

Nazis and Communists: Ideological Bedfellows

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Benito Mussolini has an infamous place in modern history, as well he should. Nearly everyone knows Mussolini as the dictator of Fascist Italy and the ally of Nazi Germany in the Second World War. But that is only part of the story.

Mussolini began his political career as an avowed Marxist (defined as the atheist philosophy which holds that capitalism is bad because it enriches a few capitalists to the detriment of masses of laborers and that laborers should take control of all means of production — in order, in theory though not in practice, to be fair to the masses). Mussolini was not just a leading leftist in Italy, he was one of the most important communists in the world (communism is here defined as a system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy, and a single, often authoritarian party, holds power — in order, in theory, to be fair and spread all goods equally amongst the people).

In 1914, Mussolini organized “Red Week,” which was aimed at causing a violent revolution against the corrupt capitalist world. The very name “Duce” (an Italian word for leader) was given to him at a banquet hosted by Marxists after his release from prison for protesting the “imperialist” Italian war in Libya, at which one veteran socialist said: “From today you, Benito, are not only the representative of Romagna Socialists, but the Duce of all revolutionary Socialists in Italy!”

After the First World War began, Mussolini worked hard to get Italy to join the side of Britain and France. He succeeded. After the war, Fascism began to grow into a serious political movement in Italy, with Benito at its head. Hitler admired Mussolini intensely and considered Fascism in Italy to be a precursor to National Socialism in Germany. Mussolini brought Fascist Italy into the Second World War as an ally of Nazi Germany about the time that the Nazis defeated France in mid-1940.

Italy surrendered to the Allied Powers in 1943 and ousted Il Duce. But that is not the end of the biography of Benito Mussolini. Hitler had him rescued and set Mussolini up as the head of a puppet state in northern Italy, the Italian Socialist Republic. The constitution of this odd polity was written by Nicola Bombacci, a communist and a friend of Lenin. In February 1944, the Socialist Republic issued a “Legislative Decree for the Socialization

of Enterprises” that provided that all enterprises with capital of over one million lire or employing more than a hundred persons would be run by a committee composed of an equal number of management and workers. After that it moved even more radically to the Left. In 1944, Mussolini praised Stalin and said that if he had to choose which nation should dominate Europe, it would be the Soviet Union. Both Mussolini and the movement he led were left-wing at their inception and even more left-wing extremist in the end.

Yet Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia, claims:

The terms *extreme right* or *ultra right* are used by some scholars to discuss only those right-wing political groups that step outside the boundaries of traditional electoral politics. This generally includes the revolutionary right, militant racial supremacists and religious extremists, neo-fascists, neo-Nazis and Klansmen. In this usage, the terms are distinct from other forms of right-wing politics such as the less-militant sectors of the far right, right-wing populists.

Though this definition, which includes fascists and Nazis, is accepted and promulgated by media and educators, how does this fit into any rational system of understanding political ideology? It does not, of course, but whenever any group displays any activity that does not adhere to a politically correct agenda, and can be pronounced by liberals as being racist, sexist, bigoted, or intolerant — whether this description is accurate or not — the group is deemed “right-wing.”

Such a definition of “right-wing” would lead one to believe that two of the vilest totalitarian regimes of the 20th century — Bolshevism and Nazism — were mortal enemies at opposite ends of a political spectrum. If such a contention is true, an argument could be made that neither a right-wing, “conservative,” limited-government ideology nor a left-wing, “liberal,” big-government one is more fundamentally sound than the other; therefore, there is no reason not to try to create an enlightened, all-powerful government.

But if Nazis and Bolsheviks were not mortal enemies, but were instead identical twins, then the whole argument of collectivists disintegrates. If moving in the direction of Barack Obama’s policies, for example, meant moving in the direction of both Stalin and Hitler, then only a madman or a monster would ever want what Obama wants for America. If embracing the small-government philosophy of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and other early American patriots always led away from Stalin and Hitler, then serious Americans would begin to cherish more deeply the legacy of our Founding Fathers.

Back in the Day

It is hard to find objectivity when talking about Nazism today. It was, of course, a ghastly movement that few defend. What most people know of it is disseminated by college professors, who tell their students that Nazism was a movement of the “Right” and that it was the tool of industrialists and religious extremists. This slant is seldom questioned; however, books written while the Nazis were in power tell a much different story.

Contemporary authors — though of different religious beliefs, different partisan and political orientations, and different nationalities — all agreed that Nazis and Bolsheviks were identical twins, not polar opposites.

Consider the nature of Bolshevism and Nazism.

Herbert Hoover wrote in his 1934 *The Challenge to Liberty* that the systems running Germany and Russia were simply collectivist, whatever names were used. Max Eastman, an early communist who later saw the light and rejected communism, wrote in his 1937 book *The End of Socialism in Russia* that the Soviet Union was “a totalitarian state not in essence different from that of Hitler and Mussolini.” Eastman later wrote in a subsequent book, *Reflections on the Failure of Socialism* (1955): “Stalin’s totalitarian police state is not an approximation to, of something like, or in some respects comparable with Hitler’s. It is the same thing, only *more* ruthless, *more* cold-blooded, *more* astute, *more* extreme in its economic policies, *more* explicitly committed to world conquest, and *more* dangerous to democracy and civilized morals.”

Erica Mann in 1938 noted the common war waged by Bolsheviks and Nazis against God and family, and wrote: “Again, all we have to do is replace ‘Bolshevism’ with ‘National Socialism’ to get a fairly exact picture.” Sir Arnold Lunn wrote in his 1939 book *Communism and Socialism*: “The quarrel between Communists and Nazis or between Stalin’s Communists and Trotsky’s Communists is not an economic controversy, but a struggle for the spoils of office.”

Herman Rauschning, the Danzig Nazi leader who later repudiated Nazism, wrote in his 1939 book *The Revolution of Nihilism*: “It is in the nature of things that the planning and methods of work of the Soviet State and the Fascist and the National Socialist States should be growing more and more similar.” Two years later, in *The Conservative Revolution*, Rauschning noted that Marxism itself was part of a single great revolutionary movement that included Marxist socialism, Nazism, communist Bolshevism, fascism, and nihilism. Dorothy Thompson, at the time the greatest female journalist in the world, wrote in her 1938 *Dorothy Thompson’s Political Guide* that Nazism and communism were both forms of collectivism and that although a great many people believed that there was a war going on between the two, the idea of such a war was invented by Nazis and Bolsheviks.

Marcel Fodor wrote in 1940 after the defeat of France that he pitied the appeasers in the democracies who believed that Nazi Germany would be a bulwark against the Soviet Union, not knowing that both regimes were children of the same ideas. Count Carlo Sforza, an Italian diplomat who fled Italy after Mussolini came to power, noted in 1941 that the slogan spread by the dictators to the workers in the democracies was “Socialism, or National-Socialism, against Plutocracy.”

The Socialism of National Socialism and Bolshevism

It seems incredible that anyone who has studied history could believe for a second that Nazis were anything but socialists. The platform of the National Socialist German

Workers (Nazi) Party was strongly collectivist, and it was never repudiated by the Nazis. Movements outside of Germany that adopted the name “National Socialist” were Marxist in attitude as well. As one example, in America the “National Socialist Party” was formed in Detroit, Michigan, in 1921, and this National Socialist Party was enthusiastically endorsed by the Soviet government.

The Bolsheviks acted like collectivists in power, but how did the Nazis act in power?

Industrialists who utterly subordinated their business interests to the state could prosper, but they were the exception. Business in general suffered under the Nazis. The Nazis on October 16, 1934 raised the highest income tax rate from 40 percent to 50 percent, and on February 17, 1939 raised that highest rate again to 55 percent. A decree of September 9, 1939 again increased income taxes, but exempted incomes of 2,400 Reichmarks a year or less. *Comparative Major European Governments*, a 1937 book, notes that through the enactment of several new laws on December 4, 1934, banking, credits, and stock exchanges passed under complete government control. Moreover, the Loan-Stock Law limited stock company dividends to six percent in some cases and to eight percent in others, with profits over that required to be transferred to the Gold Discount Bank, which in turn required that the profits be invested in government loans or municipal debt service bonds.

Nazi hostility to individual wealth was matched by its hostility to business. An act of October 16, 1934 removed the exemption on business taxes for many types of businesses and increased the progressivity of the business taxes; an act of August 27, 1936 raised the general business tax rate from 20 percent to 25 percent and to 30 percent for each year thereafter; then on July 25, 1938 corporate profits of more than 100,000 Reichmarks per year were subjected to an additional tax of 35 percent, with that rising to 40 percent for each year thereafter; and on March 20, 1939, the Nazis imposed an excess profits tax. In four years, Nazis had raised taxes to approximately one-fourth of the national income.

The Nazis passed legislation to make it difficult to form or maintain corporations and to limit the authority of directors of corporations or of stockholders in corporations. Directors of corporations, for example, were allowed to grant bonuses only upon condition that they were directly tied to profit and upon condition that the board of directors authorize “voluntary social contributions” to employees, granting employees effectively an automatic share in corporate profits. Later, the tax on directors’ fees was increased from 10 percent in March 1933 to 20 percent in February 1939. The capital market in Germany was almost completely closed to private issues and banks were subject to a succession of compulsory levies, confiscated reserves, and increasingly high taxes. In March 1939, a decree liquidated virtually all holdings of foreign securities.

The Nazis also simply expropriated, with or without compensation to the business owners, canals, dams, roads, and other private enterprises if ownership was deemed in the interest of the Reich. The owners themselves could not request compensation for virtual seizure of their businesses when the government wished to seize them. The same year, the Reich Supreme Court for Finance and Taxation invalidated claims for tax deductions,

noting that prior law could be ignored and that tax laws had to be interpreted according to a “National-Socialistic” perspective, to the great detriment of business.

Commentators noted as war came that Nazism/socialism grew stronger. Rauschning in 1939 wrote of Nazi economic policies, “The expropriation of property will inevitably follow, as well as the complete abolition of private enterprise.” Fodor in 1940 wrote: “It was mostly under Doctor Goebbels’ and Doctor Ley’s influence that National Socialist Germany has become increasingly a socialist state where the capitalist had only a very sorry role to fulfill.” In 1941, Otto Tolischus, Berlin correspondent for the *New York Times*, wrote: “Hitler’s fundamental thesis is that democracy and capitalism are doomed and must give way to some kind of ‘socialized’ or ‘planned’ economy.”

The Enemy of Christians and of Jews

Communists and Nazis both hated Christians and Jews. The communist persecution of Christianity is fairly well known. The Nazi hatred of Jews is very well known. But hatred of both Christianity and Judaism was violently embraced by both Nazis and Bolsheviks. Nazi hatred of Christianity was announced before the Nazis took power in early 1933. Dimont, a highly respected historian of Jewish history, observed in his 1962 book *Jews, God and History* that Nazi propaganda had been anti-Christian since 1919.

Hitler stated in 1932, before his ascension to power: “We are not against the hundred and one different kinds of Christianity, but against Christianity itself.” Gustavus Myers noted this as well in his posthumously published *History of Bigotry in the United States* (1943): “Early in the Nazi movement Hitler had avowed his scorn for Christianity.” A.S. Duncan-Jones, in his 1938 book *The Struggle for Religious Freedom in Germany*, also quoted Hitler describing his attitude toward Christianity before gaining power: “I insist on the certainty that sooner or later, once we hold power, Christianity will be overcome. Of course, I myself am a heathen to the bone.”

This hatred of Christianity grew more open and intense once the Nazis came into power. University Nazis in Keil wrote in 1935: “We Germans are heathens and want no more Jewish religion in our Germany. We no longer believe in the Holy Ghost; we believe in the Holy Blood.” In February 1937, Hanns Kerrl, Minister of Religion in the Third Reich, said: “The question of the divinity of Christ is ridiculous and inessential. A new answer has arisen as to what Christ and Christianity are: Adolph Hitler.” Preaching from the pulpit against Nazi propagandist Alfred Rosenberg’s racial theories was forbidden by the Nazis, and Law 130 threatened penalties against any priest who preached “against the interest of the state.” Göring ordered that the *Hitler Gruss* (the Hitler salute) was the only religious gesture allowed.

This animus affected ordinary aspects of German life. As early as 1937, death notices in Germany stated that the decedent “died in the faith of Adolph Hitler.” The Nazis replaced the Julian calendar with a new calendar, in which the new year began on January 30, the day Hitler ascended to power. Dr. Muller, the Nazi-appointed boss of the church, not only attacked Jews but attacked anyone who claimed that Jesus was a Jew.

Justice William H. Black, in his 1938 book *If I Were a Jew*, wrote: “It is apparent on all sides that since his rise to power there has been a persistent and deliberate effort to de-Christianize Germany.” The same year, John Gunther wrote of Nazi Germany in his book *Inside Europe Today*: “Germany continued its implacable hostility to the Protestant Church and to Roman Catholicism also.” Jacques Maritain wrote in his 1939 book *Anti-Semitism* about a great madness and “anti-Christianity” that was “ravaging German hearts.” Charles Shulman wrote the same year in *Europe’s Conscience in Decline*: “The Christian Cross, symbolic of mercy, goodness, peace and justice, is being torn from the steeples of churches to be replaced by the hooked cross, the swastika, symbol of intolerance and hate.” This is similar to what Pierre van Paassen wrote in his 1939 book *Days of Our Lives*, when he observed that Germany was even farther down the road to de-Christianization than the Soviet Union. In 1941, Jewish German emigrant Konrad Heiden wrote in *The New Inquisition* that Christianity preached salvation to men of good will, then added: “But that is not National Socialism. It only makes the young men and the S.S. laugh. They know all such holy talk — priest and the Jew, it’s all the same.”

What of the Bolshevik attitude toward Jews? From December 1918, the Soviets banned the teaching of Hebrew and religious instruction in Judaism. In the next decade, anti-Semitism began to appear in Communist Party propaganda, with references by Stalin against “Talmudists.” On holy days, the Soviets organized vitriolic anti-Judaic street campaigns, and Jews in the Soviet Union could not even get something as simple as a Jewish calendar.

The Bolsheviks even derisively regarded Hitler’s anti-Semitism as ineffectual. Commenting on the April 1933 boycott in Germany, the Soviet press said, “In a few days you will find that all the big Jewish stores still exist, that Jewish bankers, capitalists and stock jobbers are still carrying on their businesses, and that no Jewish industrialist has suffered any damage.”

The Soviets supported Palestinian riots against Jews in August 1929 and the much more violent riots against Jews by Palestinians in 1936. The Bolshevik position was that the Jews were a privileged minority in Palestine and that the Jews had destroyed practically all Arab industries. The cause of the Palestinians, even as early as 1936, was described as an “heroic struggle.” The Kremlin in the 1930s was denouncing “Zionist imperialist oppression of Arabs” and even calling Jewish immigrants into Palestine “Zionist-imperialist-Fascist soldiers.”

Bolsheviks sent hundreds of German Jews who had entered the Soviet Union to escape the Nazis back to Germany and certain death, directly into the hands of the Gestapo; Jewish refugees from other countries were sent to the Gulag during the Non-Aggression Pact. In the Soviet-occupied half of Poland, all elements of Jewish religious life were suppressed. The Soviets launched campaigns against “The Jewish National Counterrevolution,” and the Soviet government scrupulously avoided mentioning anything about Nazi persecution of Jews (in stark contrast to Britain, America, France, Switzerland, Sweden, and other countries which condemned the obvious racialism and hate of the Nazis toward the Jews.)

After Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of Russia in June 1941, Soviet hostility to Jews continued. The Cheka — the Soviet state security organization — interrogation and torture of Jews increasingly included crude anti-Semitic venom that had not existed before. After the Red Army established communist governments in nations like Czechoslovakia, “Zionism” became a crime, and persecutions of Jews commenced, such as the Slansky purge of 11 high-ranking Jewish communists. In some cases, Bolshevik antipathy toward Jews reached surreal extremes, such as when Jewish socialists Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter were executed by the Soviet government as “Nazi agents.”

Racism

What about the infamous racism of Nazis and the putative racial tolerance of Bolsheviks? Both regimes were racist or not racist as it suited the interests of power. The Soviet Union, though, practiced a brutal Great Russian racism against the nationalities within that empire. Ukrainians, Volga Germans, Tartars, and other groups faced genocide under the Soviets.

Karl Marx, the father of Marxism, displayed appalling racial hatred. He called for the “annihilation” of “reactionary races” like “Croats, Pandurs, Czechs and similar scum,” and also wrote: “The Slav people has no future for the simple reason that it lacks the most elementary historic, geographic, and industrial prerequisites for sovereignty and viability.” Max Eastman, in his book on the failures of socialism, quotes Marx as writing, “Thus we find every tyrant backed by a Jew,” and writing about his fellow socialist Ferdinand Lassalle, “It is perfectly obvious from the shape of his head and the way his hair grows that he is descended from the Negroes who joined Moses on the journey out of Egypt, unless perhaps his mother or grandmother had relations with a nigger.” Marx referred to Lassalle as “the little Kike” and the “Jewish nigger.”

The Nazis ignored race when it served their purposes. Their important wartime allies — Finns, Hungarians, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Italians, and Japanese — were either non-Aryan or were considered by Nazis to be the lowest form of Aryan. Herman Rauschning in 1939 observed that the Nazis had already stopped believing their racial theories: “The crucial fact is that the revolution has progressed far beyond its racialist origins and is now using this doctrinal armory of its youth, in so far as it retains any of it, merely as a necessary element in propaganda. Racialism is its make-believe; the reality of the revolutionary extremism revealed not in its philosophy but in its tactics.” Perhaps one of the most interesting examples is the Nazi repudiation of anti-Semitism in 1935, when Goebbels sent the following message to the press of the Reich: “Very important! The attention of the German press is drawn to the fact that the National Socialist movement may be called anti-Semitic no longer, but only anti-Jewish. We have nothing against Arabs and other Semitic peoples, not even against the Jews in Palestine.”

Central Government

Those who grasp the link between robust state governments and individual liberty will appreciate how important it is for totalitarians to destroy state governments; Bolsheviks and Nazis understood that as well. After the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War,

the Soviets began the re-conquest into the Soviet Union of all those people and nations that had gained independence after the fall of the Romanovs. The Ukraine, Georgia, and the Moslem lands of central Asia all fell back into conquered fealty to Moscow. The Baltic States, East Poland, and other lost lands came later — as allies of Hitler.

Weimar Germany had strong states' rights, which the Nazis quickly destroyed in order to create an all-powerful state. Hamilton Fish Armstrong, hardly a friend of local government, writes in his 1933 book *Hitler's Reich*: "Federal Germany is gone. The *Gleichschaltung* law disposes of the prerogatives of the separate States, and Nazi leaders have been named *Statthalter*, with power from Berlin to dismiss State governments should they not prove fully amenable." Clarence K. Streit, also a glob-alist usually sympathetic to big government, wrote in his 1941 book *Union Now With Britain*: "One of Hitler's first acts was to abolish the German federal system. Once he had removed the powerful brake which state rights provide, totalitarianism sped on." Of course, neither Armstrong (longtime editor of the Council on Foreign Relations journal *Foreign Affairs*) nor -Streit were political conservatives.

In *Governments of Continental Europe*, Karl Lowenstein writes of Nazi Germany that, next to the single-party totalitarian rule, the most conspicuous development in government in Nazi Germany was the complete subordination of the *Laender* (the federal states of Germany) into the federal Reich, and that this change seemed most likely to be permanent. The First Act for "co-ordinating the Laender and the Reich" of March 1933 was intended to break down the differences between the various *Laender*, and new elections for *Laender* legislative assemblies were forbidden. The Second Act for "co-ordinating the Laender and the Reich" of April 1933 brought the novelty of Reich Regent (*Reichsstatthalter*), or State Governor, appointed by the Reich President on advice of the Reich Chancellor. The last step was in the Reconstruction Act of 1934, the second "organic" act of the Third Reich, in which all sovereign powers of the states were transferred to the Reich.

This eventually extended to cities and towns. On February 16, 1934, the Nazis nationalized all state and local courts. In January 1935, the Municipal Code replaced the municipal codes of the different cities of Germany with a single municipal code. State and local judges also became simply officers of the Reich, instead of officers of the *Laender* or cities.

The Commu-Nazi

Communists and Nazis were viewed as twins by authors writing in the 1930s. Both implemented collectivism, hated Christians and Jews, used racism when it helped them (but not when it did not), and centralized government power. There was once a popular term used to describe the common evil of Bolshevism and Nazism: the Commu-Nazi. It is curious how easily Bolsheviks became Nazis and Nazis became Bolsheviks — but that is just what one would expect if the two evil movements were identical.

Before the Non-Aggression Pact, many communists, on orders from Moscow, had joined the Nazi Party and risen to high positions within the Nazi Party. German communists

even joined the Nazi Party after Hitler came to power. How did Nazis view non-Jewish German communists? In his 1936 book *Government in the Third Reich*, Morstein Marx states that National Socialist attorneys were told to never refuse a case from any non-Jewish communist because communists were merely misled.

Later, former Nazis slipped seamlessly into the power structure of the East German government. Former *SS Obenstrumfeger* Adelbert Baumler, for example, ran counterintelligence for the East German communists; Dr. Leo Lange, who had belonged to the Gestapo, was put in charge of East German communist radio and the press; and a number of German generals who served Hitler also served the new East German government.

Those who did not become members of the East German political apparatus often became members of the Social Democrat Party (SDP), the most leftist party in West Germany, and significant numbers regularly met with the Soviet KGB or with the East German StB secret services. Other prominent former Nazis were so Marxist in thought as to be indistinguishable from communists. Gunter Grass, political activist and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, opposed the reunification of Germany and has had only contemptuous things to say about America, religious people, conservative groups, and “capitalism.” What was his political pedigree? In late 2006, Grass revealed that he had been a member of the Waffen-SS in Nazi Germany.

The collectivist enemies of human freedom wear many masks, but they are all the same: Bolshevism, Nazism, radical Islam, or Fabian Socialism. Hate freedom? Hate God? Want every decision made in Washington? Want to use racism — either harming or aiding disparate racial groups — as a tool to get power? Then realize that the club you have joined is that of the Commu-Nazi and all its evil.

— ThumbnailPhoto at beginning of article: AP Images

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