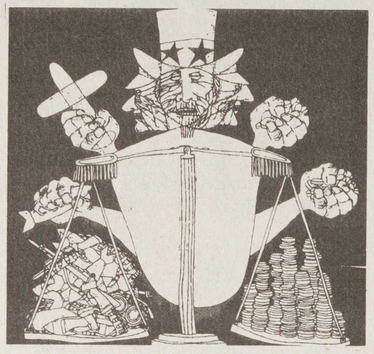
heads an array of publishing houses, far-right organizations and media organs. His Liberty Lobby has a daily radio show broadcast over 470 stations and a weekly TV commentary shown in 37 cities. "The Spotlight," the Liberty Lobby's newspaper, has a circulation of 340,000.

Today, however, it's the Republican Party that sits at the apex of the New Right. But the GOP has gone through some changes since Senator Mark Hatfield in a 1964 keynote convention speech denounced extremism by lumping the Klan, the Communists and the Birchers together. Twenty years later the moderates and liberals of the party are thrust aside as the Birchers, the Falwells and other far-right ideologues grab hold of the reins of the governing party. The spectacle of their recent convention, where opposition was totally non-existent, where everything was orchestrated from the top echelons and spontaneity banished, indeed gave the American people a possible peek at their future. Fanfare and balloons, substanceless speeches, and the final emergence of the mythical leader enveloped in an aura of religion and super-patriotism.

The Republicans, now very ideologically polarized from the Democrats, have governed for 12 of the last 16 years. They and their allies have determined the issues and rhetoric of the American political landscape since the late Sixties. Despite their defeat with the fall of Nixon, they carefully plotted their comeback. In 1975 President Ford appointed George Bush as CIA Director. From there on the Republicans, with help from such groups as the Committee on the Present Danger and countless think-tanks, orchestrated a new Cold War and anti-Soviet hysteria. These efforts eventually undermined Carter and paved the way for a GOP grandstand play, with the hand off to Ronald Reagan.

The GOP's Government

With all the branches and departments of the government at their disposal, the Republicans haven't exactly been sitting still. They've managed to coordinate a government and big business attack on the social gains achieved over the last several decades. Their victims are Black people and other minorities, women, the labor movement and the environment, and the list keeps growing. Yet, more and more of the other branches of the federal government are becoming mere extensions of the Executive, the imperial presidency. With Reagan's re-election the American people will face the spectre of all three branches dominated by the GOP and the Right with the exception of the House of Representatives. Reagan may appoint four or five new members to the Supreme Court with the approval of Falwell. But the Court and the Departments of State and Justice are already busy dumping the Bill of Rights into the wastebasket. Plus the use of preventative detention, the denial of rights to prisoners and defendants, the use of illegally seized evidence, the General Westmoreland censorship case, the return of the death penalty all point in the direction of a more repressive judicial system.



The astounding list of atrocities the Republicans have wrecked upon the nation and the world seem endless. Their policies have been financed by complacent Democrats out of fear for their own political survival and thought up by the think tanks created by the corporations and the populists. U.S. participation in the United Nations is severely curtailed and reduced. The massive build-up of arms and missiles goes on unabetted while social programs with roots in the New Deal are cut and gutted. Monopoly controls, environmental controls and government protection of racial and sexual rights are destroyed. With the Pentagon revitalized, small countries are invaded, the Vietnam Syndrome is buried, and jungle fatigues become fashionable.

Government secrecy has also become fashionable again. Government operations and maneuvering becomes enshrouded by claims of "national security" and the president is kept isolated from the press — even during a presidential campaign. All the while the government's power of surveillance has dramatically increased. In 1983 the FBI's guidelines on domestic spying were drastically revised. Now agents can go after "advocates of crime" without a crime being committed. And now they can go after legal groups who have the same politics as organizations who use direct action or illegal tactics.

The FBI has also established an Inter-State Identification Index, a national computerized directory of state arrest records. With current access to the records of 14 states, it will eventually tie in the records of all 50. This is even more startling with the realization that 40 million Americans have arrest records, and one out of every 150 is now on probation.

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Other ominous signs are around. There's evidence mounting of a new coordinated wave of government harassment and repression against the left. Solidarity groups and movements supporting third world countries the U.S. doesn't like are presently under attack. And indications are that the government is moving in the direction of outlawing such solidarity work. If a country or foreign group is labeled "terrorist" then their American supporters are but allies of terrorists. Such could be the fate of groups like the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador and those who aid Irish republican prisoners and their families.

Coupled with this is the crackdown on the growing sanctuary movement that helps refugees from the U.S.-inspired wars in Central America. Plus the right of U.S. citizens to travel to such places as Cuba is being restricted. Could all these developments indicate the coming of a new red-scare? If so, then the government has access to a technology and a militarized police force that would have made Hitler and Mussolini envious.

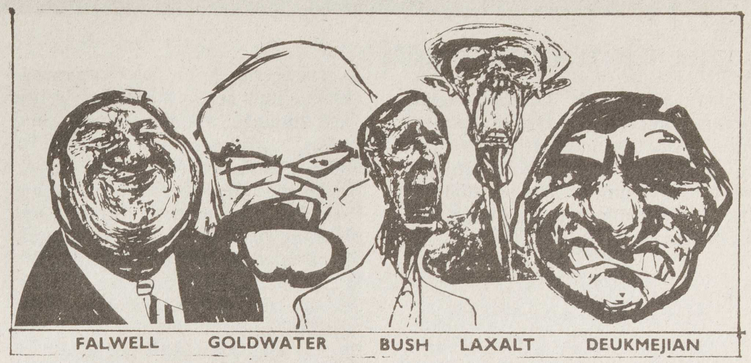
Corporate-Government Alliance

Living in modern society, we can experience another rightward leaning trend occurring around us. It is the ever-tightening integration of the large corporations, who operate on a world level, with an ever-expanding government. This pattern is happening in the U.S. and in other developed capitalist powers. Cemented during the Depression and World War II, this partnership has greatly increased the wealth and power of the financial oligarchy at the helm of the economy.

Recent administrations have been dominated by corporate managers and owners carrying out the policies of the think tanks they finance. These top corporations are now the ones benefiting from Reagan's welfare program for the truly rich. And these big guys, the armament and aerospace industries, the oil monopolies, the banks, are lining up to fill the GOP's coffers.

For the last decade or so the corporate chess players have been faced with the severest crisis to hit the capitalist system since the Depression. U.S. capitalists are particularly threatened with the loss of their hegemonist status over the world's economies and by a dwindling capitalist world. Facing profit loss, the capitalists have had to cut costs, meaning real wages had to be checked and even diminished, unions undermined, and demands for greater racial and sexual participation at the workplace reversed. The corporate controllers needed a force to turn the political climate around, and they found one in the New Right. They needed a man on a horse to lead the charge and they found one in Ronald Reagan.

The trend of a slowly evolving but powerful concentration of wealth and power in a repressive partnership between government and business is a reality. Its evolution could result in a new and subtly manipulative form of corporate fascism. This is the Friendly Fascism that Betram Gross warns us about. It hasn't happened yet, he quickly adds, but with Ronald Reagan, its engines are running in high gear. In today, tomorrow walks.



Vigilante Culture

With this mere outline of some of the most rightward trends in our country, we have a picture of some pretty powerful forces in motion. The rightwing populists and fascists, the ruling party and its governmental apparatus, and the giant corporations are all sources for these trends. The climate and political atmosphere they together are generating is creating a popular ideology favorable to overseas adventurism and a reversal of the democratic gains of the last decades. It's as if politics, like fashion, has reverted back to the fifties, when the military was honorable, anti-communism was the standard, and racial and sexual equality were unheard of.

It is a climate that aids and abets those searching for scapegoats for the ills of society. The fanatics have found a number of targets: abortion proponents, outspoken gays and lesbians, Black people, undocumented Mexican workers, draft resisters, and low income criminals. In this atmosphere white racism has taken on a new patriotic and scientific cover, with racial riots and the respectability of Shockley's anti-Black theories.

What's developing in America is a violence and vigilante culture as the rightwing forces create and widen tensions among the lower and middle classes. If white workers blame Black or Puerto Rican people for the loss of their jobs, then they won't take out their anger on the corporate rulres who moved the factory.

The media is stepping in tune to the drumbeat of the Right, as most major press and media institutions are owned and controlled by Republicans and corporations. The "Teflon President" is after-all their invention. From the downing of the Korean flight 007 — which was on a spy mission for the U.S. — the invasion of Grenada, to the uncritical acceptance of the super-patriotic tone of the Olympics, the press has played the hand-maiden of government in its rightward march.

There's more commercials for the military these days, as there's more soldiers in ordinary commercials. Fashion is becoming militarized and the military is becoming fashionable. Police shows for the Fall '84 TV series have doubled over last years, as the U.S. gears up its role as cop of the world. American society seems to be preparing culturally for a Holywar of Good against Evil. And our omniscient leader is at the head of the charge.

American society is heading into the danger zone. Three forces have been pin-pointed as leading the nation into an era of reaction, the populists, the government and the party at the controls, and the giant corporations. If these forces ever ally and consolidate, together they could create a fashionable whirlwind to topple the shaky table of constitutional capitalism. This would be a form of American fascism and we would be among the victims. These forces, these trends are with us now. It will be too late for us to act once they have joined and consolidated. For inspiration then, I close with a quote made by Adolf Hitler himself in 1933:

> Only one thing could have broken our movement: if the adversary had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed with extreme brutality the nucleus of our new movement.

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