killed by lethal injection, and, as the number of victims grew, in gas chambers. Large numbers of homeless, including whole families, were certified as "congenitally anti-social," and murdered. It must be remembered that, while the Nazis were discreet about T-4, it was not a secret program; it was, in fact, publicized as *a welfare reform and cost-cutting measure*.

It was these early Nazi policies on immigration reform, on prison reform, and on health and welfare reform which, around 1941, coalesced into the death-camp system which worked millions to death, and gassed and cremated the additional millions who, because of their age, health, or religion, were to be discarded as "useless eaters."

But, there were pitifully few people who had the brains to forecast that later nightmare, in 1933—and there were few who had the courage to believe them.