

*The United States and the dilemmas
of military intervention*

'You're damn lucky, young man, that you're not speaking German today!' The speaker was an elderly man . . .

Alan Whittmore was used to this sort of abuse . . . As editor of the . . . *American Mercury*, it was par for the course . . .

'Do I know you?' asked Whittmore, affecting a smile.

'I'm Dr. Evans. Why don't you ever publish my letters to the editor?'

So that was it! Whittmore's memory was suitably jogged . . . 'You know I'm sticking with the majority view on this issue. I still believe it was for the best that Roosevelt was impeached . . .'

Evans was having none of it: . . . 'This business of [the United States] normalizing relations with the Greater Reich is not going over. The American people won't stand for it.'

There was no levity in Whittmore's voice as he said, 'I agree that the Nazis are evil, but no more so than the Communists [whom] they tried and executed at the war crimes trials . . .'

'Well, no matter what you say, isolationism will destroy us in the end. There is no neutrality in this world.'

'Non-intervention opens doors that an empire would close.'

And so forth . . .'

American novelist Brad Linaweaver's description in his 1982 novella *Moon of Ice* of a lunch-counter argument between isolationist New York newspaper editor Alan Whittmore and an interventionist war veteran raises one of the central questions lying at the heart of all American alternate histories of a Nazi triumph in World War II: should the United States have intervened in the conflict against Nazi Germany or remained neutral? As in the case of Great Britain, American writers and audiences have argued over this question from the moment it first surfaced. The first American alternate histories on the subject of a Nazi military victory appeared at the time of the war itself. In contrast to the situation in Britain, however, they appeared less frequently and in smaller numbers. Since Americans had less reason than Britons to fear an imminent German invasion of their country,

they may have had less incentive to explore its imaginary consequences and thus produced fewer counterfactual accounts during the war years. Whatever the case may be, this trend persisted during the first decade and a half of the postwar era. In a period in which cold-war anxieties about the Soviet Union overshadowed any lingering concerns with the bygone Third Reich, it was predictable perhaps that no alternate histories on the subject of a Nazi wartime victory appeared whatsoever.

Only in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the renewal of international attention towards Germany's Nazi past, did allohistorical explorations of an imaginary German defeat and occupation of the United States begin to emerge in significant numbers. These early narratives uniformly depicted a Nazi wartime victory as having horrific consequences. In so doing, they pursued a dual agenda of preserving the Nazis' crimes in memory and vindicating the United States' decision to intervene in World War II against the Germans. By the late 1970s, however, both the content and function of narratives portraying a Nazi wartime victory began to change. If early postwar accounts depicted a Nazi-ruled world in dystopian terms, subsequent narratives rendered it in far less frightening fashion. Moreover, if the function of early postwar allohistorical depictions of a Nazi triumph was to justify the recent past, the function of later accounts was to critique it. This shift reflected the dawning of a more pessimistic mood in the United States during the 1970s. In the years since 1989, by contrast, the end of the cold war and the restoration of American optimism have led alternate histories to return to their traditional self-congratulatory function of vindicating both the past and present. At the same time, though, these narratives' relatively mild depiction of the victorious Reich provided further signs that the Nazi era's horror has continued to fade in memory. In short, over the course of the postwar era, the shifting character of American alternate histories of a Nazi triumph points to the emergence of a more normalized view of the Nazi past.

WARTIME ALTERNATE HISTORIES

Wartime alternate histories were fewer in number in the United States than in Britain.² Those that did appear, however, resembled their British counterparts in depicting Nazism as the epitome of evil. These "future histories" aimed to convince Americans of the dangers posed by the Nazis and of the need to intervene in World War II in order to defeat them. At the time that these accounts appeared, not all Americans were convinced of the wisdom of getting involved in the war. Unlike the case of Britain,

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whose population was largely in favor of fighting Germany by 1939, Americans at the time were deeply divided into separate interventionist and isolationist camps. While President Franklin D. Roosevelt was firmly convinced that Nazi Germany posed a serious threat to American interests, isolationist politicians like Burton Wheeler, Robert Taft, and Gerald Nye, along with openly "revisionist" intellectuals like Charles Beard and Harry Elmer Barnes, argued that a Nazi victory in Europe was preferable to the detrimental impact that intervention in a European war might have upon American democracy.³ Over the course of the 1930s, public opinion gradually swung over to the interventionist camp, but Roosevelt remained constrained by isolationist demands all the way up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The alternate histories of the war years reflected these larger tensions within American society. Significantly, however, they all clearly supported the interventionist cause.

Wartime depictions of a Nazi victory were motivated by the desire to dramatize the dangers posed by Germany to the United States. The two most important accounts of the war years appeared in 1940: Hendrik Willem van Loon's novel *Invasion* and Fred Allhoff's serialized novel *Lightning in the Night*.⁴ Although the novels were set in different times (van Loon's in 1940 and Allhoff's in 1945–46), they resembled each other in providing highly detailed chronicles of a German military invasion of the United States. *Invasion* was the more upbeat of the two tales. While it featured the Nazis' bombing of New York City, Galveston, and New Orleans, the novel concluded by having the combined forces of the American air force and navy repel the German assault in forty-eight hours. *Lightning in the Night*, by contrast, painted a gloomier picture, depicting the Nazis bombing such cities as Rochester, Cleveland, and Indianapolis before conquering Washington D.C. and blowing up the White House (see Figure 6). Yet while *Lightning in the Night* imagined a dire future for the United States, it too ended on a positive note. For when the American president dramatically informs Hitler that the United States possess an atomic bomb and will use it unless Germany agrees to peace on American terms, the Nazi dictator refuses and is summarily killed by his own generals, who are desperate to avert the Reich's atomic destruction. Like *Invasion*, therefore, *Lightning in the Night* ultimately provided readers with a happy ending.

In their overall function, *Invasion* and *Lightning in the Night* resembled British wartime alternate histories in their attempt to warn readers about the serious threats posed by Nazism to the United States. Both writers' motives in writing their tales were to encourage popular support for interventionism.



Figure 6 Adolf Hitler visits the Lincoln Memorial after the Nazi invasion of Washington D.C. in Fred Allhoff's serialized novel, *Lightning in the Night*, which appeared over several issues in the American magazine *Liberty* in 1940.

Van Loon, a naturalized Dutch-American writer who was active in the propaganda war against the Germans, warned his readers against complacently believing “it can never happen here” by reminding them that the inhabitants of the Netherlands and Norway had naively said the very same thing before being occupied by the German Wehrmacht.⁵ Instead, he urged readers to recognize the need for intervention against the Germans, underscoring this point by depicting them in the novel as fanatically committed to a racist vision of world dominance.⁶ Allhoff, meanwhile, was equally committed to intervention, even soliciting the advice of military officials in writing his novel.⁷ In their depiction of German fanaticism, in short, both *Invasion* and *Lightning in the Night* rejected any prospect of America remaining neutral in the European conflict.

Once the United States entered the war against Nazi Germany in late 1941, however, the goal of intervention was fulfilled and wartime alternate histories largely disappeared. Of course, Americans remained aware of the need for national unity in the fight against Nazism. Thus, the only other allohistorical narrative to appear during the war – Marion White’s 1942 novel *If We Should Fail* – graphically depicted the Nazis committing vicious atrocities in occupied America in the hope of overcoming the worrisome fact that Americans had still not yet “united sufficiently to pursue this greatest of all wars.”⁸ This work remained exceptional, however. Although the Nazi threat remained a fixture in American popular culture throughout the war – especially in films and comic books – it largely ceased to inspire works of alternate history.⁹ By the time the war ended, indeed, they had entirely vanished.¹⁰

RECEPTION

Significantly, the positive reception of wartime alternate histories testified to a public willingness to accept their underlying interventionist messages. *Invasion* was praised in many American journals and newspapers as “no hoax” and as a book that succeeded in “[making] the blood run cold.”¹¹ *Lightning in the Night*, meanwhile, was an even greater success, boosting the sales of the magazine in which it was serialized, *Liberty*, to an all-time high. So successful was the tale that it was condemned by the German government in 1940 as an “outlandish exaggeration.”¹² Finally, Marion White’s tales of German brutality in *If We Should Fail* were hailed as “pack[ing] a propaganda punch” even though “the warning they convey is no longer questioned.”¹³ In short, the public approval of wartime alternate histories revealed a nation united about the need to defeat Nazi Germany.

THE POSTWAR YEARS: ALTERNATE HISTORY
AS VINDICATION, 1945–73

With the collapse of the Third Reich in 1945, however, allohistorical accounts of a Nazi victory became scarce. Indeed, none appeared whatsoever for the first decade and a half after the war. This absence was largely due to growing cold-war fears of Soviet communism, which gradually began to overshadow the importance of World War II and the Third Reich in the American consciousness.¹⁴ To be sure, Americans had hardly forgotten about the conflict, which they continued to view largely from a moralistic perspective as a “good war” fought against evil enemies.¹⁵ The war, after all, had benefited the United States more than any other nation, making it the world’s pre-eminent economic, political, and military superpower.¹⁶ And as was demonstrated by the representation of the war in postwar popular culture – especially films – Americans continued to regard the Germans according to old stereotypes as formidable adversaries who needed to be defeated lest they impose their rule on the world.¹⁷ In short, in the early years after the war’s end Americans had every reason to follow the lead of the British and produce their own self-congratulatory alternate histories on the Nazi era. Yet for the first decade and a half after 1945, Americans were too preoccupied with leading the fight against communism in the present to smugly dwell on the recent successes of the past. If it surfaced at all in these years, the impulse towards counterfactual speculation in the United States addressed such themes as a Soviet invasion of America and superpower nuclear showdown.¹⁸ This trend changed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, when the same international events that sparked new interest in the Third Reich in Britain provided a hospitable climate for new works of alternate history to appear in the United States.¹⁹ As in Britain, these narratives revived the wartime image of Nazism as the epitome of evil. Yet their function was new. Instead of motivating Americans to fight against the Germans, these accounts served the didactic function of preserving the Germans’ crimes in memory and of vindicating America’s historic decision to intervene in World War II against them.

The first work to revive the demonic wartime image of the Germans was a short story by the well-known science fiction writer, Cyril M. Kornbluth, entitled “Two Dooms.”²⁰ Published in July 1958, Kornbluth’s tale focuses on an American nuclear scientist named Edward Royland who is busily engaged in the effort to develop the atomic bomb at the American research facility at Los Alamos during World War II. As the story opens, Royland is

highly ambivalent about the moral dimensions of the project – so much so, that he keeps secret a recent breakthrough that promises to clinch the bomb's creation. That is, until he visits a Native American colleague who provides him with some hallucinogenic Mexican mushrooms that send him off into (or at least prompt him to hallucinate the existence of) a world, 150 years in the future, in which the Nazis have won World War II. In this alternate world, the Nazis have won because of the failure of the United States to develop the atomic bomb. For without it, the United States is forced to launch a sea-borne invasion of the Japanese islands that leads to the decimation of American troops and allows the German army time to regroup and eventually conquer all of Europe and America.

However implausible, Kornbluth's vision of a Nazi wartime victory was notable for its nightmarish quality. In the tale, Royland first witnesses the horrors of life in the Japanese-occupied American southwest, a brutal place ruled by feudal samurai overlords who have enserfed the native population and forced them to live impoverished, ignorant lives in small-scale, collective farming villages. More horrific still is German-occupied America, which Royland comes to know firsthand after being deported to an extermination camp outside of Chicago. There he witnesses the selection of sick prisoners for immediate death and is himself selected as a candidate for live vivisection by a quack camp doctor. Only once Royland ingratiates himself with the doctor by telling him a fantastic story about having been sent into the future by a satanic Jewish magician is he able to discover, and quickly ingest, a hidden cache of the same hallucinogenic mushrooms that sent him into the alternate world in the first place. By the time he groggily regains consciousness in the real present, Royland recognizes the implications of his otherworldly experience and resolves to notify his boss, Rotschmidt, that he has figured out how to make the atomic bomb a reality. As the tale's narrator recounts:

He wouldn't wait until morning; a meteorite might kill him . . . He would go directly to Rotschmidt . . . [and] tell him we have the Bomb.

We have a symbol to offer the Japanese now, something to which they . . . will surrender.

Rotschmidt would be philosophical. He would probably sigh about the Bomb: 'Ah, do we ever act responsibly? Do we ever know what the consequences of our decisions will be?'

And Royland would have to try to avoid answering him very sharply: 'Yes. This once we damn well do.'²¹

With this ending, "Two Dooms" revealed its chief allohistorical function – to justify the United States' conduct in World War II. By depicting Royland

and his fellow atomic research scientists overcoming their pacifist reservations about developing and using the bomb, the tale vindicated the United States' decision in 1941 to reject isolationism and intervene in the war against the Germans. Kornbluth likely had several motives in promoting this message. On the one hand, he may have been hoping to justify the reality of the postwar world. Indeed, "Two Dooms" provided a certain sense of solace to readers during the cold war by reminding them that the main source of their present-day worries – the atomic bomb – had helped avert terrors that might have become reality without it. At the same time, however, "Two Dooms" aimed to remind readers about the real, historical crimes of the Nazis. As a World War II veteran who had fought the Germans as an infantryman in the Battle of the Bulge, Kornbluth, after 1945, was a fierce opponent of fascism who was personally committed to preserving the memory of Nazi crimes.²² Kornbluth, indeed, seemed eager to counteract the era's forgive-and-forget attitude by re-demonizing the Germans. Throughout the tale, he depicted the Germans as worse villains than the Japanese, thereby inverting racist wartime stereotypes of America's Asian foes and debunking any belief in the existence of moral or cultural affinities between Germans and Americans. Kornbluth advanced this agenda through his critical depiction of Royland's own cultural biases. After witnessing the brutality of life in the Japanese zone, Royland initially greets the first Germans he meets with relief, assuming that, in contrast to the primitively violent Japanese, they are at least "human" and "members of Western Industrial Culture like him."²³ So confident is Royland of the Germans' basic rationality, indeed, that he offers the Germans his services in building them a bomb. Yet his faith in the Germans is quickly exposed as misplaced. Before long, he is deported to an extermination camp, at which point he regrets having dismissed as mere rumor-mongering the lamentations of a Jewish fellow scientist at Los Alamos about Holocaust atrocities. By the end of the tale, Royland's exposure to Nazi barbarism convinces him of the fundamental irrationality of the German mind. It is unclear to what extent the political events of the late 1950s influenced Kornbluth's tale. Yet at a time in which Germany's Nazi past was coming to dominate the headlines, "Two Dooms" could not help but remind Americans about the pitfalls of viewing the present without a full awareness of the recent past.

If Kornbluth inaugurated the new allohistorical attention towards Nazism, no one did more to spread it into the American mainstream than famed journalist William L. Shirer. Having sparked international controversy with his blockbuster work of history, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, in 1960, Shirer abandoned non-fiction for fantasy one year

later in a widely read essay, published in the December 1961 issue of *Look* magazine, entitled "If Hitler Had Won World War II."²⁴ This essay was largely an empirically documented discussion of what the Nazis *did* do in occupied Europe as a method of debating what they might have done in the United States had they succeeded in defeating it. Indeed, Shirer stressed that his essay was not merely a product of the imagination, writing, "One has only to consult the captured German secret documents dealing with Hitler's confidential plans for the subjugation of the conquered peoples and then observe how he began to carry them out in the lands he occupied."²⁵ Using this method, Shirer proceeded to describe the brutal occupation that never happened.

In "If Hitler Had Won World War II," the defeat of the United States comes about as the result of a joint German and Japanese invasion in 1944. While the Japanese march ashore on the Pacific coast and proceed to occupy the western third of the nation up to the Rocky Mountains, the Nazis seize the remaining two-thirds of the country. In short order, both nations subject the United States to a policy of brutal occupation. Like Kornbluth, Shirer imagined the Japanese approach as much more lenient than that of the Nazis. The Japanese exploit their territory for its "oil, minerals, lumber, and food," but otherwise leave the Americans "pretty much to themselves."²⁶ In contrast, the Nazis follow up their invasion of the east coast by dissolving the nation's main political institutions and arresting its political and intellectual leaders. After suppressing the mass media, outlawing trade unions, closing churches, and destroying synagogues, they move on to more dramatic criminal acts, such as razing Washington D.C. as a symbol of what Hitler calls "decadent Western democracy." Nazi criminality reaches its apex, however, with the extension of the Final Solution to American Jewry. According to Shirer:

Under Hitler's specific orders, occupied North America has been made *Judenfrei* (free of Jews). The figures for those gassed at the great extermination camp in New Jersey have never been published. Eichmann, who was in charge of the grisly business, recently boasted . . . that they amounted to nearly five million. More than a million Jews have [escaped] . . . to the Japanese-occupied West . . . [while] some quarter of a million have escaped to Mexico, many going from there to South America.²⁷

Jews are not the only ones persecuted, however. So are other Americans, such as the "Negroes," who suffer "complete segregation," as well as the majority white population, which is subjected to severe economic exploitation as part of the Nazis' program of turning them into "Americans slaves for

the . . . Master German Race.”²⁸ Ultimately, for Shirer, the Nazi occupation of the United States, like the Nazis’ real occupation of much of Europe, inaugurates a “truly dreadful era” of unmitigated, unimaginable horror.²⁹

In writing “If Hitler Had Won World War II,” Shirer aimed to revive the American memory of Germany’s real historical crimes. The tone of moral outrage that framed his allohistorical discussion of a Nazi victory mirrored the tone used in his bestselling historical study of the Third Reich’s rise and fall. Both were rooted in Shirer’s own left-liberal, anti-Nazi political leanings, but they also reflected the resurgence of American concerns about Germany’s Nazi past in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Despite official US–German friendship and cooperation in the NATO alliance, Shirer did not want the American public’s forgetfulness towards the Germans’ not-so-recent Nazi past to lull it into a false sense of security. It was most likely for this reason that Shirer’s alternate history, like Kornbluth’s, emphasized that nothing – not even the putative racial similarities between the Germans and the “Germanic” Americans – would have spared them the same savage treatment meted out by the Nazis to the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe. It was thus a political lesson that Shirer hoped his allohistorical essay could provide: not to place America’s future security in the hands of former enemies (no matter how officially embraced in NATO) but to preserve the nation’s long tradition of self-reliance. As he declared in his concluding description of American resistance activity against the Nazis: “The spirit of the American people has not been broken. They may not have fully appreciated their freedoms when they had them. Perhaps they took them for granted – until it was too late. But they are determined to win them back.”³⁰ In short, like Kornbluth, Shirer used the grim scenario of a defeated America to highlight the wisdom of the United States’ real historical decision to fight against, and finally defeat, Nazi Germany.

Shirer’s moralistic writing on the subject of Nazism, in turn, was echoed by the early postwar era’s most important allohistorical narrative about a Nazi victory in World War II, legendary science fiction writer Philip K. Dick’s 1962 novel *The Man in the High Castle* (see Figure 7).³¹ Like the tales of Kornbluth and Shirer, Dick’s narrative was also set in an America that had been defeated and occupied by the Germans and Japanese. Unlike them, however, *The Man in the High Castle* was distinguished by an extremely intricate and multilayered plot. Dick’s novel resists simple summary, but in its broadest contours it chronicles how the lives of various American and Japanese characters in San Francisco are disrupted by the erratic policies of the hegemonic Nazi regime. The central character, a

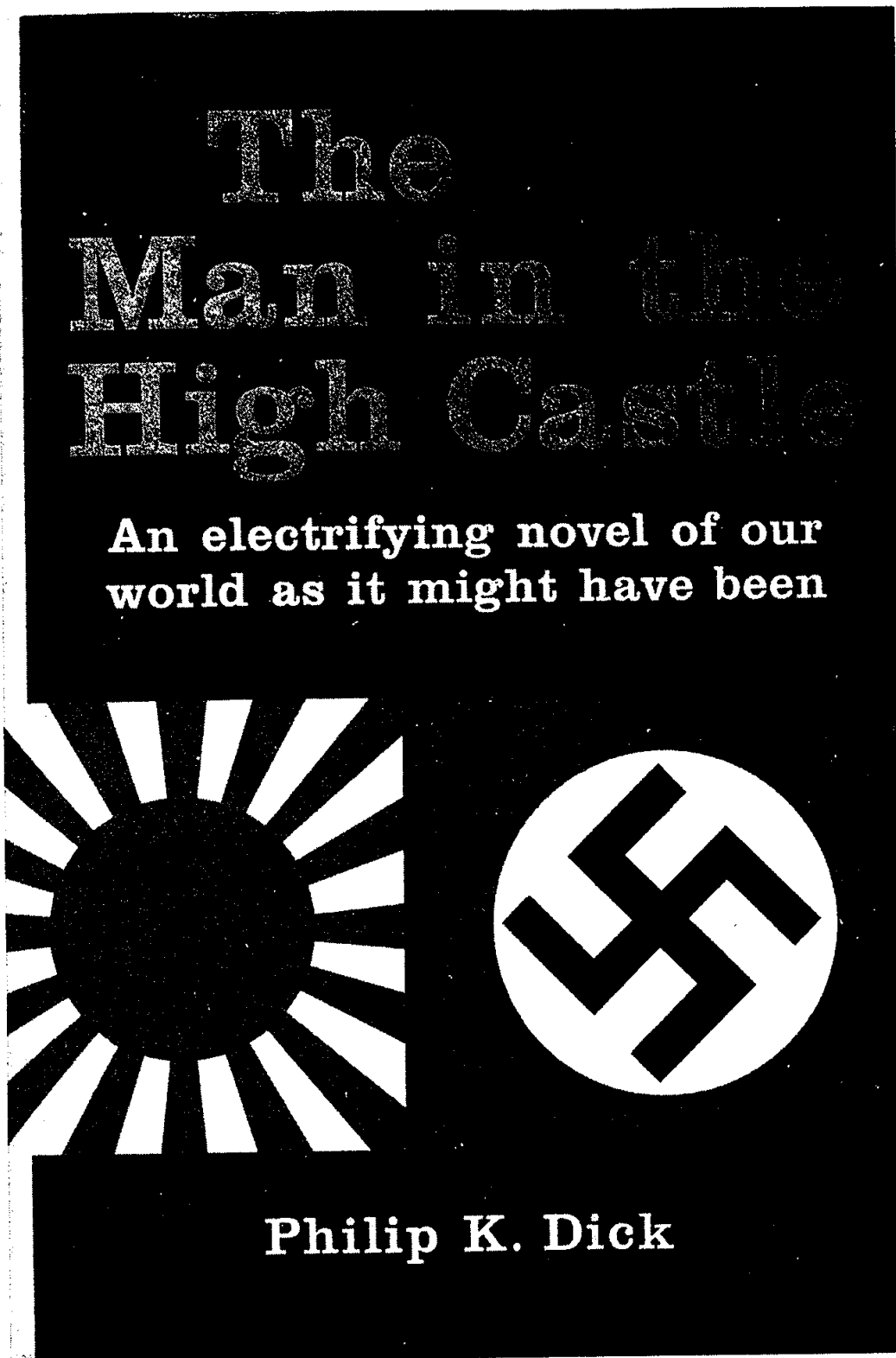


Figure 7 Cover of the first American edition of Philip K. Dick's 1962 novel
The Man in the High Castle.

benevolent Japanese diplomat named Mr. Tagomi, spends most of the novel attempting to gather intelligence from a suspected Swedish spy, named Mr. Baynes, about Germany's internal political turmoil and its implications for the nation's geopolitical behavior in the near future. Nazi Germany, at this point in its history, is in the midst of a fierce power struggle between competing party factions following the death of Chancellor Martin Bormann (the successor to the senile Führer, Adolf Hitler, who has been placed in a sanitarium). Agitated by this news, Tagomi is alarmed to learn from Baynes (who turns out to be a well-meaning German Abwehr agent named Rudolf Wegener) that the new chancellor, Josef Goebbels, is preparing an apocalyptic plan called "Operation Dandelion" to destroy Japan with nuclear weapons, seize its colonies, and extend German domination across the entire globe. Tagomi works tirelessly to avert this scenario, helping Wegener arrange a meeting with a high-ranking Japanese military official, General Tedeki, in order to warn him of Operation Dandelion, and ultimately plays the hero by shooting dead several German SD agents who try to assassinate the general. Tagomi and Wegener's modest efforts, however, fail to bring the novel to a happy conclusion. Although their disclosure of Goebbels' doomsday plan helps avert immediate disaster by boosting the fortunes of the chancellor's chief rival, Reinhard Heydrich (who opposes the plan), the world remains a highly unstable place, poised on the brink of a nuclear holocaust. As Wegener pessimistically concludes after arriving back in Germany, "The terrible dilemma of our lives. Whatever happens, it is evil beyond compare."³²

The Man in the High Castle's plot was far more nuanced than is suggested by the preceding synopsis, but it was deceptively simple in its depiction of the allohistorical origins and consequences of a Nazi wartime victory. Like Kornbluth and Shirer, Dick shared the interventionist belief that the United States had been correct in fighting Nazi Germany. This assessment was apparent in the novel's pointing to isolationism as responsible for America's defeat by the Nazis. For it is the assassination of President Roosevelt in 1932 and the resulting rise to power of his isolationist successor, President Bricker, that prevents the United States from re-arming and being able to resist the eventual Nazi attack.³³ Dick's support for interventionism was furthermore visible in the novel's horrific portrait of the United States under Nazi occupation. Like Kornbluth and Shirer, Dick juxtaposed Japanese and German occupation policies in order to accentuate the severity of the latter. The Japanese, for their part, treat occupied America in traditional imperialistic fashion, exploiting it

economically but refraining from overt acts of terror or violence. Tagomi, in particular, is a tolerant and humanitarian figure, who firmly rejects the lure of antisemitism and recoils at the uncouth barbarity of the Nazi leadership.³⁴ Tagomi's moral stature, indeed, stands in sharp contrast to the barbarism of the Nazis, whose fanatical excesses Dick outlines in fleeting, but nevertheless graphic, terms. Not only have the Nazis murdered most of American Jewry, they have exterminated much of Europe's Slavic population, and embarked upon horrific genetic experiments on the continent of Africa, where they have transformed the few surviving natives into cannibalistic slaves. There is no limit to the Nazis' craving for power, as is demonstrated by their completion of such herculean, if demented, schemes as using nuclear energy to drain and transform the Mediterranean Sea into farmland and using rocket technology to colonize Mars. The omnipotence of Nazi rule, finally, is underscored by the lack of resistance to it. Not only have the Nazis conquered America physically, they have done so mentally as well. Many of the characters in *The Man in the High Castle* embrace Nazi values, especially antisemitism, and are inclined to collaboration, the worst being the antiques dealer, Robert Childan, who so admires the Germans that he proclaims that the world would have been much worse had they lost the war.³⁵ More than anything else, the articulation of such a defeatist remark by an American underscores the totality of the Nazis' victory.

In the end, though, *The Man in the High Castle* was at its bleakest in actually raising doubts about the reality of the Nazis' triumph. As a writer who consistently questioned the nature of reality in his literary work, Dick appropriately concluded *The Man in the High Castle* by provocatively undermining its essential allohistorical narrative.³⁶ One of the most important subplots in the novel revolves around the publication of a work of alternate history entitled *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, written by a man named Hawthorne Abendsen who is rumored to live in a fortified mountain retreat (the "high castle" that gives the novel its name) near Cheyenne, Wyoming. This controversial book, though banned throughout North America and Europe, engrosses all of the novel's central characters with its "fictional" account of the Nazis' defeat in the war. All of them are highly entertained by the novel, although they all dismiss it as far-fetched. By the end of *The Man in the High Castle*, however, it becomes clear (thanks to the services of the ancient Taoist oracle known as the *I Ching*, or *The Book of Changes*) that the novel's counterfactual premise is actually true. The Nazis really *have* lost the war, but no one knows it.³⁷ In a conclusion typical of Dick's writing, fiction is exposed as reality and reality as fiction. At first

glance, this ontologically disruptive sci-fi twist might be seen as diminishing the frightful quality of *The Man in the High Castle*. For it could be taken to mean that the reality of Nazi rule is nothing but an illusion. Yet the bleakness of the novel's conclusion remains. For the reality of a Nazi victory only becomes an illusion for those who are capable of recognizing the fictionality of their own existence. And, as is implied by Abendsen's ultimate reluctance to face the truth penned by his own hand, most human beings are innately unable to deny their own reality.³⁸ Dick concluded *The Man in the High Castle*, then, on a pessimistic note by casting doubt upon the likelihood of any escape from political oppression.³⁹

In painting such a gloomy portrait of life under Nazi rule, Dick was prompted by a passionate moral commitment to preserving the memory of Nazi barbarism. The writer's interest in the history of the Third Reich was longstanding and dated back to the early 1950s. Dick, indeed, spent seven years conducting research for *The Man in the High Castle*, even reading captured Nazi war documents housed at the University of California, Berkeley, research library. This period of immersion in the primary sources of the Nazi era turned the writer into a fierce anti-Nazi. As he put it, "I thought I hated those guys before I did the research. After I did the research . . . I had created for myself an enemy that I would hate for the rest of my life. Fascism. Wherever it appears . . . it is the enemy."⁴⁰ Like Shirer, then (whose work he admired), Dick was driven by moral reasons to expose the evils of Nazism.⁴¹ It is unclear whether the growing attention to Germany's Nazi past in the late 1950s and early 1960s provided Dick with extra motivation to write his novel, but it may well have made a contribution, given his conviction that fascism had not died with the Third Reich but lived on in the present.⁴² Ultimately, his longstanding commitment to exposing the historical evils of Nazism and to fighting its contemporary manifestations in the present provided enough passion to make *The Man in the High Castle* the era's most eloquent portrayal of the horrific character of a Nazi-ruled world.

Following the influential accounts by Kornbluth, Shirer, and Dick, allohistorical depictions of a Nazi wartime victory ebbed during the remainder of the 1960s. Still, the final such account of the decade – episode number 28 of the fledgling science fiction television series, *Star Trek*, entitled "The City on the Edge of Forever" – further demonstrated the scenario's enduring appeal. Regarded as one of the series' most famous episodes, "The City on the Edge of Forever" was based on a screenplay by the well-known writer Harlan Ellison, and was first aired on April 6, 1967.⁴³ While the episode controversially diverged from the screenplay in

certain respects, it generally followed Ellison's dramatic account of the consequences of a Nazi wartime victory.⁴⁴ The basic premise of the television episode is that the Starship Enterprise's doctor, Leonard McCoy, in a state of drug-induced insanity, beams down to a mysterious planet and accidentally enters into a time portal that transports him back to the Earth of the 1930s. As a consequence of his actions, the course of history is drastically altered. (When the Enterprise's chief communications officer, Uhura, tries to get in touch with the Starship, for example, she finds that it no longer exists.) To try to undo McCoy's calamitous actions, Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock follow him back in time to discover the cause of history's radical transformation. As it turns out, McCoy has accidentally changed the course of history by preventing a young woman named Edith Keeler (played by Joan Collins) from meeting her intended fate of being killed by a speeding car while crossing the street. A strongly humanitarian woman who runs a homeless shelter and preaches a philosophy of pacifism, Keeler, as a result, is now able to pursue her dream (cut short in "real history") of spreading her pacifist movement across the nation. This achievement, however, ends up having unforeseen consequences, as is made clear by an exchange between Spock and Kirk. Looking into recorded images of the 1930s stored in a makeshift version of Spock's tricorder, the two men note the results of McCoy's interference with the past:

SPOCK: This is how history went after McCoy changed it. Here in the 1930s a growing pacifist movement delayed the United States' entry into the Second World War. While peace negotiations dragged on, Germany had time to complete its heavy water experiments.

KIRK: Germany ... Fascism ... Hitler ... – won [the] Second World War ...

SPOCK: Because all this lets them develop the A-bomb first ... With the bomb and with the V-2 rockets to carry them, Germany captured the world.⁴⁵

Following this pivotal interchange, "The City on the Edge of Forever" does not go into any further detail regarding the horrors of Nazi rule. Yet, as with other more detailed accounts, its chief lesson was clear. All history in the wake of a Nazi victory – in this case, all interplanetary history – is changed for the worse.

In its overall allohistorical narrative, "The City on the Edge of Forever" served to vindicate real history. Like Kornbluth's tale, "Two Dooms," it justified the American decision to intervene against the Germans in World War II by pointing to the horrific consequences that a platform of

isolationism – driven by pacifism – would have wrought. In the process, it found redemption in tragedy.⁴⁶ Just as Kornbluth's tale viewed the horrific atomic devastation of Hiroshima as necessary for later peace, "The City on the Edge of Forever" depicted Edith Keeler's death (and, symbolically, the death of pacifism itself) as necessary for averting allohistorical catastrophe. Both Spock and Kirk demonstrate a clear recognition of this fact in meditating over the painful ironies of Edith Keeler's historical fate. When Kirk exclaims, "But she was right. Peace *was* the way," Spock responds sagely, "She was right – but at the wrong time." Finally, in the episode's emotional climax, Kirk overcomes his deep feelings of love for Edith Keeler and allows her to be killed by a speeding truck, knowing that it is for the sake of humankind's future. In the end, history has to be allowed to unfold as it really occurred, in all of its tragic dimensions.

Interestingly, the didactic message behind "The City on the Edge of Forever" was multifaceted. Ellison's original screenplay and the eventual televised version diverged in their goals. Harlan Ellison's specific views on the subject of Nazism are unknown. But as a writer of Jewish background who felt the pain of antisemitism directly as a youth growing up in the midwest, he no doubt viewed it with disfavor.⁴⁷ His apocalyptic description of a Nazi wartime victory thus most likely expressed personal views in addition to confirming the reigning view of Nazism as the epitome of evil. Significantly, however, the intended message of the televised version of "The City on the Edge of Forever" was much more presentist in orientation. In portraying Edith Keeler's death as necessary for the progress of history, the producers of the *Star Trek* television series expressed their opposition to the growing pacifist movement protesting the war in Vietnam.⁴⁸ This explains why the producers transformed Edith Keeler's profession from a well-meaning social worker in Ellison's original draft to a more overtly political leader of a pacifist movement in the television broadcast. This shift was not to the liking of Ellison, who himself was opposed to the Vietnam war, and who went apoplectic upon learning of the changes made to his script. Yet he had no authority over the final version. Whether or not audiences in 1967 America perceived the pro-Vietnam war subtext, the final version of "The City on the Edge of Forever" ended up subtly universalizing Ellison's historically rooted screenplay to offer a political message about the present.

Following the ultra sci-fi account of a Nazi wartime victory in "The City on the Edge of Forever," the portrayal of the scenario assumed still another literary form with journalist Eric Norden's 1973 novella *The Ultimate Solution*.⁴⁹ Written as a detective thriller, *The Ultimate Solution* anticipated

later British works like *SS-GB* and *Fatherland*, which also borrowed from the genre's conventions. Yet where Deighton and Harris's novels featured protagonists who were generally sympathetic despite their moral shortcomings, Norden's featured a central character, New York City detective Bill Halder, who was thoroughly loathsome. *The Ultimate Solution* takes place in 1974 in an America that has been under Nazi rule since 1946, the year that the Nazis succeed in compelling the United States government to accept German rule or suffer total nuclear destruction (the Nazis nuke Chicago and Pittsburgh as a demonstration of their seriousness). As the novel opens, a routine police investigation into the assault of a New York City antiques dealer quickly snowballs into a larger political crisis. The assailant, Lieutenant Halder learns, was in all likelihood a Jew – indeed, “the last Jew on earth,” as the irate German official sent to investigate the case, the former German Einsatzgruppen death-squad chief, Johann von Leeb, ominously declares.⁵⁰ By 1964, the Nazis have murdered all of the world's Jews, having killed some four million in the United States and raided the globe's other continents for the remainder, even threatening Japan (which controls one-third of the non-Nazi-ruled part of the globe) with nuclear destruction unless it hands over its few Jewish inhabitants. Halder, chosen by Leeb to lead the search for the last Jew on earth, earnestly pursues his mission but comes up empty. Having failed to locate him, the best Halder can do is to theorize that he is somehow being sought by the Japanese, who are eager to embarrass the Germans and register a diplomatic coup. Through further investigation, however, during which he tortures to death one of the Jew's acquaintances, Halder learns that a colleague in the Gestapo, Beck, has captured him on his own. In the novel's climactic, if implausible, end, Beck discloses that the Jew, Felix Hirsch, has mysteriously arrived in New York City from an alternate world in which the Nazis actually *lost* the war in 1945. While Halder scoffs at this explanation, Beck confesses that he has kept Hirsch hidden in order to fight the Nazi regime, hoping that Hirsch can be used as a “gateway to another world . . . that isn't drenched in blood.”⁵¹ Halder, a good Nazi collaborator, will have none of it, however, and kills both Beck and Hirsch with his Schmeisser submachine gun. With this deed, *The Ultimate Solution* abruptly ends, the last Jew from an alternate past as dead as all remaining hope for an alternate future.

Although weaker than Shirer and Dick's creative efforts, *The Ultimate Solution* effectively articulated its interventionist agenda in depicting the allohistorical origins and consequences of the Nazi victory over the United States. Like Dick, Norden explicitly blamed isolationism for America's

defeat. As in *The Man in the High Castle*, *The Ultimate Solution* portrayed the removal of Franklin D. Roosevelt as president (once more through assassination) as bringing about the more isolationist successor, Huey Long, who keeps America out of World War II and thereby seals its fate. Just as Norden's explanation of the reasons for America's defeat served to justify America's real historical entry into the war, so too did his unsparing depiction of the brutality of life in America under Nazi rule. Like Sarban's *The Sound of His Horn*, Norden's tale emphasized the brutal, sadistic, and perverted dimensions of Nazism. The Nazis conquer America with the utmost savagery, punishing the home-grown resistance for sheltering Jews by destroying entire towns – à la Lidice – such as Mount Kisco, New York, and executing hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish Americans for defying German orders. After consolidating their rule, moreover, the Nazis elevate sadism to a social norm, breeding blacks as domestic animals, using Slavs for savage blood sports, and rendering all racially "inferior" peoples defenseless by giving them tracheotomies at birth to prevent them from speaking or screaming. This inversion of conventional values is epitomized by the commonly heard view that the Final Solution was "the greatest single achievement of recorded history."⁵²

No less brutal than the situation in the United States is that in Germany itself, which continues to be ruled by ideological fanatics well into the 1970s. Although Hitler by this time has retreated into the background with dementia (a double appears at all state occasions), the Reich's leaders, most prominently Reinhard Heydrich, continue to lust after total power, plotting a final nuclear reckoning with Japan to achieve complete world domination. Indeed, by the end of the novel, the Nazi government has given the Japanese a final ultimatum to surrender or face nuclear destruction. On the whole, the vast majority of the German and American characters in *The Ultimate Solution* are either wholly depraved or pragmatically immoral, suggesting that a Nazi victory in World War II would have been nightmarish both for the victors and the vanquished.

Norden's precise aims in painting such a horrific portrait of a Nazi victory are unclear, but they most likely grew out of a deep moral commitment to preserving the memory of Nazi criminality.⁵³ The journalist's interest in the subject of the Third Reich reflected the surging fascination in Hitler and the Nazi past during the early 1970s known as the "Hitler Wave." This growth of interest in Nazism (discussed in greater depth in chapter 2) had partly been unleashed by the publication of former Nazi armaments minister Albert Speer's bestselling memoir, *Inside the Third Reich*, in 1970. Significantly, Norden conducted a marathon ten-day-long

interview with Speer which was published in the June 1971 issue of *Playboy* magazine.⁵⁴ Speer's comment to Norden that "If the Nazis had won, [people] . . . would be living in a nightmare" no doubt inspired the writer to imagine some of the very scenarios that he described in *The Ultimate Solution*.⁵⁵ In this sense, Norden's novel can be seen as a morally informed critique of the Hitler Wave. During an era in which many Americans seemed to be losing sight of Nazism's criminality, Norden redirected readers' attention to it – in the process, vindicating the real historical decision of the United States to intervene in World War II. At the same time, however, even Norden's tale, by graphically depicting Nazism's criminal tendencies, betrayed certain signs of a lurid fascination with his topic. His artistic inventiveness in conjuring up unimaginable future horrors leaves the suspicion that it was done not only to condemn Nazism but out of a calculated desire to appeal to the lowest instincts of a pulp-fiction audience and sell books. Although he would hardly be the first, Norden, too, seemed to fall victim to the Hitler Wave's tendency to aestheticize Nazi evil.

The same year as Norden's novel, the final portrayal during this period of a Nazi victory in World War II appeared in the form of a two-part story in the popular DC comic book the *Justice League of America* (see Figure 8).⁵⁶ Entitled "Crisis on Earth-X," and written by prolific comic book writer Len Wein, the story describes the attempt of the superheroes of the Justice League of America or JLA (including Superman, Batman, Green Arrow, and others) to help their superhero colleagues, the Freedom Fighters (including the Human Bomb, the Ray, and Uncle Sam), escape from an alternate earth where the Nazis have somehow won World War II.⁵⁷ Although the plot is highly convoluted (with a predictable amount of high-octane comic book fisticuffs), it confirmed the reigning bleak image of a Nazi-ruled world.⁵⁸ Not only do the Nazis assume total control over the United States (they carve Hitler's face into Mount Rushmore for effect), they create an interstellar system of mind-control satellites that maintain their global hegemony. So demonic are the Nazis, indeed, that they end up being overwhelmed by their own twisted ideas. In the story's climactic – if far-fetched – conclusion, the superhero Red Tornado succeeds in penetrating the main Nazi mind-control satellite and appears to encounter Adolf Hitler himself, only to punch off his head and discover that he and the entire Nazi leadership on earth are androids who have been installed in power by the very mind-control machines they have invented to implement their rule. The resolution of the plot is not particularly significant (the superheroes succeed in their mission to liberate

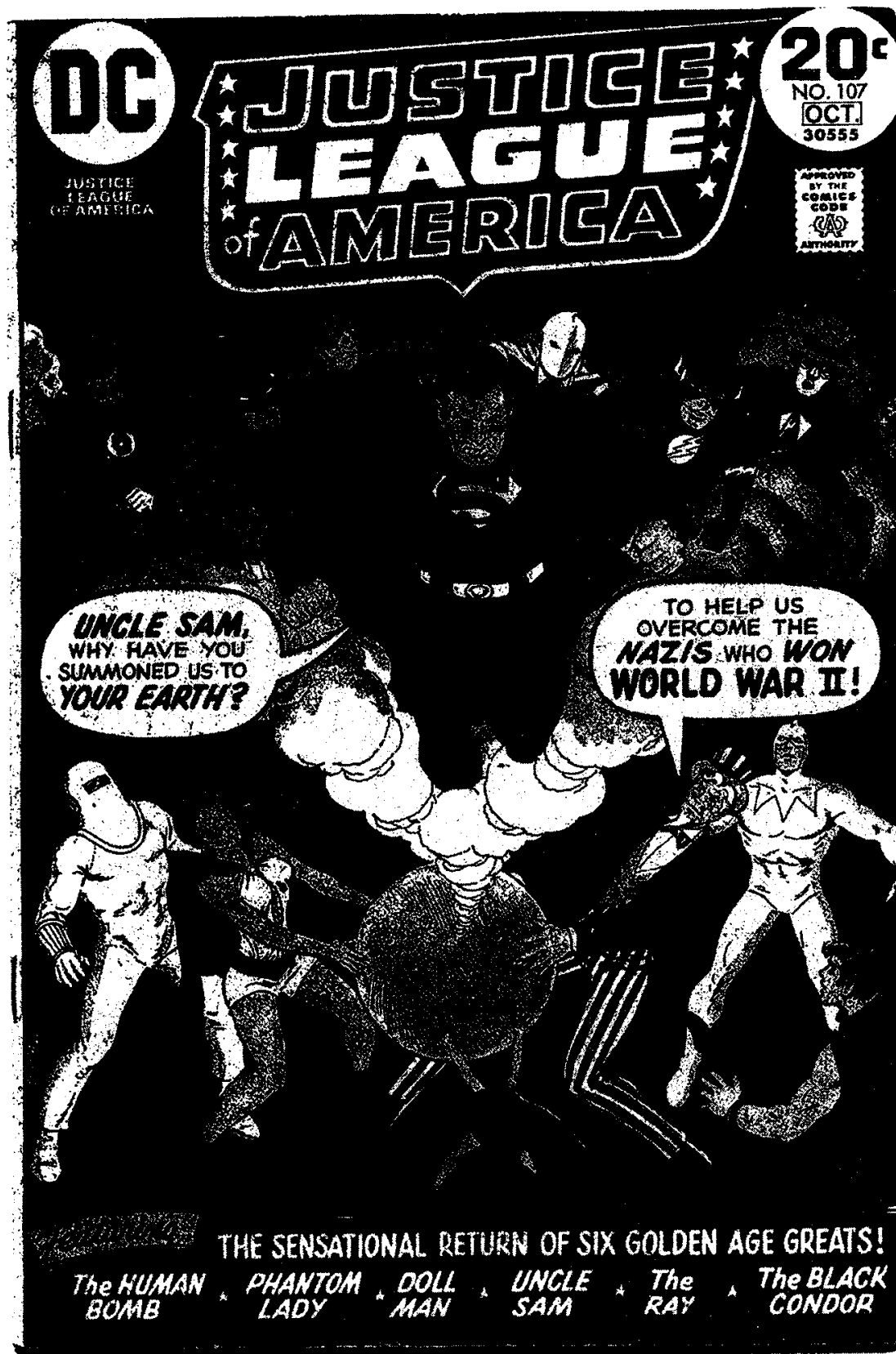


Figure 8 Cover of the comic book story, "Crisis on Earth-X," in the *Justice League of America*, Nr. 107, October, 1973.

Earth-X from the Nazi menace). The story's writer, Len Wein, moreover, did not intend it to convey any particular political message.⁵⁹ In general, then, the story was largely significant for confirming the reigning allohistorical view that a Nazi-ruled world would have been hell on earth.

All in all, up through the early 1970s, American alternate histories were united in their depiction of a Nazi victory in World War II. By representing Nazi rule as fanatical, evil, and omnipotent, these accounts expressed a clear sense of moral revulsion against it. This is not particularly surprising given that many of the authors of these tales belonged to the generation that had experienced the traumas of the Nazi era firsthand.⁶⁰ More importantly, these narratives served to vindicate America's real historical decision to intervene in World War II against Germany. After 1945, the ominous scenario of a Nazi wartime victory gave Americans a sense that (like the British) their real, historical triumph over the Germans constituted a "finest hour" for them as well. Especially in a cold-war era of renewed tensions and worries, the function of this scenario was particularly welcome. For even if the present constituted a source of anxiety, the nightmare premise of a Nazi victory served to remind Americans that it could have easily been much worse.

RECEPTION

Significantly, the positive response of American readers to these narratives demonstrated the existence of a considerable degree of support for their broader conclusions. The tales of Kornbluth, Dick, Ellison, and Norden largely met with a positive reception during the first postwar decades. *The Man in the High Castle*, for example, won the prestigious Hugo award for best science fiction novel of 1962 at the World Science Fiction Convention.⁶¹ Ellison's screenplay for "The City on the Edge of Forever" won the Writers Guild award for best dramatic teleplay for the 1967-68 season. Meanwhile, the episode itself was a phenomenal hit, having earned the reputation not only of being one of the most beloved of the original *Star Trek* series, but one of the most memorable broadcasts in American television history.⁶² Reviews of the era's literary works were also effusive. The most acclaimed was Dick's novel, which, originally hailed as "one of the finest works in [the] . . . field [of science fiction] in a long time," has since come to be recognized as the classic expression of the allohistorical scenario of a Nazi victory in World War II.⁶³ Positive reviews were also received by Eric Norden for his "bone-chilling novel," *The Ultimate*

Solution, which one reviewer termed a “marvelous read.”⁶⁴ Kornbluth’s short story was less widely reviewed but today is acknowledged as a classic pioneering work in the field of alternate history.⁶⁵

The one major exception to the otherwise uniformly positive reception of early postwar narratives was William Shirer’s essay in *Look* magazine, “If Hitler Had Won World War II.” Shirer’s essay had a mixed reception, largely due to readers’ diverging views on the essay’s political implications. As was the case with Shirer’s magnum opus, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, his *Look* piece also sparked international controversy. The furor erupted in 1961 when the German news magazine *Stern* blasted it in a cover story entitled “Swastika over New York.”⁶⁶ In criticizing the piece, *Stern*’s reporters cited the same reasons mentioned by most German critics of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* – namely, it was the work of an alleged German-hater who was “poisoning . . . public opinion in the United States” towards Germany at a sensitive moment in the cold war.⁶⁷ *Stern* sniped at Shirer’s speculative description of the Nazi defeat and occupation of the United States, retorting that “neither Shirer nor any other qualified historian has ever discovered a single serious reference to plans for the occupation of America.”⁶⁸ Certain American readers agreed with this assessment. Among the letters sent by readers to *Look*, one stated that the essay was “nothing but hair-raising madness,” while another insisted that “Shirer is just as dangerous to the peace of the free world as Hitler or Goebbels was. He is the typical propaganda man: half-truths mixed with imagination.”⁶⁹ At the same time, other American readers praised the piece for preserving the memory of Nazi crimes despite cold-war pressures to ignore them. Thus, one called the story “tremendous” and concluded that it would “awaken the American public to the fact that we face a menace today, as great as the one that faced the free world in those dark days of World War II.”⁷⁰

The reason Shirer’s piece sparked more of a mixed reaction than the era’s other equally critical accounts of a Nazi victory likely had to do with exposure. “If Hitler Had Won World War II” was published in a magazine with a circulation of seven million readers and probably reached many more.⁷¹ Its ability to shape American views of the Germans was thus substantial. In contrast, many of the other allohistorical narratives of the era were comparatively obscure, reached far fewer readers, and thus did not possess the same capacity to shock. Whatever the case may be, the polarized reaction to Shirer’s piece was highly exceptional in the early postwar period. On the whole, the moralistic, interventionist depiction of a Nazi-ruled world conformed to the horizon of expectations of most readers and was largely accepted.

THE POSTWAR YEARS: ALTERNATE HISTORY AS
SELF-CRITIQUE, 1972–89

As the 1970s progressed, however, allohistorical accounts of a Nazi victory in World War II began to portray the scenario in markedly less frightening terms. Many of these accounts ceased depicting the Nazis as fanatical demons and instead portrayed them as rational pragmatists. Some of these tales even portrayed a Nazi victory as not such a bad thing after all. Other accounts went further still in abandoning the ethically informed narrative approach of the past, adopting the mode of satire and portraying the victorious Nazis in humorous terms. To be sure, certain works continued to view a Nazi victory in negative fashion; but they were now in the minority. These shifting allohistorical depictions of a Nazi wartime victory reflected the onset of a normalizing trend in the American memory of the Nazi past.

By the 1970s, the fears of Nazism that had survived World War II and that had been revived during the late 1950s and 1960s were beginning to fade. Contributing to this trend were both generational and political factors. By the 1970s, the passing of time had enabled the emergence of a generation of Americans who lacked any personal memories of the war. Unlike the producers of early postwar narratives, such as Shirer and Kornbluth, who had witnessed Nazism's evils firsthand in Europe, many of the writers in this later period viewed the scenario of a Nazi victory from a more detached perspective. At the same time, this generation – and society at large – was confronted with new, present-day concerns that helped to displace traumatic memories of the Nazi era. As was true in Britain after the mid-1960s, the flurry of new alternate histories that appeared in the United States in the 1970s coincided with, and strongly reflected, the emergence of a pessimistic national mood. In domestic affairs, the scandal of Watergate and the oil-crisis-driven stagflation in the early 1970s spawned an atmosphere of acute crisis that persisted through the economic malaise of the Carter years. In foreign affairs, the trauma of the Vietnam War continued to cast its shadow over the nation well after its conclusion in 1975, while escalating cold-war tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 led to renewed fears of nuclear conflict. Out of such events, finally, emerged a broader skepticism towards government and a general opposition to war, both of which found ample expression in the popular culture of the period.⁷² It was hardly surprising, therefore, that increasing numbers of Americans began to reconsider how good the “good war” against the Axis powers had really been.

In this climate of crisis, alternate histories now assumed a new function. As in Britain, the scenario of a Nazi wartime victory in the United States ceased to be used for the purpose of self-congratulation and was instead now used for self-critique. In contrast to the situation in Britain, however, where the central themes were collaboration and resistance, the American counter-narratives of this period generally focused on the question of whether the United States should have intervened in, or stayed out of, World War II. Significantly, these accounts offered highly divergent answers to this question. A good number of them voiced support for the isolationist position that the United States should have remained on the sidelines and allowed the Germans to defeat the Soviets, even if it enabled them to become the masters of the European continent. These anti-interventionist accounts, whether rightwing or leftwing in origin, clearly reflected how the cold war elevated the Soviets above the Nazis as objects of fear in the American consciousness and relativized the Third Reich's historical evil. Other allohistorical tales, by contrast, continued to defend the traditional interventionist position that fighting the Germans was in the nation's best interests. Yet in doing so, they adopted a more self-critical stance, abandoning the triumphalism of early postwar accounts in favor of a more polemical tone. Even if they continued to depict the Nazis as an evil enemy, they did so less to vindicate the real historical decision to fight against them than to criticize present-day American decline. In short, even though the narratives of this period differed widely in content, they strongly resembled each other in function. Instead of validating the present by depicting its superiority to a horrific past that never was, they criticized the present by implying its inferiority to a better past that could have been.

THE REHABILITATION OF ISOLATIONISM

The first example of the new normalizing trend was provided by distinguished American political scientist Bruce M. Russett's 1972 book *No Clear and Present Danger: A Skeptical View of the U.S. Entry into World War II*.⁷³ Although not specifically a work of alternate history, Russett's study liberally used counterfactual reasoning to criticize the previously sacrosanct cause of American intervention in the war. Calling his book a "retrospective analysis of 'might-have-beens,'" Russett right from the outset presented its bold thesis – namely, that "most Americans probably would have been no worse off, and possibly a little better, if the United States had never become a belligerent [in World War II]."⁷⁴ The reason for Russett's upbeat conclusion was his contention that even if American neutrality had

allowed Germany to remain undefeated in the war, the Nazis would never have been able to deliver a knockout blow that would have defeated the Soviet Union for good.⁷⁵ Indeed, the result would have been "a mutually exhausting war that would have left the Russians even more battered than they were from their victory in 1945, and the Germans hardly better."⁷⁶ Even if in control of Eastern Europe, Germany would have suffered from the divisive forces of nationalism, as well as from the heavy burdens of reconstruction, and would not have been able to threaten the continent for some time to come.⁷⁷ More important still for Russett was the fact that Nazi Germany never posed a serious threat to the United States. Not only did Hitler have no intentions of invading America, he lacked the means to do so, having failed to develop the atomic bomb. For these reasons, American intervention ended up being an enormous mistake. President Roosevelt had failed to anticipate that, by defeating Germany, "American intervention . . . would bring Russia into Central Europe to fill the vacuum."⁷⁸ As history turned out, "American participation in World War II brought the country few gains" and made it "no more secure . . . than it could have been if it had stayed out."⁷⁹

In arriving at his revisionist conclusions, Russett openly cited the traumatic experience of the Vietnam War. As a member of the generation that came of age after the end of World War II (he was born in 1935), he was less concerned with the war's legacy after 1945 than with the contemporary crises of the postwar world. Russett's leftwing political tendencies further reinforced this orientation. A scholar writing in the isolationist tradition of Charles Beard, Russett saw the debacle of Vietnam (like American involvement in the cold war more broadly) as directly attributable to the interventionist legacy spawned by the decision to become engaged in World War II.⁸⁰ Russett thus declared his intent to "reconsider my old myths" about America "fighting for its very existence" in World War II and to question whether it was necessary at all.⁸¹ In so doing, of course, he clearly revealed how the trauma of Vietnam diminished the horror of Nazism in American consciousness. While early postwar alternate histories emphasized Nazism's inherent evil, Russett's study relativized it, insisting that "Nazism as an ideology was almost certainly less dangerous to the United States than . . . Communism."⁸² Moreover, throughout his analysis, Russett de-emphasized moral factors in arriving at his real-political conclusions. Thus, while he recognized that separating "ethics from an objective assessment of the threat Germany . . . actually posed to American national security" might get him labeled "a first cousin of the Beast of Belsen," he reminded readers that moral considerations were not involved

in the American decision to fight against Germany in the first place (news of the atrocities emerging only late in the war) and that the United States sided with the equally unethical dictator, Stalin, to defeat the Germans in the end anyway.⁸³ In short, *No Clear and Present Danger* directly challenged the moral-mnemonic consensus of the early postwar years.

A similar set of concerns animated the next allohistorical discussion of a Nazi wartime victory, well-known conservative historian John Lukacs's speculative essay "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?"⁸⁴ Published in 1978 in the runaway bestseller, *The People's Almanac*, Lukacs's essay was based upon the premise that Hitler won the war by immediately invading Britain following his victory at Dunkirk in 1940.⁸⁵ From this point, Lukacs's "plausible tale" outlined an allohistorical vision that was surprisingly upbeat. Although "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" fleetingly sketched a brutal scenario for German-occupied Eastern Europe – epitomized by the "killing [of] large numbers of Russians and even larger numbers of Jews" – its overall assessment of the Nazis' European empire was relatively rosy. "Things were not as unbearable as had been expected," Lukacs wrote, for, after their victory, the Germans declined to remain in a perpetual state of war and instead devoted most of their energies to economic expansion, building "gigantic superhighways" and "Volkswagen factories." Indeed, despite the aging Hitler's exhortations for continued brutality, his rhetoric fails to appeal to most Germans, who "after 10 years of relative peace . . . were no longer at arms" and preferred to enjoy the soulless consumerism and pop culture enabled by postwar prosperity. With Hitler's death in 1952, it is the defenders of this materialistic and technocratic order, such as Albert Speer, Claus von Stauffenberg, and Wilhelm Canaris, who triumph over the ideologues, led by Himmler and Goebbels, and who "proclaim . . . that the destiny of the German people . . . [is] to uphold law and order in Europe instead of ruling over other peoples by force alone." This pragmatic Nazi government, in fact, succeeds in "laying the ground plan for the eventual unification of Europe" and enables "an era of peace and prosperity [to] . . . dawn . . . upon the world." So peaceful is Europe by the mid-1960s that a non-German for the first time is elected president of the European Union, and former Field Marshal Erwin Rommel feels no qualms about describing World War II as "all a big mistake."

In its overall conclusions, Lukacs's essay offered a strikingly benign view of a Nazi wartime victory. This was most clearly visible in his marginalization of the Holocaust from his broader narrative. Unlike the tales of the late 1950s and early 1960s, which focused on the Nazis' genocide to

underscore the regime's brutality, Lukacs largely ignored it. Even though his essay essentially implied that the Nazis end up completing the Final Solution of the Jewish question throughout Europe (Hitler, after all, lives through the end of the war), this horrific fact does not prevent Lukacs from concluding that everything in the end works out fairly well. Lukacs's rather cavalier attitude towards the Final Solution was echoed in his essay's intermittently lighthearted tone. At certain points in "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" Lukacs found room for humor, liberally peppering his description of German hegemony with such satirical flourishes as the Germans "forcing the French to consume huge quantities of inferior German beer" and Himmler's English SS recruits "establish[ing] themselves in Liverpool, where they eventually turned their savage energies to making music."⁸⁶ By virtue of the inclusion of such comical asides, Lukacs's essay lent a degree of humor to a scenario that had once been viewed solely with horror.

Lukacs's reasons for submitting such an uncritical depiction of a Nazi victory are difficult to discern. He has noted that he wrote "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" as "*a jeu d'esprit*" – that is, a lighthearted or witty intellectual game with no broader political significance.⁸⁷ Yet the essay contained a clear political message. In fairly unambiguous fashion, "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" defended the lost cause of isolationism and thereby criticized the interventionist character of American foreign policy in World War II. In Lukacs's essay, the Germans end up winning the war in Europe because America (respectively governed from 1940 to 1944 by a much more hesitant Roosevelt, and from 1944 to 1952, by the strongly isolationistic presidents Charles A. Lindbergh and Robert A. Taft) declines to fight against them. Yet, defying conventional wisdom, Lukacs characterized this decision in positive terms. Although American isolationism allows Germany to dominate Europe, the victorious Reich brings about the same processes of European reconstruction and integration that occurred in real history. Moreover, thanks to America's refusal to fight the Germans, the world is spared the cold war, for, after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Stalin flees to the Siberian city of Omsk, where he has little ability to threaten world peace. The Nazi victory in World War II thus ends up for the best.

It is difficult to know whether the isolationist political message contained in "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" was intentional. Although Lukacs's own political views defy easy categorization, he has long stood firmly on the conservative wing of the political

spectrum.⁸⁸ His conservative views manifested themselves in various ways, but they included a strong opposition to the Soviet Union's domination of Eastern Europe – a stance that reflected his personal background as a native Hungarian who fled his homeland as a twenty-three-year-old in 1946.⁸⁹ Lukacs was not only opposed to Soviet communism, of course, but was critical of Nazism as well. Yet his views of the Third Reich have long been regarded as highly idiosyncratic.⁹⁰ The possibility thus exists that as cold-war tensions were intensifying in the late 1970s, Lukacs's opposition to Soviet communism overshadowed his distaste for Nazism and found its way into his broader allohistorical narrative. Whether intentionally or not, "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" can plausibly be seen as reflecting how heightened American fears of communism during the late 1970s could contribute to the waning memory of Nazism's historical evil. In relativizing the horrors of Nazi rule – indeed, in affirming that a Nazi victory in World War II would not have been that bad for Europe, despite the completion of the Final Solution of the Jewish question – Lukacs's essay attested to the role of the cold war in hastening the normalization of the Nazi past.

This political instrumentalization of the premise of a Nazi wartime victory continued in the next major work to appear, well-known science fiction writer Brad Linaweaver's 1982 novella *Moon of Ice*.⁹¹ Set in America in the 1980s, *Moon of Ice* tells the story of the Third Reich's turbulent evolution after its wartime victory through the eyes of Hilda Goebbels, the estranged daughter of the Nazi propaganda minister. As the novel opens, Hilda has arrived in New York City to meet with an American newspaper editor named Alan Whittmore in the hope of securing a book deal to publish the final postwar section of her recently deceased father's diaries, as well as her own autobiography. As Whittmore settles down in a hotel room to review Hilda's manuscripts, he learns much unsettling information about recent events in Nazi Germany. The most sensational revelations concern a major power struggle that erupts after Hitler's death in April 1965. The Nazi empire of the mid-1960s is a powerful but threatened entity. The Nazis dominate Europe, having successfully used atomic weapons to defeat the Soviets and the British, and to force a nuclear stalemate with the United States. But in the wake of his titanic victory, Hitler has become "indolent" and permitted his underlings to run the affairs of state.⁹² Germany has thereafter begun to suffer from imperial overstretch and has fallen behind the Americans in economic strength.⁹³

In this climate of uncertainty, civil strife emerges in the Nazi empire with an attempted *coup d'état* led by fanatical SS men from Burgundy, an independent state (created after the Nazi victory) whose SS rulers are eager

to pursue an antimodern, occultist, and mystical agenda of world domination. The Burgundians believe that postwar Germany has become weak owing to the abandonment of its holy racial mission in favor of pragmatic, technocratic policies.⁹⁴ The Burgundians thus decide to kidnap Goebbels (whom they regard as a traitor to the Nazi religion) with the intent of ritually sacrificing him alongside Hitler's stolen corpse in order to redeem the nation and send the Führer to Valhalla. Meanwhile, the Burgundians are busily preparing a final, mystical *Götterdämmerung* with the help of a brilliant but deranged geneticist, Richard Dietrich, whom they have entrusted with developing a final plague virus to kill all human beings on earth except for blue-eyed, blond men and women. The conclusion of this confrontation occurs with the Burgundians' defeat (and Goebbels' inadvertent rescue) by a ragtag coalition of anarchist, Marxist, and Zionist guerrilla groups led by his daughter Hilda. At this point, the manuscript comes to an end, and Whittmore, breathless from its astounding revelations, realizes that the woman in front of him, Hilda Goebbels, may well in fact have prevented World War III.

Despite its sensationalistic dimensions, *Moon of Ice* concludes by asserting that a Nazi victory in World War II would not have been the nightmare so feared by previous generations. As in Robert Harris's *Fatherland*, the Nazi empire after its wartime victory is far from being an omnipotent force, being plagued by worrisome economic and political problems. Linaweaver went beyond merely debunking the image of Nazi omnipotence, however, by asserting, like Lukacs, that the Nazi regime's postwar policies actually end up promoting the general European good. This outcome is made explicit at the conclusion of the novel when Hilda, in a postscript written to Whittmore in the year 2000, provocatively declares that "Adolf Hitler achieved the opposite of all his long-term goals . . . by winning World War II." As she explains, "economic reality subverted National Socialism," for as the Nazis united Europe under German rule, their New Order "knock[ed] down the barriers of ethnic and national separation" and thus worked to dampen their racialist ideology. Over the long term, she notes:

Nazi Germany was becoming less National Socialist with every passing decade. For all the talk of Race Destiny, it was the technical mind of Albert Speer and his successors at the controls of the German Empire. Ideology would surface long enough to slow down the machine . . . but in the end technical management would reassert itself.

According to Hilda, the victory of the pragmatists in Nazi Germany enables a remarkable thaw to occur. "Historical revisionists" have popped

up within Germany and have begun to criticize Hitler's policies, while in the sphere of international relations, German and American scientists are cooperating in the development of space colonies. The capstone to the defeat of the ideologues is the founding of a Jewish state in space, an event which happily confirms that "*Der Jude* could not be stopped by a mere *Führer*." These events, for the hopeful Hilda, signal the emergence of a "sane new world" recovered from the disasters of the recent past.⁹⁵

Moon of Ice's optimistic portrayal of a Nazi victory in World War II largely stemmed from its author's background. Born in 1952, Linaweaver belonged to the generation that did not experience the Nazi era firsthand and thus easily adopted a more detached perspective in portraying it. More important still were Linaweaver's conservative political beliefs. Like many science fiction writers, Linaweaver was a committed libertarian whose faith in the principles of limited government and free-market economics was on clear display throughout the novel.⁹⁶ This political stance manifested itself most obviously in his narrative's juxtaposition of the present-day United States and Nazi Germany. *Moon of Ice* depicted the United States as a libertarian paradise, having reduced the power of the Federal Government dramatically since the impeachment of President Roosevelt (for covering up his foreknowledge of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor) and having liberated private corporations from state restrictions.⁹⁷ By contrast, the Third Reich remains stagnant, unable to complete mammoth state construction projects due to its slavish adherence to the Nazi collectivist ideal.⁹⁸ As Josef Goebbels himself notes in his diary, "The American Republic was thriving, even as our economy was badly suffering."⁹⁹ The most important key to America's postwar success, however, is its libertarian hostility towards using the power of the state to promote an interventionist foreign policy. This view is made clear through the character of Whittmore (described as a "professional advocate of limited government"), who defends the American government's isolationist stance (inaugurated by Presidents Dewey and Taft) of remaining disengaged from German affairs.¹⁰⁰ As he says, "Nonintervention opens doors that an empire would close."¹⁰¹ By the end of the novel, the reform of the Nazi state is not brought about by any state power but by libertarian forces. Thus, the anarchist philosophy of Hilda Goebbels and her various comrades is credited with defeating the Third Reich's ideological fanatics, while free-market economic forces ultimately bring about the reform of the Third Reich from within.

The libertarian message of *Moon of Ice* reflected Linaweaver's own comparatively value-neutral view of Nazism. Overall, Linaweaver imagined a

Nazi wartime victory in relatively upbeat fashion. Like Lukacs, he represented America's isolationist decision not to fight against Nazism as well conceived. For one thing, Linaweaver seemed to share the common isolationist belief that the Third Reich never posed a serious threat to American interests. As Josef Goebbels notes in his diary at one point, "We never intended to subjugate decadent America anyway. Ours was a European vision."¹⁰² Moreover, by remaining distant from Europe's conflict, the United States profits handsomely. Even if American isolationism enables the Germans to achieve European hegemony, it nevertheless enables the nation to prosper economically and avoid the cold war. In the end, the United States merely has to sit back and wait while Germany, racked by internal division, eventually reforms itself from within. This optimistic conclusion reflected how cold-war fears could displace the memory of Nazism's horror. To be sure, Linaweaver recognized the evil character of Nazism, but he finally considered communism to be a far more threatening political movement. Linaweaver came to this position less as a result of any precise political events in the late 1970s than out of a general turn towards conservative politics, which itself was rooted in the broader tensions of the cold-war years, specifically his disagreement with American leftists over the conflict in Vietnam.¹⁰³ As a result of his conservative political turn, he came to the conclusion that Nazism hardly had a monopoly on evil. As Whittmore says at one juncture, "The Nazis are evil but no more so than the Communists."¹⁰⁴ In the end, however, *Moon of Ice* did not so much place Nazism and communism on a comparable footing as evil ideologies as relativize the horror of the former.

INTERVENTIONISM AS SELF-CRITICISM

While the neo-isolationist works of Russett, Lukacs, and Linaweaver constituted one type of self-critical response to the cold war, other accounts combined self-critique with support for interventionism. The first such narrative to appear was famed American science fiction writer Ward Moore's 1975 short story "A Class with Dr. Chang."¹⁰⁵ This bleak tale portrays the difficulties faced by a Chinese-American professor of history named Chang Liango-ho as he attempts to deliver a lecture on recent (allo)historical events to the surly students in his introductory history class at the University of California at Monterey. In Professor Chang's world, Nazi Germany has won World War II because of its shrewd decision to ally with China instead of Japan. Thanks to the "Berlin-Peiping Axis's" successful attack against, and conquest of, Japan, the bombing of

Pearl Harbor never takes place and the United States ends up sitting out the war as a neutral power. America's isolationist stance, however, has the adverse effect of leading the country down the path towards fascism. This outcome is made clear in the story by the angry reaction of Professor Chang's students to his sober historical survey. When he describes the Germans as "a people moved by their . . . mystical yearnings" and "fascinated . . . with the celebration of heroic death," students wearing "ALL" buttons (designating the "American Loyal League") drown him out with the cry "America First!" and respond that the Germans' success was due to their single-minded commitment to getting "rid of all the foreign elements – the Jews, Gypsies, Slavs and such who were corrupting . . . the racial will with their foreign philosophies."¹⁰⁶ Their fervor building, the students go on to vent their disgust at America's failure to enter the war, exclaiming, "We should have fought. Fought for the glory of fighting. Bled, sacrificed, gotten rid of all . . . the tainted blood, and come through as one people, totally united . . . so that every American felt and thought like every other American – 'ALL' for one and one for 'ALL.'"¹⁰⁷ At the tale's grim conclusion, the students' hatred boils over and they seize Dr. Chang and lynch him – together with a Jewish professor and a black teaching assistant – on an improvised gallows.

In writing his short story, Moore most likely intended to offer a critical commentary on what he believed to be worrisome social and political trends in the United States in the wake of the Vietnam War. A lifetime supporter of leftwing politics, Moore provided hints of a broader political agenda in his story by having the racist 'ALL' students use the same rhetorical phrases employed by conservative supporters of American involvement in Vietnam to attack leftwing members of the antiwar movement in the 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁰⁸ For example, one student decries "pink draft dodgers and flag haters" for their refusal to purge America of "foreign elements," while later on, a large group of students call for "an all-American university for all Americans" and begin rhythmically chanting, "Love it or leave!" "Love it or leave!"¹⁰⁹ By showing such phrases being used in racist fashion in alternate history, Moore clearly implied that their real historical usage during the Vietnam years was equally politically suspect, if not outright fascist. Moore's approach to the allohistorical scenario of a Nazi victory in World War II was thus quite novel. By showing America's failure to intervene in the war as having calamitous domestic political consequences, he sided with earlier writers like Kornbluth, Dick, and Shirer in defending American interventionism. Unlike them, however, he did so not to ratify the reality of the postwar world, but rather to condemn it.

A similar example of this trend, but from the opposite political camp, was provided several years later by a satirical piece that appeared in the October 1980 issue of the humor magazine *National Lampoon* entitled "If World War II Had Been Fought Like the War in Vietnam."¹¹⁰ Written by well-known humorist P. J. O'Rourke, along with Tod Carroll, and illustrated by Rick Geary, "If World War II Had Been Fought Like the War in Vietnam" was a comic-strip critique of what the authors perceived as the insufficiently vigorous American military campaign in Vietnam. In a series of fifteen illustrated panels, O'Rourke and Carroll expressed their primary contention that if the half-hearted policies in Vietnam had been used during World War II, the Nazis would have won the war. Beginning with the inadequate response of the United States to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (American military advisers are merely sent to Midway Island "to assist natives in strengthening their defense against possible Japanese aggression"), American involvement in World War II steadily grows. Troop morale remains low, however, especially following such events as the court-martial of an American bomber pilot for "murdering civilians in . . . Dresden," the visit to Germany of a high-profile "delegation of prominent peace activists," including Charles Lindbergh and Ezra Pound, to inspect bomb damage, and the eruption of antiwar protests at the 1944 Democratic National Convention. Before long, the United States pulls out of World War II with its tail between its legs, attempting to evacuate its diplomats from London as it would from Saigon in 1975. (At this point, the strip notes, "Unfortunately, helicopters have not been invented yet," and the diplomats are depicted waiting on the embassy roof for nothing.)¹¹¹ The tale sarcastically concludes by commenting, "German occupation of most territories was peaceful, although some people who were identified as having 'democratic tendencies' were temporarily placed in re-education centers" (here, a Jewish family is being directed to an extermination camp). And the last panel concludes, "Today, 36 years after the end of American involvement in the controversial Second World War, the country finds itself at peace, once again a unified nation" (depicted above this line is a Washington D.C. street scene full of advertisements for German-made products).

Like "A Class with Dr. Chang," "If World War II Had Been Fought Like the War in Vietnam" supported interventionism not to validate the past but to critique the present. The comic's grim depiction of a Nazi victory was intended less to remind readers of the evils of the 1940s than the mistakes of the 1960s and 1970s. This agenda is suggested by the staunch conservative reputation of the tale's best-known author, P. J. O'Rourke,

who clearly used the narrative to advance his belief that the American government had not been resolute enough in prosecuting the battle against communism in Vietnam.¹¹² For if the nation had fought in the cold war as decisively as it had in World War II, the United States would never have let the communist Vietcong emerge victorious. Overall, "If World War II Had Been Fought Like the War in Vietnam" illustrated the role of the cold war in normalizing the memory of Nazism. By drawing a parallel between the Vietcong and the Nazis, the piece dramatically effaced the considerable differences between them. Indeed, it universalized the significance of Nazism, shifting attention away from it for its own sake in order to direct it towards an unrelated cause. O'Rourke and Carroll's comparison of the two eras, in short, illustrated the declining specificity of World War II in the consciousness of some Americans at a time of new worries and concerns.

Another work that used the premise of a Nazi wartime victory for self-critical purposes was American writer William Overgard's 1980 novel *The Divide*.¹¹³ In many ways, *The Divide* was the last of its kind – a novel that followed in the tradition of Kornbluth, Shirer, Dick, and Norden by depicting the United States losing World War II to, and being brutally occupied by, the Germans and Japanese. Overgard, however, did not merely restate the premise of America under Nazi rule but used it in order to explore new concerns. Set in the year 1976, the novel's plot focuses on the emergence of a homegrown American resistance movement thirty years after the United States' humiliating defeat in World War II. A rough-and-tumble group, the resistance is led by the aged but crafty American, Wayne Kenneth Stubbs, and his adopted son, Cooper, both of whom spend the majority of the novel planning to sabotage a high-level political summit in the middle of the country (known as "the Divide") between the dottering Führer, Adolf Hitler, and the more gracefully aging Japanese premier, Hideki Tojo. Stubbs and Cooper attempt to enlist the cooperation of the last official representatives of the United States military who have hidden out for the last thirty years in the "National Redoubt" deep within a mine shaft in the Rocky Mountains. After decades stuck underground, the aged generals have lost the will to fight, but they permit the resisters to take with them the sole prototype of the American Manhattan project, a nuclear weapon created by the Jewish scientist, Isaac Blum, together with his daughter, Lisa. Stubbs and Cooper devise a bold plan to load the bomb onto an aging freight train and ram it into the armored railroad car carrying Hitler's entourage to meet Tojo on the Great Plains of Kansas. Yet the Nazis foil the plan, discover the bomb, and seem poised to

force a terrified Lisa to divulge the secrets of its creation. At the novel's conclusion, however, Stubbs and Cooper succeed in assassinating Tojo at the festivities (though not Hitler, who escapes) and sparking a general revolt of the crowd against the assembled Nazi dignitaries. This revolt culminates when Lisa, still in captivity, detonates the atom bomb in the presence of Hitler's designated successor, Rausch, killing him and everyone else for miles around.

The overall plot of *The Divide* superficially resembled the classic interventionist narratives of the early postwar years. Like these works, Overgard's novel supported interventionism in rendering the allohistorical origins and consequences of the Nazi triumph in World War II. *The Divide* directly blamed isolationism for the United States' defeat, portraying President Burton K. Wheeler (who defeats Roosevelt in the election of 1940) as having failed to prepare the nation for foreign invasion.¹⁴ The novel further supported the cause of interventionism by depicting the Nazis' occupation of the United States as inordinately brutal. Unlike the Japanese, who defeat the United States using relatively conventional means, the Germans use powerful new weapons – such as ME-262 fighter planes and deadly V-4 missiles – to devastate Washington D.C. and Kansas City (the seat of Wheeler's government in exile). After dividing up the country along the Rocky Mountains into two occupation zones, the Nazis complete the Final Solution of the Jewish question and proceed to exterminate other undesirables, especially Native Americans, who are targeted in the "Great Herding" and turned into soap and dog food at a massive 1,000-acre extermination facility at Cedar Bluff, Kansas.¹⁵ Only a certain percentage of minorities are permitted to survive: several thousand sterilized blacks who labor at the Cedar Bluff facility and even fewer Native Americans, for the purpose of anthropological study.¹⁶

Despite resembling earlier alternate histories in its forbidding portrayal of Nazi-occupied America, however, *The Divide* differed in significant ways. The most notable was its avoidance of black-and-white depictions of evil German perpetrators and virtuous American victims. The novel painted an extremely unflattering portrait of the American people under Nazi occupation. Instead of resisting the Nazis, the American people largely collaborate. At their worst, the Americans are depicted as inveterate racists who support the Nazis' agenda of ethnic cleansing. As the novel's protagonist, Cooper, recalls at one point, "In the beginning, the racial purification program had been resisted, but . . . the great mass of surviving Americans were glad that the country had been cleansed of minorities and misfits . . . How many times had he heard the phrase *Hitler was right about*

one thing . . . ”¹¹⁷ Moreover, most Americans tolerate the Nazis’ crimes in exchange for the unseemly motive of economic gain. The Nazis’ decision to “create a showcase of National Socialism” by pumping billions of marks into reconstructing the economy of the eastern zone largely succeeds in earning them the political quiescence of the American public.¹¹⁸ Commenting upon the political apathy of the American masses, Cooper exclaims:

They’re fat and happy down there, they got jobs and Volkswagens. Shoot! They’ve even convinced themselves that it was all for the best – they’ve accepted the elimination of other races, ‘dangerous’ minorities, political ‘criminals’ – anything that don’t include them – euthanasia, sterilization . . . all that stuff – as long as it ain’t used on them – they’ve forgot the Constitution and the rights of man and the U.S. way of life. It ain’t the enemy we got to instruct in freedom . . . it’s our own people.¹¹⁹

The Divide’s self-critical portrait of the American people under Nazi occupation was most likely intended to serve as a pessimistic commentary on the American malaise of the late 1970s. Overgard’s personal background suggests that he would have been especially disaffected by the nation’s postwar decline. A longtime novelist, cartoonist, and screenwriter, Overgard belonged to the generation that lived through World War II – in his case, serving as a sailor in the United States navy during the years 1944–45.¹²⁰ Having witnessed the United States’ heroic achievements in the past, Overgard may have projected its allohistorical moral and political collapse under Nazism in order to criticize the nation’s decline in his real, historical present.

At the same time, the novel also expressed its author’s hope for national recovery. Overgard exhibited an unambiguous patriotic streak in his writing that placed him on the conservative – if not libertarian – wing of the political spectrum. In many ways, his novel was a traditional celebration of American individualism. Overgard’s depiction of most Americans as self-interested collaborators was meant as a foil to highlight the efforts of those few patriotic Americans who intended to “relight the torch of liberty.”¹²¹

The Divide’s valorization of ordinary Americans went hand in hand, moreover, with a strong distrust of the official representatives of the state. It was revealing that the established military brass continue to hide out impotently in their mountain bunker, while the more virile average citizens undertake the heroic struggle against the enemy. Finally, Overgard’s patriotism was obvious at the novel’s end when Stubbs, having just witnessed the detonation of the atomic bomb, enthusiastically exclaims,

"We got 'em! We got the damn Germans and Japs! Hell, we got 'em all! . . . We built it! Made in America! The good old U.S. of A!"¹²² Just as this passage clearly expressed the desire of the novel's protagonist to restore the nation's wounded pride, so too did it likely express a similar wish on the part of its author. In the end, to be sure, Overgard offered no panaceas, only a sober message of the necessity of tireless struggle. Even though *The Divide* concludes with the American resistance dealing a severe blow to the Nazi occupation, the Germans remain strong. Not only does Hitler survive the attempt to assassinate him, his successors are lined up and ready to go. In the novel's last lines, Germany's most highly decorated war veteran, Hans Loftner, is shown stroking the pregnant belly of his wife – Hitler's daughter, Ilse – who, the reader is led to assume, will shortly give birth to the future Führer. In short, the struggle against the Germans – like the struggle to revive the spirit of America – has only just begun.

Overgard's critical portrayal of America in the wake of a Nazi victory in World War II was echoed several years later by another biting tale, science fiction writer David Dvorkin's 1987 novel *Budspy*.¹²³ Yet where Overgard criticized American decline during the cold war from the political right, Dvorkin did so from the political left. Set in the year 1988, *Budspy* was a spy thriller that focused on the cloak-and-dagger exploits of its protagonist, Chic Western. Chic is a high-ranking employee in the so-called Ombudsman Commission, an agency founded by American President Joseph McCarthy in 1957 to root out corruption within the Federal Government. It is in the capacity as a "budspy," or "budman," that Western is sent to Nazi Germany to investigate the leak of sensitive military secrets from the United States embassy in Berlin to the Soviet Union. Although Chic is of Jewish descent and has negative feelings about Germany (his parents were Polish Jews named Weintraub who survived the war), his concerns are quickly dispelled soon after his arrival in Berlin, for Nazi Germany in the year 1988 is the world's pre-eminent superpower. In strolling through the nation's capital, Chic is awestruck by the monumentality of its architecture, the healthy appearance of its blonde-haired, blue-eyed citizens, and the general atmosphere of orderliness. As he learns from his German acquaintances, the nation's success is largely due to the efforts of Germany's ruler of forty years, Kurt Nebel. The onetime secretary to Martin Bormann, Nebel succeeds Hitler after the Führer's death on the eastern front near Stalingrad in 1943 thanks to his skillful negotiation of a separate peace with the British and Americans that enables the Nazis to defeat the Soviets and win the war in Europe. In the wake of the Nazis' victory, the Reich under Nebel's leadership undergoes a radical

metamorphosis, abandoning "the more extreme and distasteful ideas of the older generation" and adopting "the milder, technocratic, cosmopolitan world-view of . . . Albert Speer."¹²⁴ The most significant development in this broader process is the Nazis' turn away from antisemitism. Not only has Nebel's government officially stated its regret about the extermination of 10–12 million Jews during the war, it has backed the creation of the state of Israel as a refuge for Holocaust survivors and a strategic base to protect German oil interests in the Middle East. Impressed by these achievements, Chic's initial caution about Germany gradually yields to moderate enthusiasm. Tolerant, prosperous, and powerful, the nation of 300 million people, he begins to think to himself, may well in fact be "the Master Race."¹²⁵

Yet, as *Budspy*'s narrative unfolds, Chic slowly begins to recognize that the brilliant appearance of the Reich hides a more sordid reality. As a result of his burgeoning relationship with his anti-Nazi American girlfriend, Judy, Chic comes to learn of the existence of an underground resistance movement known as the "Yellow Rose," whose members are involved in agitating against the regime. Through Judy, Chic personally comes to know some of the German dissidents, who alert him to the cruel exploitation of Slavic forced laborers in Germany and the continued resistance of Soviet partisans in German-occupied Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, through his own sleuthing in the American embassy, Chic discovers a hidden letter in his office suggesting that Hitler's death in 1943 was in fact part of a larger assassination plot engineered by Nebel. Yet despite unearthing the lies that underpin the Nazi regime, Western does not stray from his mission to expose the leak at the embassy, which turns out to be the work of his on-and-off-again girlfriend Judy and her co-conspirators in the Yellow Rose, whom he promptly betrays to the secret police. Although he effectively sends Judy and her colleagues to their deaths, Chic displays minimal regret for the consequences of his actions, convinced, as he is, that his work is helping to purify America. Only at the end of *Budspy* does he realize that his cooperation with evil has corrupted him, and he resolves to atone for his sins. At the novel's jarring climax, set twenty-four years later, in the year 2012, a television broadcast of the sixty-ninth anniversary celebrations of Hitler's death from the Adolf-Hitler-Platz in Berlin reveals that the man presiding over the festivities, the Führer of the Reich, is none other than Chic Western himself. Having symbolically changed his name to Karl Busse (a name denoting repentance), Chic has taken control of Germany in order "to systematically destroy . . . [it]" by deliberately undermining the continuing war against the Soviets. Through these actions, the onetime

budspy and now Führer of Nazi Germany, Chic Western, hopes to vindicate his life's work by proving that cooperating with evil can ultimately lead to good.

In its imaginative rendering of a Nazi wartime victory, *Budspy* submitted a leftwing critique of contemporary America. At first glance, this agenda could easily be missed, owing to the novel's resemblance to the more isolationist accounts of Lukacs and Linaweaver. *Budspy*, after all, also showed the victorious Third Reich to be a relatively moderate place ruled by rational technocrats instead of fanatical ideologues. Yet Dvorkin did not present a positive image of Nazi Germany to vindicate America's allohistorical neutrality in the war but to condemn it. *Budspy*, indeed, portrayed the American government's decision not to fight the Germans as calamitous. In the text, the reason the United States and Britain make a separate peace with the Nazis is their fear of communism (which becomes acute when the Soviets nearly defeat the Germans at Stalingrad in 1943).¹²⁶ But giving in to fears of communism has far-reaching consequences, for it soon brings Joseph McCarthy to the presidency, whose policy of cozying up to the Nazi regime gradually ushers in a period of steep national decline. Under the rule of McCarthy and later conservative administrations (the current president in 1988 is named Helms – presumably Jesse), the United States succumbs to the ills of poverty, homelessness, and race riots.¹²⁷ America's economic health lags behind that of Germany as well.¹²⁸ The root of the problem is suggested at one point by Chic's girlfriend, Judy, who proclaims, "We are corrupted by our accommodation with evil."¹²⁹ This accommodation, Dvorkin suggests, represents a betrayal of fundamental American values. As Judy tells Chic, "Remember what America was supposed to be? . . . The land of freedom, the place where people went to escape Old-World oppression? Look at it nowadays. We're just a minor-league version of the Reich."¹³⁰ Compared with the ills of contemporary America, Nazi Germany actually looks quite good. Chic's admiration for the Nazi Reich, in fact, largely stems from his disgust with America's social problems; it is partly due to his frustration with the poverty, filth, homelessness, and drug abuse of the American capital, Washington D.C., that Western so admires Berlin.¹³¹ Overall, Chic envies the Germans' adherence to the ideals of National Socialism precisely because America seems to be drifting away from "the ideals of her founders."¹³² By the time he is back in the States he is so distraught by the sight of its forlorn cities that he is moved to exclaim, "What went wrong with America?"¹³³

In writing *Budspy*, Dvorkin was partly inspired by political goals. A self-described liberal, Dvorkin portrayed the victorious Reich as superior to the

United States in order to criticize the adverse impact of the cold war on American society.¹³⁴ Having written *Budspy* during the Reagan era, Dvorkin was partly targeting some of the worrisome social and political developments of the 1980s. But more broadly, he was taking aim at the many political and moral compromises made in accordance with cold-war anticommunism. As Dvorkin has noted, "I was using . . . alternate history . . . to comment on the America of the time, but . . . it's a more longterm, general problem. Even before Viet Nam . . . thrust itself on our awareness . . . [I was] upset by the general American pattern of supporting evil regimes because we thought they were better than the alternative."¹³⁵ Dvorkin's present-day political concerns obviously shaped the plot of his alternate history. Just as anticommunism led the United States to undertake questionable alliances in the cold war, so too does America's anti-communist-based alliance of convenience with Nazi Germany lead to its allohistorical decline. In the end, the Nazis emerge as victorious not so much through military successes (though they achieve those as well) as "by infecting the world and making the West into an etiolated copy of the Reich."¹³⁶

In utilizing the scenario of a victorious Nazi Reich to criticize American political trends in the 1980s, however, Dvorkin ended up producing a strikingly non-judgmental portrait of Nazism. His unfavorable comparison of America with Nazi Germany was intended to critique the former, but it inevitably worked to relativize the evil of the latter. To be sure, this result was far from Dvorkin's primary intention. The writer's Jewish background gave him little reason to be sympathetic to, let alone serve as an apologist for, Nazism.¹³⁷ Yet his portrait of the Third Reich did partly reflect a deliberate attempt to provoke. As a writer who has openly declared his ambivalent sense of Jewish identity, Dvorkin was particularly eager to challenge what he viewed as the undue centrality of the Holocaust in American Jewish consciousness.¹³⁸ Dvorkin rejected the widespread notion among many American Jews that the Holocaust was unique (he insisted that "there were other[s]" as well) and declared that "it's past time for Jews to forget."¹³⁹ His representation of the Nazis as less than absolute evil (epitomized by the regime's apology for the Holocaust and its establishment of a Jewish state in Israel), therefore, can be seen as part of his desire to challenge the postwar view among Jews that barbarism was predominantly a German (as opposed to a universal human) trait. Dvorkin's rendering of the victorious Reich, however, did not merely reflect his iconoclastic tendencies. It also reflected a more personal attempt to work through what he has described as his "fascination" with its aesthetic allure.¹⁴⁰ In

confessing to this fascination, of course, Dvorkin was hardly alone, for his exploration of the Reich's aura of power mirrored the same psychological dynamics that underpinned the Hitler Wave of the 1970s and 1980s. While it is impossible to determine whether it was Dvorkin's desire to universalize or aestheticize the Nazi era that was more influential in the making of his novel, it is clear that both were involved in making *Budspy* one of the most normalized tales of the period.

Yet even *Budspy* was trumped by the most anomalous, and yet perhaps the most telling, allohistorical account of the period – a brief comedy sketch aired on the NBC television show *Saturday Night Live* entitled “What If: Überman.”¹⁴¹ Unlike the other narratives of the era, the sketch took no stand on the issue of interventionism or isolationism. Instead, it was most significant for reducing the premise of a Nazi wartime victory to the stuff of humor. Originally broadcast on January 27, 1979, “What If: Überman” portrays a television talk show called “What If?” that is devoted to the weekly exploration of what its host, Joan Face (played by Jane Curtin), describes as “a hypothetical question about a specific historical event.” As the sketch opens, the host introduces her panel of experts, Brigadier-General Kevin Temple (played by Garrett Morris) and Wellesley College history professor Eileen Houton (played by Gilda Radner) and invites them to address the question of the evening: “What If Superman grew up in Germany instead of America?” In short order, the show answers the question by staging a dramatic re-enactment of Nazi Germany winning World War II. The re-enactment commences in Hitler's Berlin Chancellery, where a young clerk in the Ministry of Propaganda by the name of Klaus Kent (played by Dan Aykroyd), together with his colleagues Lois Lanehoff (played by Laraine Newman) and Jimmy Olsteyn (played by Al Franken), is ushered in to meet the Führer (played by guest host, Michael Palin) who has just concluded a meeting with his top generals. After some humorous banter, Kent uses his X-ray vision to notice the presence of a bomb inside a suitcase left in the room by one of the generals in the attempt to assassinate the Führer. At this moment, Kent ducks into a nearby closet, strips off his clothes and leaps out into the room again proclaiming, “I am Überman! I . . . fight for untruth, injustice, and the Nazi way!” (see Figure 9). Thereafter, he shields Hitler by jumping onto the bomb, exposes Jimmy Olsteyn as a Jew by using his X-ray vision to look through his pants, and motivates the amazed Führer to declare, “What an amazing stroke of luck. We might win this war after all!” Within a brief span of time, indeed, Überman helps the Nazis win World War II, as is revealed by a series of newspaper headlines from the Nazi newspaper *Der*

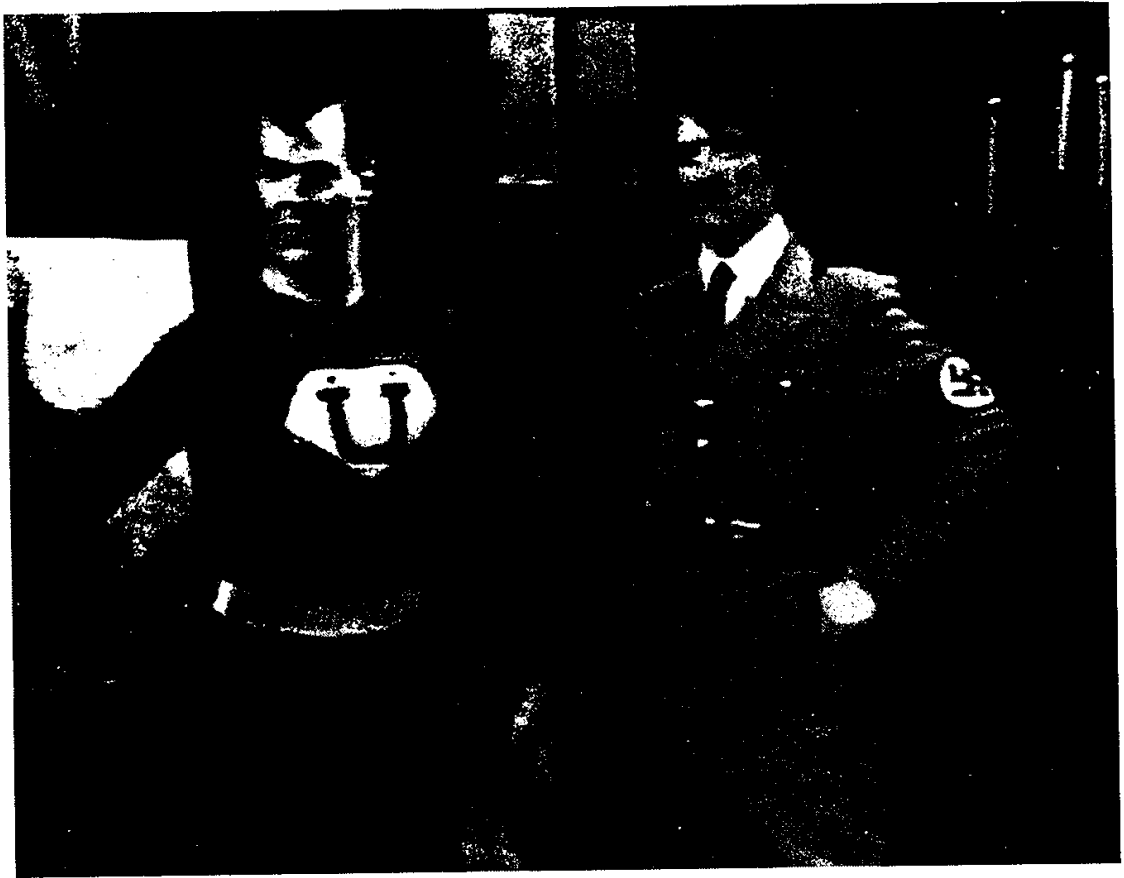


Figure 9 Überman (Dan Aykroyd) and Adolf Hitler (Michael Palin) in the Berlin Reich Chancellery in the *Saturday Night Live* skit "What If: Überman," originally broadcast on January 27, 1979.

Daily Planet, superimposed over documentary newsreel footage, which read: "Überman Takes Stalingrad in 5 Minutes: Diverts Volga," "Überman Rounds Up Two Million Jews: Total Past 6 Million," and "Überman Kills Every Person in England, U.S. Next."

The significance of the *Saturday Night Live* episode had less to do with its schematic plot than with its transformation of a Nazi wartime victory into the subject of comedy. The skit's writer, Al Franken, has noted that he wrote it primarily to entertain.¹⁴² But the very ability to poke fun at a scenario long regarded as a nightmare attested to the increasingly relaxed perspective towards the Nazi era in American consciousness. Indeed, "What If: Überman" proved that the scenario of a Nazi-ruled world no longer had to serve moral or didactic purposes, but could be used for pure entertainment. Viewing the Nazis as funny, of course, was more imaginable during an era in which they had been displaced as the epitome of evil by the Soviet Union. Such a sketch would have been impossible twenty years earlier, when current events revived Western fears of the Germans. In short, then, while the

comedy sketch made no references whatsoever to the cold war, its presence can nevertheless be sensed in the blithe manner in which the old avatar of evil, namely Nazism, was reduced to an off-color joke. The *Saturday Night Live* sketch was an exception in its era. Most allohistorical depictions of a Nazi-ruled world would not be devoted to entertainment but rather to political critique. Both, however, illustrated the role of the cold war in fostering a less morally judgmental view of the Nazi era.

RECEPTION

The generally positive response of readers and critics to the alternate histories that appeared after the 1970s demonstrated a willingness to accept their normalized depictions of a Nazi wartime victory. Of all the works of this period, the most widely praised was David Dvorkin's *Budspy*. Hailed by one reviewer for its "subtlety" and "insight," *Budspy* received the most glowing review from famed American science fiction writer Norman Spinrad, who, in 1988, called it a "masterful novel" that was "superior to just about everything short of *The Man in the High Castle* itself."¹⁴³ Tellingly, much of the praise singled out the novel's nuanced depiction of the Nazi regime. Thus one critic commended the novel for depicting "a successful Third Reich . . . more evenhandedly," while another declared that "through [the protagonist] . . . we come to admire the new Reich."¹⁴⁴ But it was Spinrad who, more than any other reviewer, analyzed the significance of the novel's unconventional approach to its subject. As he wrote:

Dvorkin's Nazi Germany is *alluring* . . . to the reader . . . He subtly gives us a perhaps somewhat uncomfortable understanding of its attractions as well as its horrors which raises our understanding of the real Nazi Germany to a new level. For after all, the central enigma of the Third Reich is not why we find its memory repellent, but how a whole nation could have been seduced by its charms.

Dvorkin's evolved Nazi Germany has genuine virtues. The most monstrous abuses are long past. It is the highest civilization on earth in terms of science, technology . . . [and] art . . .

Dvorkin gives . . . us an evolved Nazi Germany that, like all evolved societies, is a mixture of vice and virtue, visionary impulse and decay, national pride and national guilt, good and evil. Making the trenchant point thereby that *no* culture is really a black-and-white cartoon reality.¹⁴⁵

Such favorable comments indicated a wider willingness after the mid-1970s to depart from the early postwar era's understanding of Nazism.

The response to the period's other works was more mixed, but they too earned enough critical support to further illustrate this trend. Brad

Linaweaver's novel, *Moon of Ice*, received favorable blurbs from science fiction legends Robert Heinlein and Isaac Asimov and was hailed as a "fine" novel that provided a "complex, credible look into . . . the Nazi era."¹⁴⁶ Bruce Russett's *No Clear and Present Danger* was praised as "a model of logic and clarity" as well as a work of analytical "sophistication" that contained "relevant lessons."¹⁴⁷ Both works, it should be noted, also earned skeptical responses. One reviewer of *Moon of Ice* criticized its libertarian subtext as heavy-handed, and a reviewer of *No Clear and Present Danger* found its central proposition to be "repellent."¹⁴⁸ Such comments revealed that readers at the time were hardly unanimous in accepting a less morally judgmental view of the Third Reich. Yet, aside from the works of Dvorkin, Linaweaver, and Russett, few of the other works of the 1970s and 1980s generated any negative response. The lone exception was the *Saturday Night Live* sketch "What If: Überman," which received isolated expressions of complaint.¹⁴⁹ On the whole, the relatively scant criticism of the era's works suggests a growing receptivity of audiences to their normalized representation of a Nazi wartime victory.

ALTERNATE HISTORIES SINCE THE END OF THE COLD WAR, 1989–PRESENT

After the end of the cold war in 1989, alternate histories of a Nazi triumph in World War II changed still further. The works of this period reflected the complex realities of the post-cold-war world. The fall of communism was a joyous event that, in much of the West, encouraged the optimistic belief that liberalism had triumphed and ideological struggle – if not history itself – had come to an end. This sense of triumphalism was bolstered in the 1990s by the patriotic surge in attention towards World War II, which was occasioned by the arrival of the fiftieth anniversary of its central events and marked by the appearance of such bestselling books as Stephen Ambrose's *Band of Brothers* (1992) and Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation* (New York, 1998), blockbuster films like Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and the commissioning of the national World War II memorial on the Mall in Washington D.C. in 1995.¹⁵⁰ Yet however much Americans in these years embraced a nostalgic view of the recent past, they simultaneously displayed growing concerns about the present. In foreign affairs, the eruption of the Persian Gulf War and the Yugoslav Civil War revealed that the end of superpower tensions by no means heralded a new era of peace. Within the United States, meanwhile, the disappearance of the traditional external enemy of the Soviet Union allowed internal

problems to assume greater visibility and intensity. During the first half of the 1990s, as the nation was buffeted by economic recession, urban riots, and fierce debates over multiculturalism, many began to speak worriedly about the "disuniting of America."¹⁵¹ The end of the cold war, in short, ushered in an ambiguous era poised between optimism and pessimism.

The alternate histories of a Nazi wartime victory that appeared in the years after 1989 directly reflected this ambiguous atmosphere. Most accounts during this period exhibited a return to moralism. In contrast to the works of the 1970s, whose value-neutral depiction of a Nazi victory in World War II reflected a self-critical view of American interventionism, most of the narratives after 1989 vindicated American intervention by portraying a Nazi triumph as a calamity. The new triumphalistic streak of these accounts largely reflected the euphoria produced by the victory over communism and expressed the conviction that history had ultimately worked out for the best. Yet the optimistic post-cold-war climate paradoxically contributed to the broader process of normalization as well. For while most accounts portrayed the Nazis' wartime triumph as a disaster, they broke new ground by depicting the victorious Reich eventually becoming a weakened and highly vulnerable entity. Some, indeed, went so far as to show Nazi rule being challenged, if not overthrown, by anti-Nazi resistance movements. This new tendency of American accounts to embrace happy endings reflected the obvious influence of the Soviet dictatorship's collapse – an epochal event that provided writers with a model for what might have happened eventually to the Nazi empire after its military triumph. At the same time, the fact that these narratives painted a comparatively mild portrait of the victorious Nazi regime reflected the fading memory of the Third Reich's historical evil.

Not all works of alternate history in this period, however, portrayed a Nazi triumph in World War II in self-congratulatory fashion. Indeed, alternate histories of a more self-critical variety continued to appear, as they had in the 1970s. The majority of these accounts used the occasion of the cold war's end to once more question America's decision to intervene against the Nazis in World War II. These neo-isolationist tales insisted that the Third Reich had never constituted a threat to American interests and that the United States should never have fought against it in the first place. Had the United States only refrained from doing so, the terrible course of postwar history – most notably, the long struggle against Soviet communism – could have been avoided. In making this claim, these narratives expressed some of the pessimism of the post-cold-war era. At the same time, they illustrated the fading horror of the Nazi era in the consciousness of some

Americans. Not all self-critical accounts in this period, however, reflected feelings about the cold war. One major work in particular used the scenario of a Nazi wartime victory to criticize domestic trends in the post-9/11 world. In so doing, it highlighted new ways in which the scenario may evolve in the future.

THE RETURN OF TRIUMPHALISM

One of the first works that illustrated the era's return to triumphalism was Leo Rutman's 1990 novel *Clash of Eagles*.¹⁵² In many ways, *Clash of Eagles* was a throwback to the accounts of the war years. Like *Invasion* or *Lightning in the Night*, it described the Nazis' conquest of the east coast and midwest along with a lengthy account of life under occupation. Set in Nazi-ruled New York City, the novel's 530-page plot portrays the new Nazi order in familiar bleak terms, featuring American civilians being executed in Central Park, tortured by the Gestapo, and subjected to all manner of sexual degradation by assorted Nazi sadists. At the same time, though, most of the novel chronicles the successful mobilization of resistance to Nazi rule. Although Rutman hardly idealizes the resisters – portraying them as composed of rough-and-tumble Irish nationalists, two-bit American crooks, assorted mafia dons, and average working-class joes – he portrays their rebellion against the Nazis as quite effective. The novel was notable for being the first postwar account since C. M. Kornbluth's "Two Dooms" to conclude with a happy ending. *Clash of Eagles* offers numerous scenes of Americans avenging themselves against their German oppressors before finally concluding with the lines, "The city ran riot. All its children and its people. They were surging from Harlem to the Bronx, from Coney Island to Washington Heights . . . Torches burned brightly in the night . . . held proudly by the people of New York. The Americans had taken their city back."¹⁵³

In closing with this upbeat ending, Rutman's novel exhibited many of the ambiguities of the post-cold-war era. Its portrayal of the brutal Nazi occupation of America clearly vindicated the United States' real historical decision to intervene in the war against Hitler's Germany in 1941. Yet Rutman's depiction of Nazi vulnerability suggested the possible influence of the Soviet Empire's collapse. The author has denied that his novel was in any way "ideological" and noted that it was mostly intended to be an entertaining drama. Whatever the case may be, *Clash of Eagles* was notable for its comparatively de-demonized portrayal of the Nazis. Unlike previous writers such as Dick and Shirer, who emphasized the significant danger



Figure 10 The Nazi regime's nuclear-bomb-equipped stealth bomber in Stephen Cornwell's 1993 film *The Philadelphia Experiment II*.

posed by the Germans to the United States in World War II, Rutman confidently insisted that "Hitler could not have conquered the East Coast, much less America."¹⁵⁴ Of course, Rutman was writing at a time in the late 1980s in which most Americans viewed Germany as a reliable ally, in contrast to the situation in the early 1960s, when such confidence was in shorter supply. While Rutman still portrayed the scenario of a Nazi victory in World War II in moralistic terms, therefore, his depiction of the Germans as eventually succumbing to American counter-attacks reflected how the passage of time had diminished the sense of Nazism's horror.

The same upbeat tone seen in *Clash of Eagles* was visible in another work that appeared three years later, Stephen Cornwell's 1993 film *The Philadelphia Experiment II*. In this film (a sequel to the 1984 film *The Philadelphia Experiment*), a super-secret experiment of the United States military to test newly developed teleportation technology goes horribly wrong when it accidentally sends a stealth bomber equipped with nuclear weapons back in time to Nazi Germany in the year 1943 (see Figure 10). The result of this snafu is the catastrophic alteration of history, for the

Nazis use the bomber to nuke Washington D.C. (killing some 15 million people) and defeat the United States in World War II. Most of *The Philadelphia Experiment II* is set fifty years later, in Nazi-occupied Southern California, and focuses on the attempt of its protagonist, an unfortunate naval officer named David Herdeg (played by Brad Johnson), to extricate himself from the alternate world into which he has somehow been propelled. Compared with *Clash of Eagles*, the film is less heavy-handed in depicting the brutality of life under the victorious Nazi regime. The worst that Americans experience under Nazi rule is forced labor and a steady barrage of propaganda messages ("health, hygiene, happiness") administered by the state. Little of the outright terror seen in prior decades' accounts is visible in the film. Ultimately, indeed, the film's priorities lay elsewhere. Like *Clash of Eagles*, *The Philadelphia Experiment II* was mostly concerned with offering viewers a redemptive ending. Thus, at the film's conclusion, Herdeg plays the hero when he outwits his opponents, teleports himself back to Nazi Germany, and destroys the stealth bomber before it can take off and attack the United States. Having dramatically corrected the course of (alternate) history, Herdeg is quickly sucked back through time to his own world and is reunited with his overjoyed son, a Little League baseball player who, in the film's final scene, provides the hokey redemptive gesture by hitting a home run.

With this happy ending, *The Philadelphia Experiment II* resembled *Clash of Eagles* in ratifying the real historical record of American interventionism in World War II. In many ways, *The Philadelphia Experiment II* clearly expressed the buoyant climate of the early 1990s. Produced after the United States' victory in the cold war catapulted it to unrivalled global pre-eminence, the film differed from the triumphalistic tales of the early postwar years, whose proximity to the Nazi era and lingering concerns about the Germans lent them a bleaker character. At the same time, however, the film can also be seen as responding to, and providing consolation for, those domestic problems in the United States that persisted in the wake of communism's collapse. Herdeg expresses this presentist subtext explicitly when he attempts to convince one of the government officials responsible for altering history to correct his mistake by saying, "There's a different world . . . with a different history. I was just there yesterday. It's better than it is here . . . It's not perfect, it's got its problems, but not like this. It's a nightmare here." For a nation that was just emerging out of economic recession, race riots, and culture wars, this message was no doubt appealing. The film's portrayal of an alternate world inferior to that of contemporary reality clearly vindicated the latter as the preferable alternative.



Figure 11 The aging Führer, Adolf Hitler (Rudolf Fleischer), looks on in grim resignation as American President Joseph Kennedy's motorcade bypasses his Berlin reviewing stand in Christopher Menaul's 1994 film *Fatherland*.

The American penchant for happy endings continued with the release of Christopher Menaul's 1994 cinematic adaptation of Robert Harris's novel *Fatherland*. First broadcast on the American cable network HBO, the film was notable for adding a much more redemptive ending than the book. Harris had originally concluded his novel on a grim note by critically portraying isolationist President Joseph Kennedy visiting Berlin to improve relations with Hitler. By contrast, the television version portrays the protagonist, Charlie MacGuire (played by Miranda Richardson), interrupting Kennedy's imminent meeting with Hitler by rushing up to his limousine and providing him with incontrovertible photographic evidence about the Nazis' genocidal crimes against the Jews. An aghast Kennedy then motions the limousine driver to continue driving past the waiting Führer, who ends up getting snubbed by the head of the world's other superpower (see Figure 11). While the reasons for this change in plot can only be guessed at, the fact that other Hollywood studios had found *Fatherland*'s original ending too depressing (and had insisted that it be made more upbeat in order for it to get produced) no doubt was involved.¹⁵⁵ The ending also dovetailed with the broader tendency in the

wake of the cold war's conclusion for Americans to view their own past from a more triumphalistic and less self-critical perspective. Released at a time of great commemorative attention to the fiftieth anniversary of the events of World War II, the film expressed the abundant patriotism that existed within the nation about its role in helping to keep the world safe for democracy. By portraying the Third Reich as an evil empire (and underplaying the likelihood that any American government would have collaborated with it), *Fatherland* provided a self-congratulatory vindication of America's intervention in the war.

Following *Fatherland*, the most prominent work of alternate history to partake of the renewed patriotic trend appeared one year later with the publication of then Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Newt Gingrich's novel *1945*.¹⁵⁶ Co-written with science fiction writer William Forstchen, *1945* portrays a world in which Hitler's temporary elimination from power (due to serious injuries suffered in a plane crash on December 6, 1941) keeps the Germans from declaring war on the United States and, in turn, enables them to concentrate all their attention on defeating the Soviet Union, which they do in 1943. Given that the United States defeat the Japanese in the same span of time, a showdown between the world's two superpowers becomes merely a matter of time. Finally, in 1945 the treacherous Nazis decide to defeat their last remaining enemy once and for all. Aware that the Germans are considerably lagging behind the Americans in atomic weapons research and development, a recovered Hitler orders a pre-emptive strike against the American research facility at Oak Ridge, Tennessee (as well as against the facility at Los Alamos, New Mexico) to decisively render the enemy powerless to defend itself against the vastly superior conventional weapons of the Nazis. Led by the reliable villain, the malicious Austrian SS killer, Otto Skorzeny, an elite team of Nazi assassins, supported by a fleet of long-range German bombers, penetrates deep into American territory and destroys the Oak Ridge facility in a fiery inferno. Only due to the heroic efforts of the novel's protagonist, an American naval intelligence officer named Jim Martel, are the Americans able to learn of the attack soon enough to organize a semblance of resistance that prevents the assault from being a total fiasco. The novel's final outcome, however, is highly ambiguous – on its final page appear the words: "to be continued." Still, while the ending is never spelled out, *1945* implies that the Americans face a dire situation in the wake of the German attack. Not only do they now trail the Germans in the race to develop the bomb, but they lag far behind in conventional weapons capacity and have no capable allies to help them face the Nazi menace.

In its ominous description of the Nazi threat to the United States, *1945* emphatically endorsed the United States' real historical decision to fight Nazi Germany. Throughout the novel, Gingrich and Forstchen criticized isolationism. The main supporter of isolationism – the chief of staff to President Andrew Harrison, John Mayhew – is depicted as morally corrupt and treasonous. Meanwhile, the President himself muses at one point, "Were it not for Hitler . . . isolationism would look pretty good. As things were, he had to run with the internationalist crowd."¹⁵⁷ In the end, the evil of Nazism makes intervention an obvious choice. As Winston Churchill puts it to a vacillating President Harrison at one point in the novel, "There is no clearer enemy than Hitler."¹⁵⁸ At the same time, the authors justified interventionism by underscoring Nazi brutality. The American hero, Jim, proclaims that "Hitler and his scum . . . [are] evil incarnate," and the American General George Marshall adds, "We are in a de facto state of war with a power that makes the Japanese Empire at its height look like a Gilbert and Sullivan threat."¹⁵⁹

Gingrich and Forstchen's motives in defending the historical struggle against Nazism spanned a range of political and personal concerns.¹⁶⁰ As was true of the Anglo-American accounts of the 1960s, portraying the Nazis as the incarnation of evil helped accentuate the heroic quality of America's struggle against them. It was significant that *1945* valorized the American resistance. When the Germans invade Oak Ridge, local World War I veterans, led by none other than war hero Alvin York, help repel the German assault, rescue Oak Ridge's atomic scientists, and preserve the nation's hopes of restarting the Manhattan project in time to defend the homeland against future German attacks. The desire to glorify America's struggle against the Nazis was further suggested by the fact that *1945* denied the Soviets a role in defeating them. By having the Soviet Union conclude an armistice with Germany and bow out of the conflict in 1943, Gingrich and Forstchen spared the Americans the obligation of having to share the credit for defeating Nazism with its real historical communist ally and instead give it the exclusive glory of doing so alone.¹⁶¹ As Jim says at one point, "We [Americans] are all that stands between the world and Hitler."¹⁶² This fantasy scenario partly reflected a smug sense of satisfaction about the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war.

This sense of triumphalism, to be sure, was not unalloyed. Written in a period of the early 1990s in which conservatives were bemoaning the threat to American values by big government, multiculturalism, and other "liberal" dangers, *1945* partly expressed the era's conservative cultural pessimism. At one juncture, the authors charge the federal government under

Roosevelt with incompetence due to its misguided decision to pass gun-control legislation in Oak Ridge, thus making its citizens more vulnerable to Nazi attack.¹⁶³ Still, *1945* was less of a libertarian rant against big government than a patriotic celebration of the American character. As shown by the vigorous defense against the Germans mounted by the local inhabitants of Oak Ridge, *1945* seemed to say that, even when challenged, ordinary Americans exhibited a strong capacity for valor. Furthermore, at the end of the novel, the authors affirmed the important role of the central government in choosing the best and brightest to devise new ways of defending the nation from external attack.¹⁶⁴ On the whole, *1945* was an affirmative rather than a self-critical tale. It expressed a sense of nostalgia for a simpler time where there was a unity of nation and state. Epitomizing this was Gingrich and Forstchen's dedication of *1945* to "the generation that fought the Nazis in the real world, especially our parents" – a gesture that allows the book to be placed within the broader wave of attention to the "greatest generation" of Americans that began to surge in the mid-1990s.¹⁶⁵ Given his underlying faith in the virtues of the American people, there is little doubt that Gingrich would have carried the narrative of *1945* through to its logical conclusion – namely, an American triumph over the Nazis – had he ever produced the promised sequel to it. But even in its abridged version, *1945* implied this happy ending in clear enough terms.

Since the turn of the millennium, this upbeat view has continued to find confirmation in other novels. Two that provided further evidence of the decreasing frightfulness of a Nazi wartime victory were Arthur Rhodes's 2001 novel *The Last Reich: America Strikes Back*, and J. N. Stroyar's 2001 novel *The Children's War*. Both books portrayed Nazi rule in familiar fashion as defined by great brutality, but their focus was directed less towards the crimes of the perpetrators than to the heroic resistance marshaled by the victims. For its part, Rhodes's novel resembled Rutman's *Clash of Eagles* by portraying the Nazi occupation of the United States as ultimately being overthrown by American resistance forces in the 1960s.¹⁶⁶ Stroyar's mammoth 1,149-page novel was far more intricate in its characters and plot; its portrayal of Nazi barbarism, in particular, was extremely vivid and bordered on the gratuitous. Yet it too ended on a redemptive note. After spending hundreds of pages describing the Nazi persecution of the Poles, Stroyar finally portrays the Polish resistance as successfully infiltrating one of its members, a man by the name of Richard Traugutt, into the highest circles of the Nazi leadership. By the end of the novel, Traugutt seems poised to become Germany's next Führer and inaugurate a

reformist course in the Nazi state.¹⁶⁷ While *The Children's War* never gives the reader the satisfaction of the happy ending, it clearly points in that direction.

Finally, the same can be said of eminent alternate history author Harry Turtledove's 2003 novel *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*.¹⁶⁸ Set in 2009 in a world in which Nazi Germany has conquered Europe and occupied the United States, the novel focuses on the daily life of Heinrich Gimpel, a German bureaucrat employed by the military (the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, or OKW) who turns out to be one of a handful of Jews who have escaped the Holocaust and survived in Berlin by hiding their true identities. Much of the novel focuses on the great lengths to which Gimpel and his family must go in order to remain undetected as Jews. But the significance of *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* lies less in the details of this suspenseful subplot about Jewish survival than in its portrayal of how German society evolves in the wake of a Nazi victory. While the beginning of the novel paints a familiarly grim portrait of Nazi omnipotence and barbarism – Germany rules over the entire globe (except for Japan) and has completed the Final Solution – it quickly shifts gear to portray the Nazi Reich undergoing a major internal crisis that culminates in revolution.

Great changes begin to occur in the Reich following the death of its third Führer, the ninety-year-old Kurt Haldweim (a not-so-thinly-veiled dig at the former Austrian President and Wehrmacht officer, Kurt Waldheim), who is succeeded by a dynamic young technocrat by the name of Heinz Buckliger. Having served as the Minister of Heavy Industry, Buckliger is well aware that the Reich has become a bloated and inefficient state, and he vows to usher in a long overdue process of economic and political reform. In attempting to advance this goal, Buckliger delivers a secret speech to the party at Nuremberg and thereafter goes on national television to admit a wide range of historical mistakes, declaring that “for far too long, this state has been founded on . . . terror.” He thereupon vows to cease the racially grounded “exploitation” of subject peoples, such as the British and Dutch, who have increasingly been voicing a desire for greater autonomy.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, by promising real political reforms, such as free elections for the Reichstag, Buckliger launches a thaw within Nazi society that quickly assumes its own dynamic. Before long, the Gauleiter of Berlin, a populist radical by the name of Rolf Stolle, demands further democratizing reforms and directly challenges the SS establishment at a mass demonstration by declaring, “We’re going to show the world where the bodies are buried – and we all know there are lots of them.”¹⁷⁰ With ordinary Germans encouraged by this trend – many enthusiastically embrace the slogan

"We are the *Volk*"—the worried SS tries to suppress the fledgling democracy movement by kidnapping Buckliger and seizing power in a brazen *coup d'état*. But in the end, Stolle comes to the rescue with the help of the Wehrmacht, which joins the broader revolutionary cause and overthrows the SS conspirators by force of arms. At the novel's conclusion, Buckliger and Stolle speak before the German people and promise not only to respect their will in the upcoming elections but also to "give democratic rights back to some other Aryan peoples too." As a television reporter concludes, "Where the *Volk* . . . comes out into the streets . . . how can things possibly remain the same after that?"¹⁷¹

In arriving at this happy ending, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* reflected the ambiguities of the post-cold-war era. Turtledove's moralistic depiction of Nazi evil, and his triumphalistic validation of American intervention in World War II, revealed that he shared the era's optimistic mood. He clearly partook of the broader celebration of the "greatest generation" of war veterans, for example, as was made clear by his dedication of the book to family members who served in the war and who "helped ensure that this [the novel's story] is alternate history." He was also strongly influenced by the dramatic events surrounding the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990. Indeed, his heroic characters of Buckliger and Stolle were clear stand-ins for Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, who provided the obvious inspiration for them. At the same time, though, the optimistic mood fostered by the events of the early 1990s led Turtledove to paint a comparatively normalized portrait of the Nazi era. As was true of Robert Harris's *Fatherland*, Turtledove's belief that the dissolution of the USSR provided a model for what would have eventually happened had the Nazis won World War II indicates how the end of the cold war contributed to the fading memory of Nazi barbarism. *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, indeed, offered a much milder depiction of the Nazis than other accounts. While the tales of Harris, Rutman, and Gingrich, for example, diminished the horror of a victorious Reich by representing it as being successfully challenged by external resistance movements (whether Soviet or American), Turtledove portrayed the Reich's internal collapse from within. Instead of heroizing the Nazis' opponents, Turtledove heroized — or at least dramatically humanized — the Nazis themselves. He departed from most previous accounts, which depicted the Nazis as uniformly evil, by portraying them as a diverse group, ranging from ideological fanatics to reasonable pragmatists.¹⁷² As one Jewish character named Esther concedes near the novel's end, "There were Nazis . . . and then there were Nazis."¹⁷³ Turtledove, of course, was no apologist for Nazism. But this highly relativistic

statement – which would have been unimaginable in earlier eras that viewed the Third Reich as the incarnation of evil – epitomized the further waning of a moral perspective towards the Nazi experience.

THE PERSISTENCE OF SELF-CRITIQUE

The triumphalistic trend of the 1990s, however, did not stand unopposed. The most vociferous dissent was provided by conservative pundit and three-time Reform party presidential candidate Pat Buchanan's controversial 1999 book *A Republic, Not an Empire*.¹⁷⁴ Although not a work of alternate history, Buchanan's book liberally utilized counterfactual reasoning in critiquing the interventionist character of twentieth-century American foreign policy.¹⁷⁵ In advancing his argument, Buchanan echoed Bruce Russett's conclusions from a generation earlier that the United States should have stayed out of World War II. Not only were vital American interests not at stake in this conflict, Buchanan argued, but the United States was not under any threat from the Nazi regime. Buchanan sharply downplayed the likelihood that Hitler would have sought war with, let alone invaded, the United States, arguing that he was primarily interested in expanding Germany's borders to the east by defeating the Soviet Union. As he put it, "If Hitler could not put a soldier into England in the fall of 1940, the notion that he could invade the Western Hemisphere . . . was preposterous."¹⁷⁶ It was therefore doubly tragic, he went on to note, that Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany after its invasion of Poland. For this decision led Hitler to invade Western Europe (in which he allegedly had no prior interest) and also prevented him from throwing all of his forces against the Russians, thus ensuring that the Soviet Union would survive the Nazi onslaught and remain communist.¹⁷⁷ The main thrust of Buchanan's counterfactual analysis culminated with his provocative claim that "Had Britain and France not given the war guarantees to Poland, there might have been no Dunkirk, no blitz, no Vichy, [and] no destruction of the Jewish populations of Western Europe."¹⁷⁸ In this view, the wrong-headed decision of the British and French to declare war on the Germans, and the dishonest means through which Roosevelt brought the United States into the fray on their side, ended up having tragically paradoxical effects. As Buchanan concluded, "In 1941, Roosevelt had gone to war to make Europe . . . safe for democracy, and had made Europe safe for Stalinism."¹⁷⁹

In drawing this pessimistic conclusion, Buchanan expressed a highly normalized view of the Nazi past. To be sure, Buchanan's primary motives

for questioning American intervention against the Nazis in World War II were political. The presidential candidate's political platform of economic nationalism and diplomatic isolationism logically required him to rehabilitate the beliefs of American isolationists that staying out of the European conflict would have allowed Hitler to crush Bolshevism.¹⁸⁰ Still, regardless of this argument's political utility, Buchanan's embrace of it was significant in illustrating the fading fears of Nazism. Like John Lukacs in "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" Buchanan relativized Nazism's evil by comparing it to that of Soviet communism. By 1939, he noted, "Stalin had amassed a record of murder and enslavement that dwarfed Hitler's." "Estimates of the dead at the hands of the Great Terrorist before September 1939," he added, "run to twenty-two million, one thousand times the number that could then be charged to Hitler. Stalin's concentration camps also held one thousand times as many souls as did Hitler's."¹⁸¹ Moreover, Buchanan observed, even after two years of war, on the eve of Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, "the body count of those murdered by Stalin still exceeded Hitler's by the millions." It was no wonder, he concluded, that "many Americans [viewed] Stalin's Russia . . . [as] a far greater long-term threat than Hitler's Germany."¹⁸²

Yet no matter how much Americans might have endorsed this view during the 1940s, Buchanan's support for it ten years after the fall of communism seems puzzling. Given the dramatic events of 1989, conservative attention to the evils of communism might have been expected to disappear. But in fact the opposite was true. Throughout the West, there appeared new attention to the historical evils of communism, epitomized by the publication of Stéphane Courtois's mammoth compendium of communist crimes *The Black Book of Communism*.¹⁸³ Such works proliferated in the 1990s as part of a triumphalistic desecration of communism's corpse and also as an effort to vindicate the cold-war crusade against the Soviet Union. In order for this campaign for vindication to be effective, however, it needed to relativize the crimes of Nazism, against which communist crimes were usually deemed less horrific. Buchanan's allohistorical downplaying of the Nazi threat to the United States in *A Republic, Not an Empire* was part of a broader attempt to justify the cold-war struggle against communism. So important was this mission to him that, in the book's final section, he abandoned his allegedly principled stance of isolationism and defended the United States' intervention in the cold war.¹⁸⁴ In doing so, while simultaneously rejecting American intervention in World War II against Nazi Germany, of course, Buchanan exposed a fundamental inconsistency of principle that dramatically weakened the

overall argument of *A Republic, Not an Empire*. At the same time, though, he provided further confirmation of the enduring role of cold-war anticommunism in attenuating Western fears of Nazism.

The same can be said for A. Edward Cooper's 1999 novel *Triumph of the Third Reich*.¹⁸⁵ Written with a less overt political agenda than Buchanan's book, Cooper's text nonetheless exhibited a mixture of neo-isolationist and anticommunist leanings in his depiction of a Nazi victory in World War II. In the novel (which is largely an extended timeline with little character development), Hitler wins the war in 1944 by developing superior weapons (V-1 and V-2 rockets, Me-262 fighters, and the atomic bomb), which he uses to defeat the Allied landing at Normandy and thereafter compel the British and Americans to accept an armistice and separate peace agreements. Significantly, Cooper describes the decision to bow out of the war by isolationist President Joseph Kennedy (who becomes commander-in-chief after the death of Roosevelt and the assassination of successor President Henry Wallace in 1944) as a prudent one. With the United States out of the conflict, Hitler re-invades the the Soviet Union, thus fulfilling Kennedy's fantasy of having the Nazis and Bolsheviks fight to the death. But an even better outcome ensues, for the continued fight against Bolshevism and the continued occupation of Western Europe ruin the German economy and earn Hitler the opposition of a powerful cabal of generals and civilian resistance figures which eventually succeeds in assassinating him in early 1949.¹⁸⁶ Under the new chancellor, Erwin Rommel, Nazi Germany abandons ideological fanaticism in favor of pragmatism, holding war crimes trials of leading Nazi figures, closing down the concentration camps, ending the atomic weapons program, and generally reforming the nation's political system in a more progressive democratic direction. In the end, the way seems to be paved for the forging of a German-American alliance in the ongoing fight against Soviet communism. In short, by sketching out the fantasy scenario of Nazi Germany reforming itself from above after a wartime victory, Cooper – like Brad Linaweaver almost twenty years earlier – challenged the persistent belief that American intervention against Nazi Germany in World War II was historically necessary.¹⁸⁷

Unlike Linaweaver – and certainly unlike Buchanan – however, Cooper does not seem to have written his novel with a partisan political agenda in mind. As a retired aerospace engineer and part-time novelist writing for the religiously oriented, Utah-based publishing house, Agreka Books, he portrayed the ultimate result of a Nazi victory in World War II in optimistic fashion most likely as a way of celebrating the universal human desire for

freedom.¹⁸⁸ It is possible, moreover, that the end of the cold war and the liberation of Eastern Europe from the communist yoke inspired Cooper to portray the Nazis ultimately reforming their regime from above in order to avert later collapse. Just as Robert Harris was influenced by the collapse of the Soviet Union in portraying the victorious Nazi empire as progressively more vulnerable due to the longterm costs of victory, Cooper portrayed President Kennedy confidently predicting that “an empire as evil as Hitler’s cannot possibly exist for long, [for] once . . . the day-to-day realities of running such an empire sets in, the German people themselves will grow weary of it.”¹⁸⁹ Whatever Cooper’s specific motives may have been in arriving at this upbeat conclusion, it was implicitly founded on the belief that America would have been better off remaining neutral in World War II. As such it reflected the tendency of some Americans after the cold war to rethink older moralistic views of the Nazi past.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SELF-CRITIQUE SINCE 9/11

If the scattered self-critical works of the 1990s expressed a fading sense of the Third Reich’s horror, the opposite is true of the most recent work of alternate history to address the theme of a Nazi victory – Philip Roth’s much-publicized 2004 novel *The Plot against America* (see Figure 12).¹⁹⁰ Although Roth’s book only flirts with, and never fully develops, the scenario of the Nazis winning World War II, it is significant for several reasons. The fact that Roth, one of America’s most celebrated and accomplished writers, chose to write a work of alternate history to begin with affirms the genre’s arrival into the American cultural mainstream. Beyond constituting something of a milestone in that respect, the book is notable for inaugurating what may be a new phase in the representation of the Nazi era in American works of alternate history.

The Plot against America portrays the struggle of its protagonist, a nine-year-old boy named Philip Roth, to adapt to the new world that results from the novel’s main allohistorical point of divergence, Charles Lindbergh’s defeat of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the American presidential election of 1940. Having campaigned on a platform of isolationism – “Vote for Lindbergh or Vote for War” is his slogan – Lindbergh moves as president to relax relations with Hitler’s Germany, going so far as to forge a neutrality pact with the Reich in the fall of 1940 known as the “Iceland Understanding” that, together with the signing of a similar agreement, the “Hawaii Understanding,” with Japan, essentially makes the United States a member of the Axis alliance. This turn of events is understandably

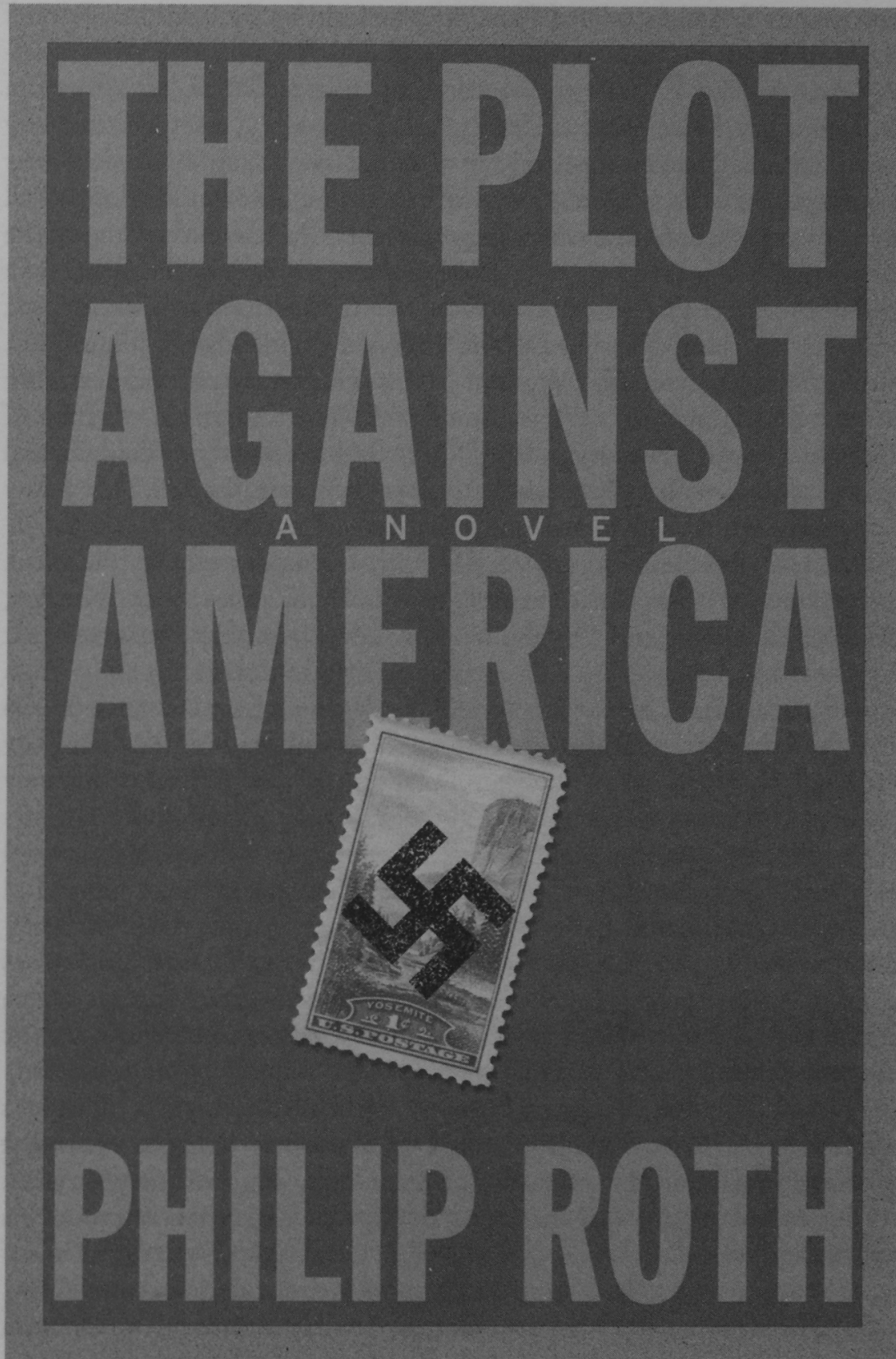


Figure 12 Cover of Philip Roth's novel *The Plot against America* (2004).

worrisome for American Jews like Philip and his family, and their fears of worse to come are soon realized as Lindbergh goes on to enact fascist-inspired policies – like the newly established Office of American Absorption's "Homestead 42" program to forcibly resettle inner-city Jewish families in the rural midwest – that are meant to hasten their Americanization and dilute their ethnic cohesion. Events deteriorate still further in the fall of 1942, when ongoing American Jewish criticism of the president's warm relations with Nazi Germany – Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop receives a state dinner at the White House – sparks antisemitic riots in midwestern cities like Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and St. Louis, in which hundreds of Jewish synagogues and businesses are burned and hundreds of Jews murdered. This American version of Kristallnacht quickly brings young Philip and his family to despair, and before similar anti-Jewish violence arrives in their own Newark, New Jersey neighborhood, they resolve to flee into exile in Canada.

Up until this point in the novel, Roth essentially echoed the bleak conclusions of such earlier writers as Philip K. Dick, Eric Norden, William Overgard, and David Dvorkin. Like them, Roth asserted that the United States government's decision to remain isolationist and refrain from fighting Nazi Germany in World War II would have led the nation to turn towards fascism and collaboration. Furthermore, he implicitly endorsed the idea that American isolationism would have ultimately permitted Germany to win the war. By the fall of 1942, indeed, Roth writes that Lindbergh's policies had "provided the German army with additional time to quell the continuing . . . resistance from the Soviet Union" and had "furnished German industry and the German scientific establishment – already secretly developing a bomb . . . powered by atomic fission, as well as a rocket engine capable of conveying this weapon across the Atlantic – with a further two years in which to complete preparation for the apocalyptic struggle with the United States."¹⁹¹

Yet, before this bleak outcome can occur, Roth radically alters his novel's counterfactual trajectory by introducing a *deus ex machina* twist that restores historical events to their rightful course. The twist begins when President Lindbergh's private plane disappears without a trace on his return flight from Louisville, Kentucky to Washington D.C. in the fall of 1942. Soon thereafter, Vice-President Burton Wheeler declares martial law, citing FBI reports from Nazi sources that the president has allegedly been kidnapped by "Jewish interests" who are holding him captive in Canada. As calls emerge for the United States to invade Canada, as German troops set out to occupy Mexico (ostensibly to "protect" America's southern

border), and as FBI agents arrest various liberal and Jewish members of Roosevelt's former administration for their suspected roles in the kidnapping scheme, Lindbergh's wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, goes on the radio to drop the bombshell that she has just escaped from Walter Reed Medical Hospital, where she has been confined by agents of the Wheeler administration involved in a broader plot against the United States government. As the novel goes on to reveal in highly convoluted fashion, Lindbergh's disappearance was part of a decade-old Nazi conspiracy, in which Hitler used the president's young son (who had been famously kidnapped and thought dead, but actually had been smuggled into Germany in the early 1930s) to blackmail Lindbergh into becoming a Nazi fifth-columnist who would do the Reich's bidding once he rose to power. Lindbergh's failure to heed Heinrich Himmler's demands for more ruthless action against the American Jewish community, however, ultimately leads the Nazi government to oust Lindbergh, whom they covertly bring back to Germany after staging his disappearance. In the wake of these events, Anne Morrow Lindbergh invokes the American constitution to call for new elections in 1942, and in short order, Roosevelt sweeps back into power, the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, and the United States enter the war against its former German and Japanese allies, finally defeating them in 1945. Although America has suffered a serious crisis, it ultimately triumphs, just like in real history.

The upbeat conclusion of *The Plot against America* is significant for a variety of reasons. To a degree, the novel resembles many other American accounts from the 1990s, such as *Clash of Eagles* and the *Philadelphia Experiment II*, which also culminated with happy endings. Unlike these works, however, Roth's novel hardly diminishes the horror of the Third Reich and makes no attempt to normalize its legacy. Instead, by depicting the Nazis as fearsome enemies who come dangerously close to realizing their demonic goals in the United States, *The Plot against America* expresses an enduring sense of their evil. Still, by refraining from portraying the Nazis as emerging victorious, Roth somewhat undercuts the effectiveness of his tale's underlying cautionary lesson. *The Plot against America* thus represents something of a return to the future histories of the early 1940s, such as *Invasion* and *Lightning in the Night*, which also tempered their cautionary lessons about the Nazi menace with happy endings so as not to demoralize the reading public. Yet while Roth's novel partakes of an older tradition, his specific goals in writing it are quite new. Most likely, Roth wanted his novel to serve as a warning about the contemporary dangers facing America in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the war in

Iraq. In portraying the United States becoming a fascist-like state under the administration of an ill-qualified, naive, and incompetent president, Roth offers a not-so-thinly veiled critique of the United States under the administration of President George W. Bush.¹⁹² Roth's use of the nightmare scenario of the Nazis (almost) winning World War II to criticize present-day problems, of course, has ample precedent – most notably, in the practice of American writers during the crisis-ridden 1970s, who were the first to abandon the scenario's original self-congratulatory function in favor of one that was more self-critical. Whether or not the premise of a Nazi victory in World War II continues to be used in such self-critical fashion in future works of alternate history remains to be seen. But in commenting on post-9/11 events, *The Plot against America* clearly confirms the tendency of alternate histories to adapt to changing times and may thus eventually be seen as inaugurating a new phase of the scenario's evolution.

RECEPTION

On balance, the narratives that have appeared since the 1990s reflected a growing tendency to view the Nazi past from a less judgmental perspective, yet the strongly negative reaction to them illustrated a desire of American audiences to preserve traditional, moralistic views. In contrast to the largely positive reception of the normalized works of the 1970s and 1980s, the response to the accounts of the 1990s was predominantly negative. This was particularly true of the higher-profile works of the period.¹⁹³ HBO's television version of *Fatherland*, for example, was accorded a wide reception but was generally regarded as a "disappointment."¹⁹⁴ Reviewers cited a variety of reasons in making this assessment, but most found the film inferior to the original novel, with more than a few specifically criticizing the film's "depressingly hokey and stupid climax."¹⁹⁵ It may well be that such complaints reflected a reluctance of critics to accept the nakedly patriotic happy ending forced upon the film by network executives and, thus, a willingness to embrace a less self-congratulatory view of the American past. Yet it is easy to exaggerate such a point. Other reviewers, after all, found the film not patriotic enough. One reviewer seemed motivated by conservative anticommunism when he called *Fatherland*'s basic premise – that "the United States bowed out of the war while the Soviets fought valiantly on" – "unacceptable."¹⁹⁶ It is impossible to know with certainty what political implications viewers perceived the film as containing. But politics aside, perhaps the most significant complaint was that *Fatherland* made the premise of a Nazi victory boring. One reviewer

polemically branded the film a “thrill-free thriller,” concluding “Zey haff vays of making you yawn in *Fatherland*.”¹⁹⁷

Such complaints are significant, for they were echoed in the responses to the film *The Philadelphia Experiment II*. To an even greater degree than *Fatherland*, *The Philadelphia Experiment II* received low marks across the board, being called a “contrived” film that did not exceed “grade-C science fiction.” Notably, certain reviewers alluded to the film’s mild portrayal of a Nazi-ruled world, arguing that it merely portrayed “the new Nazi nation . . . as a bummer” and did not succeed in leaving viewers with anything more than a “few jitters.”¹⁹⁸ It is significant that the two major films of the decade were both faulted for failing to inject the appropriate degree of terror into the premise of a Nazi victory in World War II, for it suggests that while the horror of a Nazi-ruled world had perhaps faded in the minds of the creators of alternate history, it persisted in the minds of audiences.

Yet while *Fatherland* and *The Philadelphia Experiment II* received negative marks, they did not fare so poorly as the two forays into alternate history produced by the nation’s two most visible conservative politicians: Newt Gingrich and Pat Buchanan. Gingrich’s novel, *1945*, met with the most savage reception of any work of alternate history in the postwar era. Called a “dud” by one of the more charitable reviewers, the novel was described as outright “torture” by another, who proclaimed he would rather “spend a year in solitary confinement with nothing to read except Danielle Steel than [spend] another nanosecond with the prose of Gingrich.”¹⁹⁹ Critics lambasted everything, from the novel’s literary ineptitude to its conservative political subtext.²⁰⁰ One reviewer described it as “muddled, military mish-mash: part Rambo, part Tom Clancy, with *Pulp Fiction*-esque gore tossed in,” and another criticized it for its eroticization of military hardware.²⁰¹ So bad were the reviews of *1945* that the majority of the unsold copies ended up being pulped.²⁰² Yet, in surveying the reviews, it is notable that most criticized the Speaker of the House for temporarily ignoring politics to make a profit in the publishing world.²⁰³ Few objected to the novel’s allohistorical function of validating the United States’ real historical intervention in World War II to fight Nazi Germany.²⁰⁴ Indeed, the only reviewers to object to the novel’s triumphalistic message were British critics who resented *1945* for denying the British and Soviets any role in defeating the Nazis and selfishly reserving all the credit for the United States.²⁰⁵ For this reason, the book’s negative reception does not necessarily mean that its interventionist message was repudiated by American readers.

Significantly, the opposite was true of the critical response to Pat Buchanan’s *A Republic, Not an Empire*, which was explicitly condemned

because of its revisionist view of Nazism. Some, like John Judis in the *New York Times Book Review*, criticized Buchanan for harboring an overly "benign view of Hitler" and for glossing over "the fate of . . . German and East European Jews and Poles" under Nazism.²⁰⁶ Others criticized Buchanan for underestimating the Nazis' aggressive intentions towards the West.²⁰⁷ Various scholars, for example, cited Hitler's commissioning of the ME-264 (known as the Amerika-Bomber) and a fleet of super battleships as evidence of a long-range plan to engage the United States in military confrontation in the future.²⁰⁸ Had the Nazis actually been able to gain dominance over Europe, critics added, they would have been a major threat to the United States. As journalist Michael Lind concluded, a "Third Reich that had consolidated its power would have been far more technologically advanced and perhaps more aggressive than the Soviet Union ever was."²⁰⁹ Buchanan's claims actually caused a major controversy within the Reform party in 1999 when Donald Trump (who was challenging Buchanan for the party's presidential nomination) accused him of "denigrating the memory of Americans who died fighting in an unavoidable war," noting, "Pat says Hitler had no malicious intent toward the United States . . . Well, Hitler killed six million Jews and millions of others. Don't you think it was only a question of time before he got to us?"²¹⁰ Despite such criticism, however, other observers defended Buchanan's thesis. Conservative stalwart William F. Buckley supported Buchanan, noting, "Would things have been better if Hitler had conquered Moscow? They could hardly have been worse."²¹¹ Moreover, Buchanan's book enjoyed considerable commercial success and was a hit with many readers.²¹² On the whole, though, mainstream opinion looked unfavorably upon Buchanan's argument.

The strongest indication of the enduring desire of American audiences to view the Nazi era from a morally informed perspective was provided by the negative reaction to Harry Turtledove's *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*. This reaction was particularly significant, given Turtledove's status as the most skilled and acclaimed writer working in the field of alternate history today. His distinguished reputation notwithstanding, Turtledove earned widespread criticism for what was largely viewed as a disappointing work of fiction. While many reviewers complained about the book's "tepid characterization and clumsy plot devices," a good number focused upon his mild portrait of the victorious Reich.²¹³ One reviewer, for example, described Turtledove's representation of the Nazi regime's "political thaw" as "unlikely" and "unconvincing"; another found it "disconcerting" that "unrepentant Nazis" were among the novel's "unlikely heroes."²¹⁴ Even average readers posted reviews declaring that "Turtledove thinks a

little too highly of Nazi civilization."²¹⁵ In short, by rejecting Turtledove's vision of the Third Reich's internal reform as both implausible and unbelievable, readers expressed a basic commitment to remembering the Nazi regime as the embodiment of evil.

CONCLUSION

On balance, the conclusions of, and responses to, alternate histories of a Nazi victory in World War II suggest that the memory of the Nazi past in the United States has slowly become more normalized over the course of the postwar era. From 1945 up until the early 1970s, works of alternate history uniformly portrayed a Nazi victory in horrifying terms, thereby affirming the wisdom of the United States government's decision to intervene against the Germans in World War II. With the period of national decline that peaked during the era of crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, alternate histories became more self-critical. Some challenged the prevailing interventionist consensus by depicting a Nazi triumph as a relatively benign event; others affirmed the interventionist belief in Nazism's evil, but less to validate the past than to criticize the present. These tales reflected the existence of a counter-memory opposed to the dominant memory established during the early postwar period. The accounts that have appeared since 1989, by contrast, have reflected the post-cold-war return of national self-confidence by once more validating interventionism and portraying a Nazi victory as a terrible event. At the same time, these accounts have portrayed a Nazi victory in much less horrific terms than those of the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, in providing audiences with happy endings, these narratives suggested the fading horror of the Nazi era in the minds of many Americans. How many, though, is difficult to gauge. The continued desire of audiences to see the Nazis portrayed as the epitome of evil, and their disapproval of works that have failed to offer such portraits, reflect an enduring moralistic perspective on the Nazi era in the popular consciousness.

Especially compared with the case of Great Britain, therefore, the degree of normalization in the United States seems to be less pronounced. If in Britain the challenge to (and defense of) the myth of the finest hour has been both prolonged and vehement, the limited number and cool reception of works criticizing interventionism in the United States suggests that it represents more of a marginal phenomenon. The reluctance of Americans to criticize one of their nation's postwar foundational myths as stridently as Britons have criticized theirs suggests that Americans have

maintained a greater degree of self-confidence than Britons about the status of their nation in the postwar world. Without having to face the reality of decline in as pressing a manner as the British, Americans have had less occasion to question inherited views of the past. They have largely continued to believe that the fight against Nazism was both strategically necessary and morally just. Nevertheless, the Nazi past has gradually shed some of its horrific dimensions in American consciousness over time. The decreasingly grim portrayal of a Nazi victory, its increasing use for comedic entertainment, and the growing desire for happy endings all reflect the decline of moralism and the growth of normalization.

CHAPTER 2: THE UNITED STATES AND THE DILEMMAS
OF MILITARY INTERVENTION

- 1 *Moon of Ice* was originally published as a novella in 1982 and was expanded into a full-length novel in 1988. All quotations in this chapter come from the novel. Brad Linaweaver, *Moon of Ice* (New York, 1988), pp. 4–10. The short story version is reproduced in Harry Turtledove and Martin H. Greenberg, eds., *The Best Alternate History Stories of the 20th Century* (New York, 2001), pp. 356–415.
- 2 Britain produced seven accounts between the years 1937–45, compared with three in the United States. See Appendix.
- 3 Isolationists regularly dismissed the threat of the Third Reich to the United States. Warren I. Cohen, *The American Revisionists: The Lessons of Intervention in World War I* (Chicago, 1967); Wayne Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists: 1932–45* (Lincoln, NE, 1983), p. 343.
- 4 Hendrik Willem van Loon, *Invasion: Being an Eyewitness Account of the Nazi Invasion of America* (New York, 1940); Fred Allhoff, *Lightning in the Night* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1979). Allhoff's novel was serialized in the magazine *Liberty* in thirteen installments between August 24 and November 16, 1940.
- 5 Van Loon wrote: "The facts of this book . . . are the revaluation against an American background of what happened in those neutral European countries which were . . . overthrown by the Nazis . . . Up to the last moment, these poor victims . . . had been writing me, 'don't worry . . . the Germans will never do us any harm . . . it can never happen here.' Alas . . . a week later . . . they had lost . . . their old freedom . . . America sometime very soon will have to decide what course it intends to follow. Hence this little book." Van Loon, pp. 201–02. Van Loon (1882–1944) moved to the United States in 1902 and made his reputation as a bestselling author of popular histories for juveniles – in particular, *The Story of Mankind* (1921). He was known for his short-wave broadcasts to the Netherlands as "Uncle Hank" during World War II. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group, 2000.
- 6 This fanaticism is made clear when the narrator encounters a dying German soldier in Vermont whose last wish is to gaze at a photograph of his beloved Führer, Adolf Hitler.
- 7 Allhoff wrote the novel "with the advice and counsel of Lieutenant General Robert Lee Bullard, Rear Admiral Yates Sterling, and George E. Sokolsky." Terry Miller, "Introduction: A Basis in Fact," in Allhoff, p. 17.
- 8 Marion White, *If We Should Fail* (New York, 1942). White essentially transferred Nazi atrocities committed in Europe to American towns and cities.
- 9 See Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York, 1993), especially chapter 6; Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore, 2001), chapter 2, for a discussion of comic books' support for American intervention against the Nazis.
- 10 Yet fears of a Nazi revival persisted and were expressed in scattered "future histories." One of the most important was Erwin Christian Lessner's 1944 novel

- Phantom Victory: The Fourth Reich, 1945–1960* (New York, 1944), which told the story of Germany emerging unrepentant from World War II and ultimately conquering the United States. Lessner's well-received book was a thinly veiled appeal for Germany to be subjected to a "hard peace" after 1945. For reviews, see *Book Review Digest*, 1944, pp. 453–54. See also Robert Abernathy, "Hostage of Tomorrow," *Planet Stories*, spring, 1949, pp. 86–117, which depicts the Germans overthrowing the Allied occupation in 1949 with "radioactive dust."
- 11 See F. T. Marsh, review of *Invasion* in *Books*, October 27, 1940, p. 3 and review of *Invasion* in *The Nation*, November 9, 1940. These and other positive reviews are listed in *Book Review Digest*, 1940, p. 939.
 - 12 *Liberty's* sales reached an all-time high when Allhoff's story appeared. Terry Miller, "Introduction: A Basis in Fact," *Lightning in the Night*, pp. 17–18.
 - 13 Review of *If We Should Fail* in *Books*, November 22, 1942, p. 30. Cited in *Book Review Digest*, 1942, p. 828.
 - 14 Kurt Piehler notes the relative lack of interest in erecting monuments to World War II after 1945, typified by the twenty-year delay in erecting the memorial to Pearl Harbor. G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington, D.C., 1995), see chapter 4.
 - 15 See Studs Terkel, *'The Good War': An Oral History of World War II* (New York, 1984).
 - 16 Michael C. C. Adams writes that "of the major belligerents, the United States was alone in enjoying a higher standard of living as a result of the war." *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore, 1994), p. 6.
 - 17 Such images were visible in films like *13 Rue Madeleine* (1946), *Battleground* (1949), and *The Colditz Story* (1954). See discussion in Manvell, *passim*. Most films about the war, however, did not focus directly on the Germans and were more interested in commenting on American wartime behavior, whether valorous or flawed. See, for example, *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946) and *From Here to Eternity* (1953). This focus was also true of novels, such as Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948).
 - 18 See such works as Leonard Engel and Emmanuel S. Piller, *The World Aflame: The Russian–American War of 1950* (New York, 1947), Cyril M. Kornbluth, *Not This August* (New York, 1955), and Pat Frank, *Alas Babylon* (New York, 1959), all of which focused on a catastrophic Third World War.
 - 19 It is notable that British alternate histories were republished in America at precisely this time. Thus, Sarban's 1952 novel *The Sound of His Horn* was reprinted by Ballantine books in 1960 for an American audience. Ballantine also brought out British journalist Comer Clarke's 1961 book *England under Hitler*.
 - 20 Cyril M. Kornbluth, "Two Dooms," reprinted in Gregory Benford and Martin H. Greenberg, *Hitler Victorious: Eleven Stories of the German Victory in World War II* (New York, 1986), pp. 11–52. "Two Dooms" first appeared in *Venture* in July 1958. Timothy P. Szczechuil, ed., *His Share of Glory: The Complete Short Science Fiction of C. M. Kornbluth* (Framingham, MA, 1997), p. vi.
 - 21 Kornbluth, "Two Dooms," p. 52.

- 22 See Kornbluth's obituary, "Cyril M. Kornbluth Dead at 35: Wrote Science-Fiction Stories," *New York Times*, Saturday, March 22, 1958, p. 17. <http://members.tripod.com/~gwillick/obit/korno.htm/l>. After 1945, Kornbluth was a member of a group of science fiction writers known as the Futurians (including Isaac Asimov and Frederik Pohl) who were known for their leftwing politics and opposition to fascism. Edward James, *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1994), p. 64.
- 23 Kornbluth, "Two Dooms," p. 41.
- 24 William L. Shirer, "If Hitler Had Won World War II," *Look*, December 19, 1961, pp. 28–43. For the controversy sparked by Shirer's history of Nazi Germany, see Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, "The Reception of William L. Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* in the United States and West Germany, 1960–1962," *Journal of Contemporary History*, January, 1994, pp. 95–129.
- 25 Shirer, p. 28.
- 26 Ibid., p. 34.
- 27 Ibid., p. 42.
- 28 Ibid., p. 34.
- 29 Ibid., p. 42.
- 30 Ibid., p. 43.
- 31 Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle* (New York, 1992).
- 32 Ibid., p. 246.
- 33 Ibid., pp. 66–67.
- 34 This tolerant mentality is epitomized by Mr. Tagomi, who, late in the novel, refuses to approve a Nazi request to deport a Jewish antiques forger, Frank Frink, to the German zone for certain extermination.
- 35 As he puts it, "If Germany and Japan had lost the war, the Jews would be running the world today. Through Moscow and Wall Street." Dick, pp. 111–13.
- 36 Lawrence Sutin writes that the two "great themes" of Dick's work were "What is human? What is reality?" Lawrence Sutin, ed., *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick: Selected Literary and Philosophical Writings* (New York, 1995), p. xiii.
- 37 Dick portrays Abendsen as having used the *I Ching* to write *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*. Near the end of the novel a character named Juliana visits Abendsen and tells him to ask the oracle (which never lies) why it wrote the novel, to which the oracle replies, "Chung Fu," or "Inner Truth." Dick, p. 257. While the idea that the Nazis might have actually lost the war remained somewhat hazy in *The Man in the High Castle*, Dick planned on clarifying it in a never-completed sequel to *The Man in the High Castle*, begun in 1974, in which he explored the idea that the Nazis had lost the war in an alternate world (called the *Nebenwelt*). See Sutin, pp. 119–34.
- 38 Dick portrays Abendsen's reaction to Juliana's claim that his book is true as follows: "Hawthorne . . . had an almost savage expression. 'It means . . . that my book is true?' 'Yes,' she said . . . Hawthorne said nothing. 'Even you don't face it,' Juliana said . . . 'I'm not sure of anything,' he said. 'Believe,' Juliana said. He shook his head no." Dick, p. 257.

- 39 See Patricia S. Warrick, "The Encounter of Taoism and Fascism in *The Man in the High Castle*" and N. B. Hayles, "Metaphysics and Metafiction in *The Man in the High Castle*," in Martin Harry Greenberg and Joseph D. Olander, eds., *Philip K. Dick* (New York, 1983), pp. 27–72.
- 40 For background on Dick's interest in Nazism, see the June 26, 1976 radio interview with Dick on KPFK-FM. See www.geocities.com/pkdlw/dickivo4.html.
- 41 In acknowledging the individuals whose work influenced *The Man in the High Castle*, Dick openly wrote in the book's preface, "I have made much use of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* . . . by William L. Shirer." Dick, p. ix.
- 42 As he put it, "Fascism is very much with us today, boys and girls. And it's still the enemy." Interestingly, Dick differed from Shirer in de-emphasizing fascism's German dimensions, noting that "fascism and Germany are not that intimately linked. Fascism is a world wide phenomena [sic]." www.geocities.com/pkdlw/dickivo4.html.
- 43 Harlan Ellison, "The City on the Edge of Forever: An Original Teleplay," in Roger Ellwood, *Six Science Fiction Plays* (New York, 1976), pp. 5–138.
- 44 Ellison was famously irate about rewrites in the script for the television version, but none of the changes affected the episode's allohistorical dimensions. See Harlan Ellison, "Introduction to *The City on the Edge of Forever*," in Ellwood, pp. 5–14.
- 45 Harlan Ellison's original script was somewhat more vague in its formulation, consisting solely of Spock's observation, "in a few years this planet will have . . . a great war. What if [Edith Keeler's] . . . philosophy spread, and it kept America out of the war for a mere two years longer . . . and in that time Germany perfected its atomic weapons? The outcome of the war would be reversed." Ellison, "The City on the Edge of Forever," p. 100.
- 46 Many *Star Trek* time-travel episodes featured such redemptive endings. See Jon Wagner and Jan Lundeen, *Deep Space and Sacred Time: Star Trek in the American Mythos* (Westport, CT, 1998), pp. 198–99.
- 47 Ellison has noted that his boyhood experience of antisemitism in Ohio helped him develop his sense of being an outsider. Thomas Dillingham, "Harlan Ellison," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume VIII, Twentieth-Century American Science Fiction Writers* (Detroit, 1981), p. 163.
- 48 H. Bruce Franklin's "Star Trek in the Vietnam Era," *Science Fiction Studies*, March, 1994, pp. 24–34, cited in Ellen Weil and Gary K. Wolfe, *Harlan Ellison: The Edge of Forever* (Columbus, OH, 2002), pp. 111–15.
- 49 Eric Norden, *The Ultimate Solution* (New York, 1973).
- 50 Ibid., p. 18.
- 51 Ibid., p. 138.
- 52 Ibid., p. 13.
- 53 Norden was the pseudonym of Eric Pelletier (1899–1979). www.locusmag.com/index/s574.html#A13582.
- 54 Tom Rosenstiel, "The Lost Art of Interviewing," *The Columbia Journalism Review*, January/February 1995. www.cjr.org/year/95/1/interviewing.asp.

- 55 This quotation comes from a longer one that serves as the epigraph to Norden's novel. Norden, p. 142.
- 56 "Crisis on Earth-X," *Justice League of America*, Nr. 107, October, 1973; "Thirteen Against the Earth," *Justice League of America*, Nr. 108, December, 1973.
- 57 Len Wein created such comic book series as Swamp Thing, X-Men, and many others.
- 58 In the tale, the Nazis win the war after developing the atomic bomb, which they use to cow the politically polarized United States into submission (the story vaguely refers to "the governmental balance of power [going] . . . the wrong way" after the American president dies of a heart attack in 1944).
- 59 Wein has asserted that there was no "political agenda" behind the story. Wein's Jewish background no doubt sensitized him to the evils of Nazism. E-mail message from Len Wein to author.
- 60 The tales written between 1945 and the 1970s were composed by people generally born between the years 1905–35. The oldest, Eric Norden, was born in 1899; William Shirer was born in 1905; Kornbluth was born in 1925; Dick was born in 1928; and Ellison was born in 1934. The youngest, Len Wein, was born in 1948.
- 61 Review of *The Man in the High Castle* in *Amazing Stories*, June, 1964, p. 123. The Hugo is named after Hugo Gernsback, the pioneering founder of the first science fiction magazine, *Amazing Stories*, in 1926. Carter, *The Creation of Tomorrow*, p. 4.
- 62 *Entertainment Weekly* ranked "The City on the Edge of Forever" the number-one episode of all 303 that were ever produced. Fall, 1994, Special *Star Trek* issue. *TV Guide* in 1995 ranked the episode Nr. 68 in the top 100 "most memorable moments in TV history." *TV Guide*, July 1, 1975. Quoted in Harlan Ellison's *The City on the Edge of Forever* (Clarkston, GA, 1993), pp. 35, 277.
- 63 Review of *The Man in the High Castle* in *Amazing Stories*, June, 1964, p. 123. The novel was also called "a remarkable book" and a "veritable jewel." Avram Davidson, review of *The Man in the High Castle*, in *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, June, 1963, pp. 59–61; S. E. Cotts, review of *The Man in the High Castle* in *Amazing Stories*, February, 1963, pp. 119–20. The *New York Times* gave the novel a positive review, writing that the novel skillfully presented its basic "moral . . . that things could always be worse." Review of *The Man in the High Castle* in the *New York Times Book Review*, October 28, 1962, p. 53.
- 64 Review of *The Ultimate Solution* in *Publishers Weekly*, March 19, 1973, p. 73.
- 65 This is suggested by its inclusion in Benford and Greenberg, *Hitler Victorious*.
- 66 "Hakenkreuz über New York," *Stern*, January 28, 1962, pp. 32–43, 85–89.
- 67 *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 86. *Stern* described Shirer as "one of those who persecute us [Germans] with their hatred," p. 32.
- 68 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 69 See Letters to the editor, *Look*, January, 1962, p. 9.
- 70 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 71 This figure was cited in the *Stern* essay.

- 72 This sensibility was especially visible in both popular music and film. Notable examples include – to name merely a few – the music of the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and Joan Baez, and films like *M*A*S*H* (1970), *The Deer Hunter* (1978), and *Apocalypse Now* (1979). Doherty, pp. 282–86. While these works reflected the impact of the Vietnam War, fears of nuclear conflict found echo in the music of such rock groups as REM and films like *The Day After* (1983).
- 73 Bruce M. Russett, *No Clear and Present Danger: A Skeptical View of the U.S. Entry into World War II* (New York, 1972). Russett currently holds an endowed chair in political science at Yale University.
- 74 *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 22.
- 75 As he wrote, “Germany probably would not have been defeated, though . . . neither could it have won.” Russett continued, “Probably World War II would have ended in some sort of draw . . . or would have continued on for a decade or two with occasional truces . . . [like] the Napoleonic Wars.” *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- 76 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 77 As a result, “It would have been quite a while before Hitler could have marshalled the resources of Europe for any serious . . . drive either east or west.” *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.
- 78 *Ibid.*, p. 40.
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- 80 *Ibid.*, pp. 11–13.
- 81 *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.
- 82 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 83 *Ibid.*, pp. 41–42.
- 84 John Lukacs, “What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?”, in David Wallechinsky, ed., *The People’s Almanac*, #2 (New York, 1978), pp. 396–98.
- 85 *The People’s Almanac* rose to number one on the trade-paperback bestseller list in early 1978. Review of *The People’s Almanac*, *New York Times Book Review*, January 28, 1979, p. 16.
- 86 Other examples of Lukacs’s humor include his depiction of Mussolini’s son, Vittorio, marrying Betty Grable and Rudolf Hess petitioning to become an Englishman (and being renamed the Duke of Wessex). Lukacs, “What if Hitler Had Won?”, p. 398.
- 87 Postcard from John Lukacs to author, February 21, 2002.
- 88 Lukacs’s conservative credentials are documented in Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950–1985* (Ithaca, 1993), especially pp. 64–66 and chapter 6. Lukacs is at heart a schismatic conservative who, as a result of disagreements with many American neoconservatives in particular, has preferred to call himself a “reactionary.” Lukacs has long been associated with the “paleoconservative” journal, *Chronicles*, which has supported Patrick Buchanan for president.
- 89 Lukacs has been more critical of the Soviet/Russian domination of Europe than of communism as an ideology. In general, Lukacs argues that very few Eastern Europeans believed in communism after 1945, using it instead as a pretext for traditional imperialistic practices. For this reason, he has been critical of American

conservatives for harping on the communist menace during the cold war. For the most recent articulation of this belief, see Lukacs's essay, "The Poverty of Anti-Communism," *The National Interest*, spring, 1999.

- 90 Lukacs's book *The Hitler of History* took a fairly sympathetic view of arch-conservative German historian Rainer Zitelmann's relativistic characterization of Hitler as a progressive revolutionary leader. Volker Berghahn's review of the book in the *New York Times* expressed concerns about this fact. "The Ultimate Modern," *New York Times*, November 9, 1997. Istvan Deak called the book "peculiar" in his review of it for the *New Republic*, December 15, 1997, p. 37. At the same time, Lukacs has been quite critical of Nazism. In his recent book, *Five Days in London: May 1940* (New Haven, 1999), he criticized the revisionist claim of John Charmley that Britain should have forged a separate peace with Germany after the fall of France in 1940, declaring that "the greatest threat to western civilization was not communism. It was National Socialism." Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, pp. 217–18. As this statement directly contradicts the entire thrust of Lukacs's *People's Almanac* essay, the best explanation is that his views on the relative dangers of communism and Nazism changed with the end of the communist threat in 1989.

- 91 Linaweaver, *Moon of Ice* (New York, 1988).

- 92 Ibid., p. 100.

- 93 Ibid., p. 92.

- 94 Ibid., p. 196.

- 95 Ibid., pp. 246–48.

- 96 Linaweaver is quite open about his libertarian political beliefs. See "Brad Linaweaver – Libertarian," www.self-gov.org/celebs/Linaweaver.html. Other libertarian science fiction writers include Poul Anderson, James Hogan, L. Neil Smith, Vernor Vinge, and F. Paul Wilson. See "LFS sponsors convention," on the Libertarian party's web site, www.lp.org/lpnews/0104/newsbriefs.html. The Libertarians sponsor a science fiction prize called the Prometheus Award.

- 97 Linaweaver, pp. 90, 104.

- 98 Ibid., p. 15.

- 99 Ibid., p. 104.

- 100 Ibid., p. 18.

- 101 Ibid., p. 10.

- 102 Ibid., p. 116.

- 103 Linaweaver's turn towards conservative politics, as well as his interest in Nazism, reflected the social and political tensions raging in America during the Vietnam War. As he has put it, "In the early 1970s, I was in [the] Air Force R. O. T. C. at Florida State University. Every Thursday we had to wear the uniform all day. Every Thursday we were called Nazis all day. The shrillest critics were members of the Young Socialist Alliance. One day I learned that the full name of the Nazis was the National Socialist German Workers Party . . . I couldn't stop noticing the word socialist. I became so confused that I began

- researching the history of Nazi Germany." E-mail message from Brad Linaweaver to author, March 7, 2002.
- 104 Linaweaver, p. 8.
- 105 Ward Moore, "A Class with Dr. Chang," in Sandra Ley, ed., *Beyond Time* (New York, 1976).
- 106 Ibid., p. 135.
- 107 Ibid., p. 136.
- 108 Moore (1903–78) came to support leftwing politics early on in life. Expelled from his New York City high school for adhering to "Red" ideas, he assumed a variety of blue-collar jobs before settling on the career of a writer. He is best known for his classic alternate history of the South winning the Civil War, *Bring the Jubilee* (1953). See *Contemporary Authors*, Vol. CXIII (Detroit, 1985), p. 335; and also www.scifi.com/scifiction/classics/classics_archive/moore/moore_bio.html.
- 109 Ibid., p. 136. The phrase "America, love it or leave it" was popular among opponents of the antiwar movement, especially soldiers who painted it on their helmets in 1968. This phrase was a response to the leftwing motto, "Vietnam, love it or leave it." Richard Sennett, "A Nation's Narrative Written to an End," Index, July 27, 2003. www.indexonline.org/news/20030727_unitedstates.shtml
- 110 P. J. O'Rourke and Tod Carroll, "If World War II Had Been Fought Like the War in Vietnam," *National Lampoon*, October, 1980, pp. 54–57.
- 111 This panel reflects the common misperception that the famous photograph of people rushing to board an American helicopter in Saigon were themselves Americans. In fact, they were Vietnamese. "Getting It Wrong in a Photo," *New York Times*, April 23, 2000, cited at: www.mishalov.com/Vietnam_finalescape.html.
- 112 Born in 1947, O'Rourke was a baby-boomer who rejected his generation's embrace of leftwing politics. It is notable that the original idea for the essay was provided by a retired U.S. Marine, George S. Rickley. O'Rourke and Carroll, p. 54.
- 113 William Overgard, *The Divide* (New York, 1980).
- 114 Ibid., p. 64.
- 115 Ibid., p. 35.
- 116 Ibid., pp. 175, 209.
- 117 Ibid., p. 224.
- 118 Ibid., p. 161.
- 119 Ibid., p. 49.
- 120 Overgard (1926–90) was the author of several well-received novels, including *Shanghai Tango* (1987) and *A Few Good Men* (1988). See entry for Overgard in *Contemporary Authors Online*. The author seems to have distanced himself from *The Divide*, however, which is not listed among his works. One of the few clues that link the William Overgard of *The Divide* to the author of *Shanghai Tango* is the dedication of *The Divide* to Arthur Rankin, the producer of the 1980 film, *The Bushido Blade*, for which Overgard is listed as the screenwriter.

- 121 Overgard, p. 71
- 122 Ibid., p. 243.
- 123 David Dvorkin, *Budspy* (New York, 1987).
- 124 Ibid., p. 77.
- 125 Ibid., p. 63.
- 126 Ibid., p. 79.
- 127 As several newspaper headlines read, "Negro Districts in Atlanta Remain Calm" and "White Men are Still Unsafe in Parts of Oklahoma!" Ibid., p. 11.
- 128 When Chic first sees Germany's autobahns, he notes, "There was simply no comparison . . . the American highways were only a poor, scaled-down imitation of the original." Ibid., p. 25.
- 129 Ibid., p. 79.
- 130 Ibid., p. 79.
- 131 Ibid., pp. 171, 130.
- 132 Ibid., p. 113.
- 133 Ibid., p. 182.
- 134 Dvorkin describes himself as "very liberal." Source: *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group, 1999.
- 135 E-mail message from Dvorkin to author, February 2, 2002.
- 136 Dvorkin, p. 190.
- 137 Dvorkin was born in 1943 in England, the son of Rabbi Israel Dvorkin. He spent time as a youth in South Africa and later emigrated to the United States, moving to Indiana, where he grew up and went to college. Source: *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group, 1999.
- 138 Dvorkin has openly described himself as an atheistic "ex-Jew" opposed to traditional Jewish religious and cultural practice. See his polemical essay "Why I am Not a Jew," a version of which was published in *Free Inquiry* magazine in 1990. www.csd.net/~dvorkin/yinotjew.htm.
- 139 As Dvorkin has noted, "I grew up hearing about the Holocaust [and] . . . reached the point where I didn't want to hear about it again. I object to 'never forget.'" E-mail message from Dvorkin to author, February 2, 2002.
- 140 Dvorkin has written that, growing up, he found himself "responding with disturbing fascination to photographs of ranks of marching Nazi soldiers . . . I felt the seductive pull of the Reich . . . So I had a lot of demons of my own to exorcise." E-mail message from Dvorkin to author, February 2, 2002.
- 141 I am grateful to my colleague Harold Forsythe for alerting me to the existence of this episode.
- 142 E-mail message from Franken to author, May 1, 2002.
- 143 Review of *Budspy* in *Science Fiction Chronicle*, January, 1988, p. 48; Norman Spinrad, review of *Budspy* in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction*, November, 1988, p. 184. Another reviewer praised it as an "involving . . . thriller." Review of *Budspy* in *Booklist*, October 15, 1987, p. 363. The reviewer for the *Denver Post* said he "enjoyed it." Don C. Thompson, review of *Budspy*, the *Denver Post*, November 15, 1987, Books, p. 21.

- 144 *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, p. 24. Review of *Budspy* in Robert A. Collins and Robert Latham, eds., *Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Review Annual*, 1988 (Westport, 1989), pp. 160–61.
- 145 Norman Spinrad, review of *Budspy* in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction*, November, 1988, pp. 185–86.
- 146 Heinlein's blurb appears on the front cover of the paperback edition of the novel. Review of *Moon of Ice* in *Publishers Weekly*, December 25, 1987, p. 65. This reviewer noted, however, that "Linaweaver's relegating [of] the Holocaust to a small corner of his sometimes comic opera plot is sure to offend some." Review of *Moon of Ice* in *Science Fiction Chronicle*, January, 1988, p. 48.
- 147 Robert H. Ferrell, review of *No Clear and Present Danger*, *Political Science Quarterly*, September, 1973, p. 492; review of *No Clear and Present Danger*, *The Nation*, July 16, 1973, p. 60; Thomas Bailey, review of *No Clear and Present Danger*, *AHR*, April, 1974, p. 608.
- 148 Review of *Moon of Ice* in Robert A. Collins and Robert Latham, eds., *Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Review Annual*, 1988 (Westport, 1989), pp. 325–26. Bill Collins called the novel "a browbeating of the reader with political science lectures." Morton Tenzer, review of *No Clear and Present Danger*, *American Political Science Review*, March, 1976, pp. 293–94. See also the critical review by John Lewis Gaddis: review of *No Clear and Present Danger* in *Military Affairs*, December, 1973, p. 160. See the response by Russett in the March 1977 issue, p. 276. See also Thomas Bailey, review of *No Clear and Present Danger*, *AHR*, April, 1974, p. 608; Daniel Smith, review of *No Clear and Present Danger*, *Journal of American History*, September, 1973, pp. 503–04.
- 149 The co-writer of the sketch, Al Franken, has observed, "I think the complaints were specific to the headline in the sketch, which was something to the effect: 'Überman kills several thousand Jews – total now over 6 million.'" E-mail message from Franken to author, May 1, 2002. It is worth noting that this line in the skit got few laughs from the live audience.
- 150 This view was already beginning to emerge at the time of the fortieth anniversary celebrations of the war in the early to mid-1980s. See Jonathan Yardley, "The Way Things Weren't in WWII: Our National Delusions of the Last 'Good' War," *Washington Post*, June 11, 1984, p. B1.
- 151 Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (New York, 1998).
- 152 Leo Rutman, *Clash of Eagles* (New York, 1990).
- 153 *Ibid.*, p. 530.
- 154 E-mail message from Rutman to author, October 21, 2002.
- 155 Christy Campbell, "The Shrinking of *Fatherland*," *Sunday Telegraph*, June 26, 1994, p. 5. Harris also surmised that HBO might not have wanted to besmirch the reputation of the powerful Kennedy family. Cited in John Lyttle, "Hitler: Back on Screen," *Independent*, November 24, 1994, p. 31.
- 156 Newt Gingrich and William Forstchen, *1945* (Riverdale, NY, 1995).

- 157 Mayhew is depicted as falling into the clutches of a sexually ravenous German spy named Erica. Ibid., pp. 2–3, 129.
- 158 Ibid., p. 134.
- 159 Ibid., pp. 125, 336.
- 160 Why a politician like Gingrich undertook to write a science fiction book is explained by the fact that he is a big science fiction buff who has made frequent appearances at sci-fi conventions. See Maureen Dowd, “Newt’s Potboiler,” *New York Times*, December 4, 1994, Section 6, p. 44.
- 161 This astute point is made in Fred Smoler’s review, “A Sci-Fi History of WWII Offers a New Take on an Old Story,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 1, 1995, p. E4.
- 162 Gingrich and Forstchen, p. 125.
- 163 Ibid., p. 92.
- 164 Ibid., pp. 365–66.
- 165 See Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (New York, 1998).
- 166 Arthur Rhodes, *The Last Reich* (Danbury, CT, 2001). Rhodes is the pen name of retired bond trader Clem Schaefer (born in 1935). In writing the book, Rhodes has declared his desire not to portray the Nazis as horrific demons, but rather as incompetent “buffoons.” Phone interview with Clem Schaefer, April 7, 2003.
- 167 J. N. Stroyar, *The Children’s War* (New York, 2001). Stroyar extended this plot line in her sequel to *The Children’s War*, *A Change of Regime* (Authorhouse [online publisher], 2004).
- 168 Harry Turtledove, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* (New York, 2003). This novel was a substantially lengthened version of an older short story by the same name. See Harry Turtledove, “In the Presence of Mine Enemies,” in Harry Turtledove, *Departures* (New York, 1993), pp. 200–17.
- 169 Turtledove, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, pp. 182, 202.
- 170 Ibid., p. 353.
- 171 Ibid., pp. 439–40.
- 172 The distinction between Nazis and Germans is non-existent in Turtledove’s account, as all Germans (save the few Jews who remain) identify with and support the Nazi system.
- 173 Ibid., p. 440.
- 174 Patrick J. Buchanan, *A Republic, Not an Empire: Reclaiming America’s Destiny* (Washington, D.C., 1999).
- 175 Buchanan blamed American intervention in World War I for the rise of Nazism, writing, “The war to make the world safe for democracy made the world safe for Bolshevism, fascism, and Nazism.” Buchanan, p. 219. Had the United States stayed out of the war and allowed Germany to escape without being defeated, he wrote, “a strong . . . Germany would not have spawned a Hitler. There might have been no Holocaust, no quarter-century reign of Stalin, no Cold War.” Buchanan, p. 218.
- 176 Ibid., p. 278.
- 177 Ibid., p. 266.
- 178 Ibid., p. 266.
- 179 Ibid., p. 297.

- 180 Buchanan specifically relied on William Henry Chamberlin's *America's Second Crusade* (Chicago, 1950).
- 181 Buchanan, p. 262.
- 182 Ibid., p. 276.
- 183 Stephan Courtois, et al., eds., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, MA, 1999).
- 184 "By the late 1940s Americans had concluded that a Soviet invasion of western Europe . . . could tilt the balance of power against us; and the communists had declared that their ultimate enemy in this struggle was the United States." Buchanan, p. 310.
- 185 A. Edward Cooper, *Triumph of the Third Reich* (Salt Lake City, 1999).
- 186 As Minister of Economics Walther Funk notes, "The simple fact is . . . that we won the war . . . but lost the peace." Cooper, *Triumph of the Third Reich*, p. 248.
- 187 That this scenario did not necessarily have to challenge the belief in interventionism was indicated by Harry Turtledove's *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, which validated interventionism while portraying the Nazis reforming their regime from above.
- 188 http://utahbooks.com/Third_Reich_Alternate_History.htm. This is further suggested by a reader's observation on amazon.com, submitted on August 2, 1999.
- 189 Cooper, *Triumph of the Third Reich*, p. 211.
- 190 Philip Roth, *The Plot against America* (New York, 2004).
- 191 Roth, p. 325.
- 192 Roth's portrayal of Lindbergh attacking American Jews as warmongers eager to fight against Nazi Germany no doubt reflected the author's fear that American Jews could be seen as the primary lobbyists for war against Iraq and would be scapegoated if the war's outcome was worse than expected.
- 193 The novels by Leo Rutman, Arthur Rhodes, and A. Edward Cooper received little critical attention. Rutman's *Clash of Eagles* (New York, 1990), however, did sell over 100,000 copies in paperback. E-mail message from Rutman to author, October 21, 2002.
- 194 Dusty Saunders, review of *Fatherland*, *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, November 28, 1994, p. 10D. One of the more positive reviews was by Ray Loynd, "Provocative Journey into the 'Fatherland,'" *Los Angeles Times*, November 26, 1994, p. 21.
- 195 David Bianculli, review of *Fatherland*, in *Baltimore Sun*, November 26, 1994, p. 6D. See also Robert Bianco, "If Hitler Had Won," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 25, 1994, p. 26.
- 196 Tom Shales, "HBO's *Fatherland*, A Pale Thriller," *Washington Post*, November 26, 1994, p. B1.
- 197 Matt Roush, "'Fatherland' falters," *USA Today*, November 25, 1994, p. 3D.
- 198 Joseph Gelmis, review of *The Philadelphia Experiment II*, *Newsday*, November 12, 1993, p. 73, in *Film Review Annual* (Englewood, NJ, 1994), p. 1117; Stephen Holden, "Back to a Big 'What If' in '43," *New York Times*,

- November 13, 1993; Bill Hoffman, review of *The Philadelphia Experiment II*, *New York Post*, November 12, 1993, p. 36, in *Film Review Annual* (Englewood, NJ, 1994), pp. 1116–17. *Variety* criticized the film for its “humdrum action plot,” while the *Hollywood Reporter* termed it “dark, murky, and slow.” See reviews of the film in *Variety*, November 29, 1993 and the *Hollywood Reporter*, November 15, 1993.
- 199 Harry Levins, “Newt’s Improbable Novel has Nazis Wage War in ’46,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 30, 1995, p. 5C; Jonathan Yardley, “Stick to Politics, Mr. Speaker,” *Washington Post*, July 12, 1995, p. D2.
- 200 Joan Didion called it a “primitive example of . . . ‘alternate history.’” Joan Didion, “The Teachings of Speaker Gingrich,” *New York Review of Books*, August 10, 1995, p. 7. Even conservative publications like the *National Review* offered tepid reviews of the book. James Bowman, review of *1945*, *National Review*, October 23, 1995, p. 62.
- 201 Sandra McElwaine, “Newt Romances the Reich,” *Washington Monthly*, September, 1995, p. 45H; Bruce Franklin, “Only the Hardware is Erotic,” *The Nation*, August 14/21, 1995, pp. 174–75.
- 202 David Streitfeld, “Pulp Fiction: Gingrich’s Novel A Disastrous Flop,” *Washington Post*, August 2, 1996, p. B1.
- 203 Jonathan Yardley, “Stick to Politics, Mr. Speaker,” *Washington Post*, July 12, 1995, p. D2; Susan Larson, “Sex, Violence, and Newtity,” *Times-Picayune*, July 2, 1995, p. E7.
- 204 An exception was the claim of one reviewer that Gingrich and Forstchen offered up a “sanitized view of Nazi Germany [that] might well be retitled Romancing the Reich.” Sandra McElwaine, “Newt Romances the Reich,” *Washington Monthly*, September, 1995, p. 45.
- 205 Boyd Tonkin, “Newt Lays Down the Law,” *New Statesman and Society*, August 11, 1995, p. 40. Tonkin added that “*1945* makes Robert Harris’s *Fatherland* look like Tolstoy.” Other British reviewers came up with highly creative methods of condemning the novel. Thus, one said that, “To call this bird a turkey would be to do grave injustice to a dignified . . . bird.” John Naughton, “Newt’s 15-Pound Turkey,” *Observer*, August 13, 1995, p. 15.
- 206 John Judis, “The Buchanan Doctrine,” *New York Times Book Review*, October 3, 1999, p. 16.
- 207 Adam Cohen, “Foreign Policy from the Fringe,” *Time Magazine*, September 27, 1999, p. 46.
- 208 The work of historian Norm Goda was cited explicitly in Michael Kelly’s review, “Republican Stunts,” *Washington Post*, October 6, 1999, p. A33.
- 209 Michael Lind, “Minority of One,” *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, October 3, 1999, p. 8.
- 210 Francis X. Clines, “Buchanan’s Views on Hitler Create a Reform Party Stir,” *New York Times*, September 21, 1999, p. 22.
- 211 Cited in Phil Brennan, “The Buchanan Factor,” www.buchanan.org/no-99-1003-ezo-brennan.html. Accessed October 7, 2002.

- 212 The overwhelming majority of readers' reviews on amazon.com's web site were supportive of the book. A recent survey of the readers' reviews reveals 103 supportive reviews and 27 critical reviews (roughly a four-to-one ratio). See www.amazon.com.
- 213 Review of *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, *Publishers Weekly*, October 20, 2003, p. 39.
- 214 Ibid.; Adam-Troy Castro, review of *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*. www.scifi.com/sfw/issue351/books.html.
- 215 Review by Patrick Devenny, January 28, 2004; www.amazon.com.

CHAPTER 3: GERMANY'S WARTIME TRIUMPH: FROM DYSTOPIA TO NORMALCY

- 1 *Wenn das der Führer wüsste* was published in the United States in 1968 under the title *The Twilight Men*. All quotes from the novel have been taken from this version. Otto Basil, *The Twilight Men* (New York, 1968), pp. 3, 5, 12, 18.
- 2 Altogether, this study examines twenty-seven British accounts, twenty-eight American accounts, and six German accounts. See Appendix.
- 3 During the Nazi era itself, scattered future histories appeared that portrayed the Nazis triumphing over their racial enemies through military conquest. For a discussion, see Jost Hermand, *Old Dreams of a New Reich: Volkisch Utopias and National Socialism* (Bloomington, IN, 1992), especially pp. 246–62, for a discussion of Nazi science fiction novels.
- 4 Basil, p. 204.
- 5 Ibid., p. 198.
- 6 Ibid., pp. 228–29.
- 7 For a detailed introduction to Basil, see Volker Kaukoreit und Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, eds., *Otto Basil und die Literatur um 1945* (Vienna, 1998).
- 8 Joe Julius Heydecker and Johannes Leeb, *Der Nürnberger Prozess; Bilanz der tausend Jahre* (Cologne, 1958). Contained in Basil's papers in Vienna are several underlined newspaper articles digesting the latest revelations from the Nuremberg trials. See, for example, "Der Nürnberger Prozess: Ihr Endziel: Weltreich bis zum Ural," *Abendzeitung*, no date; "Der Nürnberger Prozess: Die Deutschen müssen ein Volk von Nichtrauchern und Vegetariern werden!" (no date), in Nachlass Otto Basil: Signatur ÖLA: 52/W1/2; Gruppe I.I.I.I.
- 9 Basil was also very interested in scientific advances in such fields as laser technology, synthetic drug production, and radiation research. He collected numerous newspaper and magazine articles on all of these themes. See Nachlass Otto Basil: Signatur ÖLA: 52/W1/2; Gruppe I.I.I.I.
- 10 Otto Basil, "Kleiner Idiotenführer durch den 'Führer,'" no date (but most likely 1967), pp. 1–2. Nachlass Otto Basil: Signatur ÖLA: 52/W1/4.
- 11 Some were reluctant to take on the work, which was originally entitled *Wagenburg Deutschland*, because of its controversial depiction of a character

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*The United States and the dilemmas
of military intervention*

'You're damn lucky, young man, that you're not speaking German today!' The speaker was an elderly man . . .

Alan Whittmore was used to this sort of abuse . . . As editor of the . . . *American Mercury*, it was par for the course . . .

'Do I know you?' asked Whittmore, affecting a smile.

'I'm Dr. Evans. Why don't you ever publish my letters to the editor?'

So that was it! Whittmore's memory was suitably jogged . . . 'You know I'm sticking with the majority view on this issue. I still believe it was for the best that Roosevelt was impeached . . .'

Evans was having none of it: . . . 'This business of [the United States] normalizing relations with the Greater Reich is not going over. The American people won't stand for it.'

There was no levity in Whittmore's voice as he said, 'I agree that the Nazis are evil, but no more so than the Communists [whom] they tried and executed at the war crimes trials . . .'

'Well, no matter what you say, isolationism will destroy us in the end. There is no neutrality in this world.'

'Non-intervention opens doors that an empire would close.'

And so forth . . .'

American novelist Brad Linaweaver's description in his 1982 novella *Moon of Ice* of a lunch-counter argument between isolationist New York newspaper editor Alan Whittmore and an interventionist war veteran raises one of the central questions lying at the heart of all American alternate histories of a Nazi triumph in World War II: should the United States have intervened in the conflict against Nazi Germany or remained neutral? As in the case of Great Britain, American writers and audiences have argued over this question from the moment it first surfaced. The first American alternate histories on the subject of a Nazi military victory appeared at the time of the war itself. In contrast to the situation in Britain, however, they appeared less frequently and in smaller numbers. Since Americans had less reason than Britons to fear an imminent German invasion of their country,

they may have had less incentive to explore its imaginary consequences and thus produced fewer counterfactual accounts during the war years. Whatever the case may be, this trend persisted during the first decade and a half of the postwar era. In a period in which cold-war anxieties about the Soviet Union overshadowed any lingering concerns with the bygone Third Reich, it was predictable perhaps that no alternate histories on the subject of a Nazi wartime victory appeared whatsoever.

Only in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the renewal of international attention towards Germany's Nazi past, did allohistorical explorations of an imaginary German defeat and occupation of the United States begin to emerge in significant numbers. These early narratives uniformly depicted a Nazi wartime victory as having horrific consequences. In so doing, they pursued a dual agenda of preserving the Nazis' crimes in memory and vindicating the United States' decision to intervene in World War II against the Germans. By the late 1970s, however, both the content and function of narratives portraying a Nazi wartime victory began to change. If early postwar accounts depicted a Nazi-ruled world in dystopian terms, subsequent narratives rendered it in far less frightening fashion. Moreover, if the function of early postwar allohistorical depictions of a Nazi triumph was to justify the recent past, the function of later accounts was to critique it. This shift reflected the dawning of a more pessimistic mood in the United States during the 1970s. In the years since 1989, by contrast, the end of the cold war and the restoration of American optimism have led alternate histories to return to their traditional self-congratulatory function of vindicating both the past and present. At the same time, though, these narratives' relatively mild depiction of the victorious Reich provided further signs that the Nazi era's horror has continued to fade in memory. In short, over the course of the postwar era, the shifting character of American alternate histories of a Nazi triumph points to the emergence of a more normalized view of the Nazi past.

WARTIME ALTERNATE HISTORIES

Wartime alternate histories were fewer in number in the United States than in Britain.² Those that did appear, however, resembled their British counterparts in depicting Nazism as the epitome of evil. These "future histories" aimed to convince Americans of the dangers posed by the Nazis and of the need to intervene in World War II in order to defeat them. At the time that these accounts appeared, not all Americans were convinced of the wisdom of getting involved in the war. Unlike the case of Britain,

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whose population was largely in favor of fighting Germany by 1939, Americans at the time were deeply divided into separate interventionist and isolationist camps. While President Franklin D. Roosevelt was firmly convinced that Nazi Germany posed a serious threat to American interests, isolationist politicians like Burton Wheeler, Robert Taft, and Gerald Nye, along with openly "revisionist" intellectuals like Charles Beard and Harry Elmer Barnes, argued that a Nazi victory in Europe was preferable to the detrimental impact that intervention in a European war might have upon American democracy.³ Over the course of the 1930s, public opinion gradually swung over to the interventionist camp, but Roosevelt remained constrained by isolationist demands all the way up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The alternate histories of the war years reflected these larger tensions within American society. Significantly, however, they all clearly supported the interventionist cause.

Wartime depictions of a Nazi victory were motivated by the desire to dramatize the dangers posed by Germany to the United States. The two most important accounts of the war years appeared in 1940: Hendrik Willem van Loon's novel *Invasion* and Fred Allhoff's serialized novel *Lightning in the Night*.⁴ Although the novels were set in different times (van Loon's in 1940 and Allhoff's in 1945–46), they resembled each other in providing highly detailed chronicles of a German military invasion of the United States. *Invasion* was the more upbeat of the two tales. While it featured the Nazis' bombing of New York City, Galveston, and New Orleans, the novel concluded by having the combined forces of the American air force and navy repel the German assault in forty-eight hours. *Lightning in the Night*, by contrast, painted a gloomier picture, depicting the Nazis bombing such cities as Rochester, Cleveland, and Indianapolis before conquering Washington D.C. and blowing up the White House (see Figure 6). Yet while *Lightning in the Night* imagined a dire future for the United States, it too ended on a positive note. For when the American president dramatically informs Hitler that the United States possess an atomic bomb and will use it unless Germany agrees to peace on American terms, the Nazi dictator refuses and is summarily killed by his own generals, who are desperate to avert the Reich's atomic destruction. Like *Invasion*, therefore, *Lightning in the Night* ultimately provided readers with a happy ending.

In their overall function, *Invasion* and *Lightning in the Night* resembled British wartime alternate histories in their attempt to warn readers about the serious threats posed by Nazism to the United States. Both writers' motives in writing their tales were to encourage popular support for interventionism.



Figure 6 Adolf Hitler visits the Lincoln Memorial after the Nazi invasion of Washington D.C. in Fred Allhoff's serialized novel, *Lightning in the Night*, which appeared over several issues in the American magazine *Liberty* in 1940.

Van Loon, a naturalized Dutch-American writer who was active in the propaganda war against the Germans, warned his readers against complacently believing "it can never happen here" by reminding them that the inhabitants of the Netherlands and Norway had naively said the very same thing before being occupied by the German Wehrmacht.⁵ Instead, he urged readers to recognize the need for intervention against the Germans, underscoring this point by depicting them in the novel as fanatically committed to a racist vision of world dominance.⁶ Allhoff, meanwhile, was equally committed to intervention, even soliciting the advice of military officials in writing his novel.⁷ In their depiction of German fanaticism, in short, both *Invasion* and *Lightning in the Night* rejected any prospect of America remaining neutral in the European conflict.

Once the United States entered the war against Nazi Germany in late 1941, however, the goal of intervention was fulfilled and wartime alternate histories largely disappeared. Of course, Americans remained aware of the need for national unity in the fight against Nazism. Thus, the only other allohistorical narrative to appear during the war – Marion White's 1942 novel *If We Should Fail* – graphically depicted the Nazis committing vicious atrocities in occupied America in the hope of overcoming the worrisome fact that Americans had still not yet "united sufficiently to pursue this greatest of all wars."⁸ This work remained exceptional, however. Although the Nazi threat remained a fixture in American popular culture throughout the war – especially in films and comic books – it largely ceased to inspire works of alternate history.⁹ By the time the war ended, indeed, they had entirely vanished.¹⁰

RECEPTION

Significantly, the positive reception of wartime alternate histories testified to a public willingness to accept their underlying interventionist messages. *Invasion* was praised in many American journals and newspapers as "no hoax" and as a book that succeeded in "[making] the blood run cold."¹¹ *Lightning in the Night*, meanwhile, was an even greater success, boosting the sales of the magazine in which it was serialized, *Liberty*, to an all-time high. So successful was the tale that it was condemned by the German government in 1940 as an "outlandish exaggeration."¹² Finally, Marion White's tales of German brutality in *If We Should Fail* were hailed as "pack[ing] a propaganda punch" even though "the warning they convey is no longer questioned."¹³ In short, the public approval of wartime alternate histories revealed a nation united about the need to defeat Nazi Germany.

THE POSTWAR YEARS: ALTERNATE HISTORY
AS VINDICATION, 1945–73

With the collapse of the Third Reich in 1945, however, allohistorical accounts of a Nazi victory became scarce. Indeed, none appeared whatsoever for the first decade and a half after the war. This absence was largely due to growing cold-war fears of Soviet communism, which gradually began to overshadow the importance of World War II and the Third Reich in the American consciousness.¹⁴ To be sure, Americans had hardly forgotten about the conflict, which they continued to view largely from a moralistic perspective as a “good war” fought against evil enemies.¹⁵ The war, after all, had benefited the United States more than any other nation, making it the world’s pre-eminent economic, political, and military superpower.¹⁶ And as was demonstrated by the representation of the war in postwar popular culture – especially films – Americans continued to regard the Germans according to old stereotypes as formidable adversaries who needed to be defeated lest they impose their rule on the world.¹⁷ In short, in the early years after the war’s end Americans had every reason to follow the lead of the British and produce their own self-congratulatory alternate histories on the Nazi era. Yet for the first decade and a half after 1945, Americans were too preoccupied with leading the fight against communism in the present to smugly dwell on the recent successes of the past. If it surfaced at all in these years, the impulse towards counterfactual speculation in the United States addressed such themes as a Soviet invasion of America and superpower nuclear showdown.¹⁸ This trend changed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, when the same international events that sparked new interest in the Third Reich in Britain provided a hospitable climate for new works of alternate history to appear in the United States.¹⁹ As in Britain, these narratives revived the wartime image of Nazism as the epitome of evil. Yet their function was new. Instead of motivating Americans to fight against the Germans, these accounts served the didactic function of preserving the Germans’ crimes in memory and of vindicating America’s historic decision to intervene in World War II against them.

The first work to revive the demonic wartime image of the Germans was a short story by the well-known science fiction writer, Cyril M. Kornbluth, entitled “Two Dooms.”²⁰ Published in July 1958, Kornbluth’s tale focuses on an American nuclear scientist named Edward Royland who is busily engaged in the effort to develop the atomic bomb at the American research facility at Los Alamos during World War II. As the story opens, Royland is

highly ambivalent about the moral dimensions of the project – so much so, that he keeps secret a recent breakthrough that promises to clinch the bomb's creation. That is, until he visits a Native American colleague who provides him with some hallucinogenic Mexican mushrooms that send him off into (or at least prompt him to hallucinate the existence of) a world, 150 years in the future, in which the Nazis have won World War II. In this alternate world, the Nazis have won because of the failure of the United States to develop the atomic bomb. For without it, the United States is forced to launch a sea-borne invasion of the Japanese islands that leads to the decimation of American troops and allows the German army time to regroup and eventually conquer all of Europe and America.

However implausible, Kornbluth's vision of a Nazi wartime victory was notable for its nightmarish quality. In the tale, Royland first witnesses the horrors of life in the Japanese-occupied American southwest, a brutal place ruled by feudal samurai overlords who have enserfed the native population and forced them to live impoverished, ignorant lives in small-scale, collective farming villages. More horrific still is German-occupied America, which Royland comes to know firsthand after being deported to an extermination camp outside of Chicago. There he witnesses the selection of sick prisoners for immediate death and is himself selected as a candidate for live vivisection by a quack camp doctor. Only once Royland ingratiates himself with the doctor by telling him a fantastic story about having been sent into the future by a satanic Jewish magician is he able to discover, and quickly ingest, a hidden cache of the same hallucinogenic mushrooms that sent him into the alternate world in the first place. By the time he groggily regains consciousness in the real present, Royland recognizes the implications of his otherworldly experience and resolves to notify his boss, Rotschmidt, that he has figured out how to make the atomic bomb a reality. As the tale's narrator recounts:

He wouldn't wait until morning; a meteorite might kill him . . . He would go directly to Rotschmidt . . . [and] tell him we have the Bomb.

We have a symbol to offer the Japanese now, something to which they . . . will surrender.

Rotschmidt would be philosophical. He would probably sigh about the Bomb: 'Ah, do we ever act responsibly? Do we ever know what the consequences of our decisions will be?'

And Royland would have to try to avoid answering him very sharply: 'Yes. This once we damn well do.'²¹

With this ending, "Two Dooms" revealed its chief allohistorical function – to justify the United States' conduct in World War II. By depicting Royland

and his fellow atomic research scientists overcoming their pacifist reservations about developing and using the bomb, the tale vindicated the United States' decision in 1941 to reject isolationism and intervene in the war against the Germans. Kornbluth likely had several motives in promoting this message. On the one hand, he may have been hoping to justify the reality of the postwar world. Indeed, "Two Dooms" provided a certain sense of solace to readers during the cold war by reminding them that the main source of their present-day worries – the atomic bomb – had helped avert terrors that might have become reality without it. At the same time, however, "Two Dooms" aimed to remind readers about the real, historical crimes of the Nazis. As a World War II veteran who had fought the Germans as an infantryman in the Battle of the Bulge, Kornbluth, after 1945, was a fierce opponent of fascism who was personally committed to preserving the memory of Nazi crimes.²² Kornbluth, indeed, seemed eager to counteract the era's forgive-and-forget attitude by re-demonizing the Germans. Throughout the tale, he depicted the Germans as worse villains than the Japanese, thereby inverting racist wartime stereotypes of America's Asian foes and debunking any belief in the existence of moral or cultural affinities between Germans and Americans. Kornbluth advanced this agenda through his critical depiction of Royland's own cultural biases. After witnessing the brutality of life in the Japanese zone, Royland initially greets the first Germans he meets with relief, assuming that, in contrast to the primitively violent Japanese, they are at least "human" and "members of Western Industrial Culture like him."²³ So confident is Royland of the Germans' basic rationality, indeed, that he offers the Germans his services in building them a bomb. Yet his faith in the Germans is quickly exposed as misplaced. Before long, he is deported to an extermination camp, at which point he regrets having dismissed as mere rumor-mongering the lamentations of a Jewish fellow scientist at Los Alamos about Holocaust atrocities. By the end of the tale, Royland's exposure to Nazi barbarism convinces him of the fundamental irrationality of the German mind. It is unclear to what extent the political events of the late 1950s influenced Kornbluth's tale. Yet at a time in which Germany's Nazi past was coming to dominate the headlines, "Two Dooms" could not help but remind Americans about the pitfalls of viewing the present without a full awareness of the recent past.

If Kornbluth inaugurated the new allohistorical attention towards Nazism, no one did more to spread it into the American mainstream than famed journalist William L. Shirer. Having sparked international controversy with his blockbuster work of history, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, in 1960, Shirer abandoned non-fiction for fantasy one year

later in a widely read essay, published in the December 1961 issue of *Look* magazine, entitled "If Hitler Had Won World War II."²⁴ This essay was largely an empirically documented discussion of what the Nazis *did* do in occupied Europe as a method of debating what they might have done in the United States had they succeeded in defeating it. Indeed, Shirer stressed that his essay was not merely a product of the imagination, writing, "One has only to consult the captured German secret documents dealing with Hitler's confidential plans for the subjugation of the conquered peoples and then observe how he began to carry them out in the lands he occupied."²⁵ Using this method, Shirer proceeded to describe the brutal occupation that never happened.

In "If Hitler Had Won World War II," the defeat of the United States comes about as the result of a joint German and Japanese invasion in 1944. While the Japanese march ashore on the Pacific coast and proceed to occupy the western third of the nation up to the Rocky Mountains, the Nazis seize the remaining two-thirds of the country. In short order, both nations subject the United States to a policy of brutal occupation. Like Kornbluth, Shirer imagined the Japanese approach as much more lenient than that of the Nazis. The Japanese exploit their territory for its "oil, minerals, lumber, and food," but otherwise leave the Americans "pretty much to themselves."²⁶ In contrast, the Nazis follow up their invasion of the east coast by dissolving the nation's main political institutions and arresting its political and intellectual leaders. After suppressing the mass media, outlawing trade unions, closing churches, and destroying synagogues, they move on to more dramatic criminal acts, such as razing Washington D.C. as a symbol of what Hitler calls "decadent Western democracy." Nazi criminality reaches its apex, however, with the extension of the Final Solution to American Jewry. According to Shirer:

Under Hitler's specific orders, occupied North America has been made *Judenfrei* (free of Jews). The figures for those gassed at the great extermination camp in New Jersey have never been published. Eichmann, who was in charge of the grisly business, recently boasted . . . that they amounted to nearly five million. More than a million Jews have [escaped] . . . to the Japanese-occupied West . . . [while] some quarter of a million have escaped to Mexico, many going from there to South America.²⁷

Jews are not the only ones persecuted, however. So are other Americans, such as the "Negroes," who suffer "complete segregation," as well as the majority white population, which is subjected to severe economic exploitation as part of the Nazis' program of turning them into "Americans slaves for

the . . . Master German Race.”²⁸ Ultimately, for Shirer, the Nazi occupation of the United States, like the Nazis’ real occupation of much of Europe, inaugurates a “truly dreadful era” of unmitigated, unimaginable horror.²⁹

In writing “If Hitler Had Won World War II,” Shirer aimed to revive the American memory of Germany’s real historical crimes. The tone of moral outrage that framed his allohistorical discussion of a Nazi victory mirrored the tone used in his bestselling historical study of the Third Reich’s rise and fall. Both were rooted in Shirer’s own left-liberal, anti-Nazi political leanings, but they also reflected the resurgence of American concerns about Germany’s Nazi past in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Despite official US–German friendship and cooperation in the NATO alliance, Shirer did not want the American public’s forgetfulness towards the Germans’ not-so-recent Nazi past to lull it into a false sense of security. It was most likely for this reason that Shirer’s alternate history, like Kornbluth’s, emphasized that nothing – not even the putative racial similarities between the Germans and the “Germanic” Americans – would have spared them the same savage treatment meted out by the Nazis to the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe. It was thus a political lesson that Shirer hoped his allohistorical essay could provide: not to place America’s future security in the hands of former enemies (no matter how officially embraced in NATO) but to preserve the nation’s long tradition of self-reliance. As he declared in his concluding description of American resistance activity against the Nazis: “The spirit of the American people has not been broken. They may not have fully appreciated their freedoms when they had them. Perhaps they took them for granted – until it was too late. But they are determined to win them back.”³⁰ In short, like Kornbluth, Shirer used the grim scenario of a defeated America to highlight the wisdom of the United States’ real historical decision to fight against, and finally defeat, Nazi Germany.

Shirer’s moralistic writing on the subject of Nazism, in turn, was echoed by the early postwar era’s most important allohistorical narrative about a Nazi victory in World War II, legendary science fiction writer Philip K. Dick’s 1962 novel *The Man in the High Castle* (see Figure 7).³¹ Like the tales of Kornbluth and Shirer, Dick’s narrative was also set in an America that had been defeated and occupied by the Germans and Japanese. Unlike them, however, *The Man in the High Castle* was distinguished by an extremely intricate and multilayered plot. Dick’s novel resists simple summary, but in its broadest contours it chronicles how the lives of various American and Japanese characters in San Francisco are disrupted by the erratic policies of the hegemonic Nazi regime. The central character, a

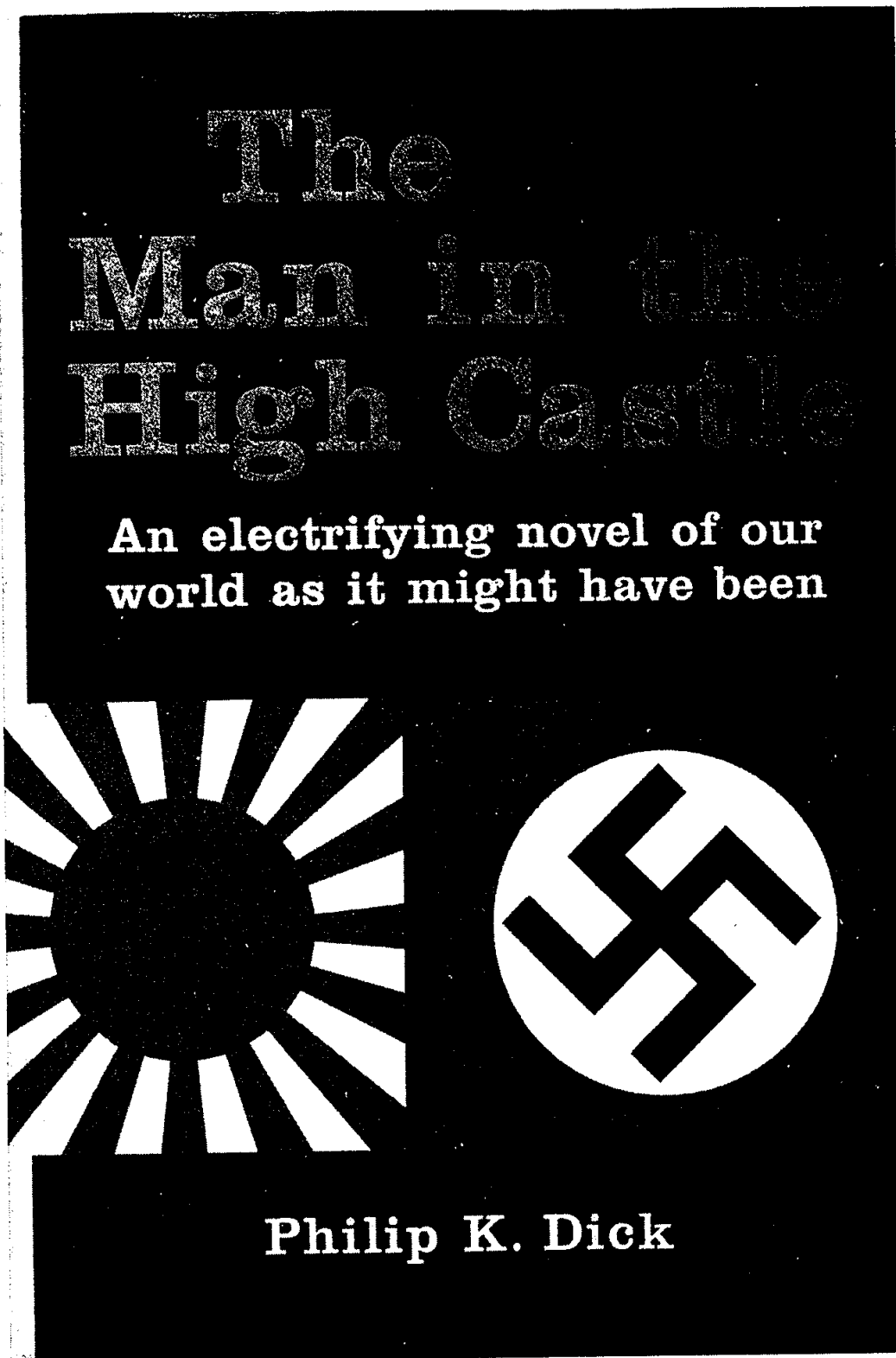


Figure 7 Cover of the first American edition of Philip K. Dick's 1962 novel
The Man in the High Castle.

benevolent Japanese diplomat named Mr. Tagomi, spends most of the novel attempting to gather intelligence from a suspected Swedish spy, named Mr. Baynes, about Germany's internal political turmoil and its implications for the nation's geopolitical behavior in the near future. Nazi Germany, at this point in its history, is in the midst of a fierce power struggle between competing party factions following the death of Chancellor Martin Bormann (the successor to the senile Führer, Adolf Hitler, who has been placed in a sanitarium). Agitated by this news, Tagomi is alarmed to learn from Baynes (who turns out to be a well-meaning German Abwehr agent named Rudolf Wegener) that the new chancellor, Josef Goebbels, is preparing an apocalyptic plan called "Operation Dandelion" to destroy Japan with nuclear weapons, seize its colonies, and extend German domination across the entire globe. Tagomi works tirelessly to avert this scenario, helping Wegener arrange a meeting with a high-ranking Japanese military official, General Tedeki, in order to warn him of Operation Dandelion, and ultimately plays the hero by shooting dead several German SD agents who try to assassinate the general. Tagomi and Wegener's modest efforts, however, fail to bring the novel to a happy conclusion. Although their disclosure of Goebbels' doomsday plan helps avert immediate disaster by boosting the fortunes of the chancellor's chief rival, Reinhard Heydrich (who opposes the plan), the world remains a highly unstable place, poised on the brink of a nuclear holocaust. As Wegener pessimistically concludes after arriving back in Germany, "The terrible dilemma of our lives. Whatever happens, it is evil beyond compare."³²

The Man in the High Castle's plot was far more nuanced than is suggested by the preceding synopsis, but it was deceptively simple in its depiction of the allohistorical origins and consequences of a Nazi wartime victory. Like Kornbluth and Shirer, Dick shared the interventionist belief that the United States had been correct in fighting Nazi Germany. This assessment was apparent in the novel's pointing to isolationism as responsible for America's defeat by the Nazis. For it is the assassination of President Roosevelt in 1932 and the resulting rise to power of his isolationist successor, President Bricker, that prevents the United States from re-arming and being able to resist the eventual Nazi attack.³³ Dick's support for interventionism was furthermore visible in the novel's horrific portrait of the United States under Nazi occupation. Like Kornbluth and Shirer, Dick juxtaposed Japanese and German occupation policies in order to accentuate the severity of the latter. The Japanese, for their part, treat occupied America in traditional imperialistic fashion, exploiting it

economically but refraining from overt acts of terror or violence. Tagomi, in particular, is a tolerant and humanitarian figure, who firmly rejects the lure of antisemitism and recoils at the uncouth barbarity of the Nazi leadership.³⁴ Tagomi's moral stature, indeed, stands in sharp contrast to the barbarism of the Nazis, whose fanatical excesses Dick outlines in fleeting, but nevertheless graphic, terms. Not only have the Nazis murdered most of American Jewry, they have exterminated much of Europe's Slavic population, and embarked upon horrific genetic experiments on the continent of Africa, where they have transformed the few surviving natives into cannibalistic slaves. There is no limit to the Nazis' craving for power, as is demonstrated by their completion of such herculean, if demented, schemes as using nuclear energy to drain and transform the Mediterranean Sea into farmland and using rocket technology to colonize Mars. The omnipotence of Nazi rule, finally, is underscored by the lack of resistance to it. Not only have the Nazis conquered America physically, they have done so mentally as well. Many of the characters in *The Man in the High Castle* embrace Nazi values, especially antisemitism, and are inclined to collaboration, the worst being the antiques dealer, Robert Childan, who so admires the Germans that he proclaims that the world would have been much worse had they lost the war.³⁵ More than anything else, the articulation of such a defeatist remark by an American underscores the totality of the Nazis' victory.

In the end, though, *The Man in the High Castle* was at its bleakest in actually raising doubts about the reality of the Nazis' triumph. As a writer who consistently questioned the nature of reality in his literary work, Dick appropriately concluded *The Man in the High Castle* by provocatively undermining its essential allohistorical narrative.³⁶ One of the most important subplots in the novel revolves around the publication of a work of alternate history entitled *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, written by a man named Hawthorne Abendsen who is rumored to live in a fortified mountain retreat (the "high castle" that gives the novel its name) near Cheyenne, Wyoming. This controversial book, though banned throughout North America and Europe, engrosses all of the novel's central characters with its "fictional" account of the Nazis' defeat in the war. All of them are highly entertained by the novel, although they all dismiss it as far-fetched. By the end of *The Man in the High Castle*, however, it becomes clear (thanks to the services of the ancient Taoist oracle known as the *I Ching*, or *The Book of Changes*) that the novel's counterfactual premise is actually true. The Nazis really *have* lost the war, but no one knows it.³⁷ In a conclusion typical of Dick's writing, fiction is exposed as reality and reality as fiction. At first

glance, this ontologically disruptive sci-fi twist might be seen as diminishing the frightful quality of *The Man in the High Castle*. For it could be taken to mean that the reality of Nazi rule is nothing but an illusion. Yet the bleakness of the novel's conclusion remains. For the reality of a Nazi victory only becomes an illusion for those who are capable of recognizing the fictionality of their own existence. And, as is implied by Abendsen's ultimate reluctance to face the truth penned by his own hand, most human beings are innately unable to deny their own reality.³⁸ Dick concluded *The Man in the High Castle*, then, on a pessimistic note by casting doubt upon the likelihood of any escape from political oppression.³⁹

In painting such a gloomy portrait of life under Nazi rule, Dick was prompted by a passionate moral commitment to preserving the memory of Nazi barbarism. The writer's interest in the history of the Third Reich was longstanding and dated back to the early 1950s. Dick, indeed, spent seven years conducting research for *The Man in the High Castle*, even reading captured Nazi war documents housed at the University of California, Berkeley, research library. This period of immersion in the primary sources of the Nazi era turned the writer into a fierce anti-Nazi. As he put it, "I thought I hated those guys before I did the research. After I did the research . . . I had created for myself an enemy that I would hate for the rest of my life. Fascism. Wherever it appears . . . it is the enemy."⁴⁰ Like Shirer, then (whose work he admired), Dick was driven by moral reasons to expose the evils of Nazism.⁴¹ It is unclear whether the growing attention to Germany's Nazi past in the late 1950s and early 1960s provided Dick with extra motivation to write his novel, but it may well have made a contribution, given his conviction that fascism had not died with the Third Reich but lived on in the present.⁴² Ultimately, his longstanding commitment to exposing the historical evils of Nazism and to fighting its contemporary manifestations in the present provided enough passion to make *The Man in the High Castle* the era's most eloquent portrayal of the horrific character of a Nazi-ruled world.

Following the influential accounts by Kornbluth, Shirer, and Dick, allohistorical depictions of a Nazi wartime victory ebbed during the remainder of the 1960s. Still, the final such account of the decade – episode number 28 of the fledgling science fiction television series, *Star Trek*, entitled "The City on the Edge of Forever" – further demonstrated the scenario's enduring appeal. Regarded as one of the series' most famous episodes, "The City on the Edge of Forever" was based on a screenplay by the well-known writer Harlan Ellison, and was first aired on April 6, 1967.⁴³ While the episode controversially diverged from the screenplay in

certain respects, it generally followed Ellison's dramatic account of the consequences of a Nazi wartime victory.⁴⁴ The basic premise of the television episode is that the Starship Enterprise's doctor, Leonard McCoy, in a state of drug-induced insanity, beams down to a mysterious planet and accidentally enters into a time portal that transports him back to the Earth of the 1930s. As a consequence of his actions, the course of history is drastically altered. (When the Enterprise's chief communications officer, Uhura, tries to get in touch with the Starship, for example, she finds that it no longer exists.) To try to undo McCoy's calamitous actions, Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock follow him back in time to discover the cause of history's radical transformation. As it turns out, McCoy has accidentally changed the course of history by preventing a young woman named Edith Keeler (played by Joan Collins) from meeting her intended fate of being killed by a speeding car while crossing the street. A strongly humanitarian woman who runs a homeless shelter and preaches a philosophy of pacifism, Keeler, as a result, is now able to pursue her dream (cut short in "real history") of spreading her pacifist movement across the nation. This achievement, however, ends up having unforeseen consequences, as is made clear by an exchange between Spock and Kirk. Looking into recorded images of the 1930s stored in a makeshift version of Spock's tricorder, the two men note the results of McCoy's interference with the past:

SPOCK: This is how history went after McCoy changed it. Here in the 1930s a growing pacifist movement delayed the United States' entry into the Second World War. While peace negotiations dragged on, Germany had time to complete its heavy water experiments.

KIRK: Germany ... Fascism ... Hitler ... – won [the] Second World War ...

SPOCK: Because all this lets them develop the A-bomb first ... With the bomb and with the V-2 rockets to carry them, Germany captured the world.⁴⁵

Following this pivotal interchange, "The City on the Edge of Forever" does not go into any further detail regarding the horrors of Nazi rule. Yet, as with other more detailed accounts, its chief lesson was clear. All history in the wake of a Nazi victory – in this case, all interplanetary history – is changed for the worse.

In its overall allohistorical narrative, "The City on the Edge of Forever" served to vindicate real history. Like Kornbluth's tale, "Two Dooms," it justified the American decision to intervene against the Germans in World War II by pointing to the horrific consequences that a platform of

isolationism – driven by pacifism – would have wrought. In the process, it found redemption in tragedy.⁴⁶ Just as Kornbluth's tale viewed the horrific atomic devastation of Hiroshima as necessary for later peace, "The City on the Edge of Forever" depicted Edith Keeler's death (and, symbolically, the death of pacifism itself) as necessary for averting allohistorical catastrophe. Both Spock and Kirk demonstrate a clear recognition of this fact in meditating over the painful ironies of Edith Keeler's historical fate. When Kirk exclaims, "But she was right. Peace *was* the way," Spock responds sagely, "She was right – but at the wrong time." Finally, in the episode's emotional climax, Kirk overcomes his deep feelings of love for Edith Keeler and allows her to be killed by a speeding truck, knowing that it is for the sake of humankind's future. In the end, history has to be allowed to unfold as it really occurred, in all of its tragic dimensions.

Interestingly, the didactic message behind "The City on the Edge of Forever" was multifaceted. Ellison's original screenplay and the eventual televised version diverged in their goals. Harlan Ellison's specific views on the subject of Nazism are unknown. But as a writer of Jewish background who felt the pain of antisemitism directly as a youth growing up in the midwest, he no doubt viewed it with disfavor.⁴⁷ His apocalyptic description of a Nazi wartime victory thus most likely expressed personal views in addition to confirming the reigning view of Nazism as the epitome of evil. Significantly, however, the intended message of the televised version of "The City on the Edge of Forever" was much more presentist in orientation. In portraying Edith Keeler's death as necessary for the progress of history, the producers of the *Star Trek* television series expressed their opposition to the growing pacifist movement protesting the war in Vietnam.⁴⁸ This explains why the producers transformed Edith Keeler's profession from a well-meaning social worker in Ellison's original draft to a more overtly political leader of a pacifist movement in the television broadcast. This shift was not to the liking of Ellison, who himself was opposed to the Vietnam war, and who went apoplectic upon learning of the changes made to his script. Yet he had no authority over the final version. Whether or not audiences in 1967 America perceived the pro-Vietnam war subtext, the final version of "The City on the Edge of Forever" ended up subtly universalizing Ellison's historically rooted screenplay to offer a political message about the present.

Following the ultra sci-fi account of a Nazi wartime victory in "The City on the Edge of Forever," the portrayal of the scenario assumed still another literary form with journalist Eric Norden's 1973 novella *The Ultimate Solution*.⁴⁹ Written as a detective thriller, *The Ultimate Solution* anticipated

later British works like *SS-GB* and *Fatherland*, which also borrowed from the genre's conventions. Yet where Deighton and Harris's novels featured protagonists who were generally sympathetic despite their moral shortcomings, Norden's featured a central character, New York City detective Bill Halder, who was thoroughly loathsome. *The Ultimate Solution* takes place in 1974 in an America that has been under Nazi rule since 1946, the year that the Nazis succeed in compelling the United States government to accept German rule or suffer total nuclear destruction (the Nazis nuke Chicago and Pittsburgh as a demonstration of their seriousness). As the novel opens, a routine police investigation into the assault of a New York City antiques dealer quickly snowballs into a larger political crisis. The assailant, Lieutenant Halder learns, was in all likelihood a Jew – indeed, “the last Jew on earth,” as the irate German official sent to investigate the case, the former German Einsatzgruppen death-squad chief, Johann von Leeb, ominously declares.⁵⁰ By 1964, the Nazis have murdered all of the world's Jews, having killed some four million in the United States and raided the globe's other continents for the remainder, even threatening Japan (which controls one-third of the non-Nazi-ruled part of the globe) with nuclear destruction unless it hands over its few Jewish inhabitants. Halder, chosen by Leeb to lead the search for the last Jew on earth, earnestly pursues his mission but comes up empty. Having failed to locate him, the best Halder can do is to theorize that he is somehow being sought by the Japanese, who are eager to embarrass the Germans and register a diplomatic coup. Through further investigation, however, during which he tortures to death one of the Jew's acquaintances, Halder learns that a colleague in the Gestapo, Beck, has captured him on his own. In the novel's climactic, if implausible, end, Beck discloses that the Jew, Felix Hirsch, has mysteriously arrived in New York City from an alternate world in which the Nazis actually *lost* the war in 1945. While Halder scoffs at this explanation, Beck confesses that he has kept Hirsch hidden in order to fight the Nazi regime, hoping that Hirsch can be used as a “gateway to another world . . . that isn't drenched in blood.”⁵¹ Halder, a good Nazi collaborator, will have none of it, however, and kills both Beck and Hirsch with his Schmeisser submachine gun. With this deed, *The Ultimate Solution* abruptly ends, the last Jew from an alternate past as dead as all remaining hope for an alternate future.

Although weaker than Shirer and Dick's creative efforts, *The Ultimate Solution* effectively articulated its interventionist agenda in depicting the allohistorical origins and consequences of the Nazi victory over the United States. Like Dick, Norden explicitly blamed isolationism for America's

defeat. As in *The Man in the High Castle*, *The Ultimate Solution* portrayed the removal of Franklin D. Roosevelt as president (once more through assassination) as bringing about the more isolationist successor, Huey Long, who keeps America out of World War II and thereby seals its fate. Just as Norden's explanation of the reasons for America's defeat served to justify America's real historical entry into the war, so too did his unsparing depiction of the brutality of life in America under Nazi rule. Like Sarban's *The Sound of His Horn*, Norden's tale emphasized the brutal, sadistic, and perverted dimensions of Nazism. The Nazis conquer America with the utmost savagery, punishing the home-grown resistance for sheltering Jews by destroying entire towns – à la Lidice – such as Mount Kisco, New York, and executing hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish Americans for defying German orders. After consolidating their rule, moreover, the Nazis elevate sadism to a social norm, breeding blacks as domestic animals, using Slavs for savage blood sports, and rendering all racially "inferior" peoples defenseless by giving them tracheotomies at birth to prevent them from speaking or screaming. This inversion of conventional values is epitomized by the commonly heard view that the Final Solution was "the greatest single achievement of recorded history."⁵²

No less brutal than the situation in the United States is that in Germany itself, which continues to be ruled by ideological fanatics well into the 1970s. Although Hitler by this time has retreated into the background with dementia (a double appears at all state occasions), the Reich's leaders, most prominently Reinhard Heydrich, continue to lust after total power, plotting a final nuclear reckoning with Japan to achieve complete world domination. Indeed, by the end of the novel, the Nazi government has given the Japanese a final ultimatum to surrender or face nuclear destruction. On the whole, the vast majority of the German and American characters in *The Ultimate Solution* are either wholly depraved or pragmatically immoral, suggesting that a Nazi victory in World War II would have been nightmarish both for the victors and the vanquished.

Norden's precise aims in painting such a horrific portrait of a Nazi victory are unclear, but they most likely grew out of a deep moral commitment to preserving the memory of Nazi criminality.⁵³ The journalist's interest in the subject of the Third Reich reflected the surging fascination in Hitler and the Nazi past during the early 1970s known as the "Hitler Wave." This growth of interest in Nazism (discussed in greater depth in chapter 2) had partly been unleashed by the publication of former Nazi armaments minister Albert Speer's bestselling memoir, *Inside the Third Reich*, in 1970. Significantly, Norden conducted a marathon ten-day-long

interview with Speer which was published in the June 1971 issue of *Playboy* magazine.⁵⁴ Speer's comment to Norden that "If the Nazis had won, [people] . . . would be living in a nightmare" no doubt inspired the writer to imagine some of the very scenarios that he described in *The Ultimate Solution*.⁵⁵ In this sense, Norden's novel can be seen as a morally informed critique of the Hitler Wave. During an era in which many Americans seemed to be losing sight of Nazism's criminality, Norden redirected readers' attention to it – in the process, vindicating the real historical decision of the United States to intervene in World War II. At the same time, however, even Norden's tale, by graphically depicting Nazism's criminal tendencies, betrayed certain signs of a lurid fascination with his topic. His artistic inventiveness in conjuring up unimaginable future horrors leaves the suspicion that it was done not only to condemn Nazism but out of a calculated desire to appeal to the lowest instincts of a pulp-fiction audience and sell books. Although he would hardly be the first, Norden, too, seemed to fall victim to the Hitler Wave's tendency to aestheticize Nazi evil.

The same year as Norden's novel, the final portrayal during this period of a Nazi victory in World War II appeared in the form of a two-part story in the popular DC comic book the *Justice League of America* (see Figure 8).⁵⁶ Entitled "Crisis on Earth-X," and written by prolific comic book writer Len Wein, the story describes the attempt of the superheroes of the Justice League of America or JLA (including Superman, Batman, Green Arrow, and others) to help their superhero colleagues, the Freedom Fighters (including the Human Bomb, the Ray, and Uncle Sam), escape from an alternate earth where the Nazis have somehow won World War II.⁵⁷ Although the plot is highly convoluted (with a predictable amount of high-octane comic book fisticuffs), it confirmed the reigning bleak image of a Nazi-ruled world.⁵⁸ Not only do the Nazis assume total control over the United States (they carve Hitler's face into Mount Rushmore for effect), they create an interstellar system of mind-control satellites that maintain their global hegemony. So demonic are the Nazis, indeed, that they end up being overwhelmed by their own twisted ideas. In the story's climactic – if far-fetched – conclusion, the superhero Red Tornado succeeds in penetrating the main Nazi mind-control satellite and appears to encounter Adolf Hitler himself, only to punch off his head and discover that he and the entire Nazi leadership on earth are androids who have been installed in power by the very mind-control machines they have invented to implement their rule. The resolution of the plot is not particularly significant (the superheroes succeed in their mission to liberate

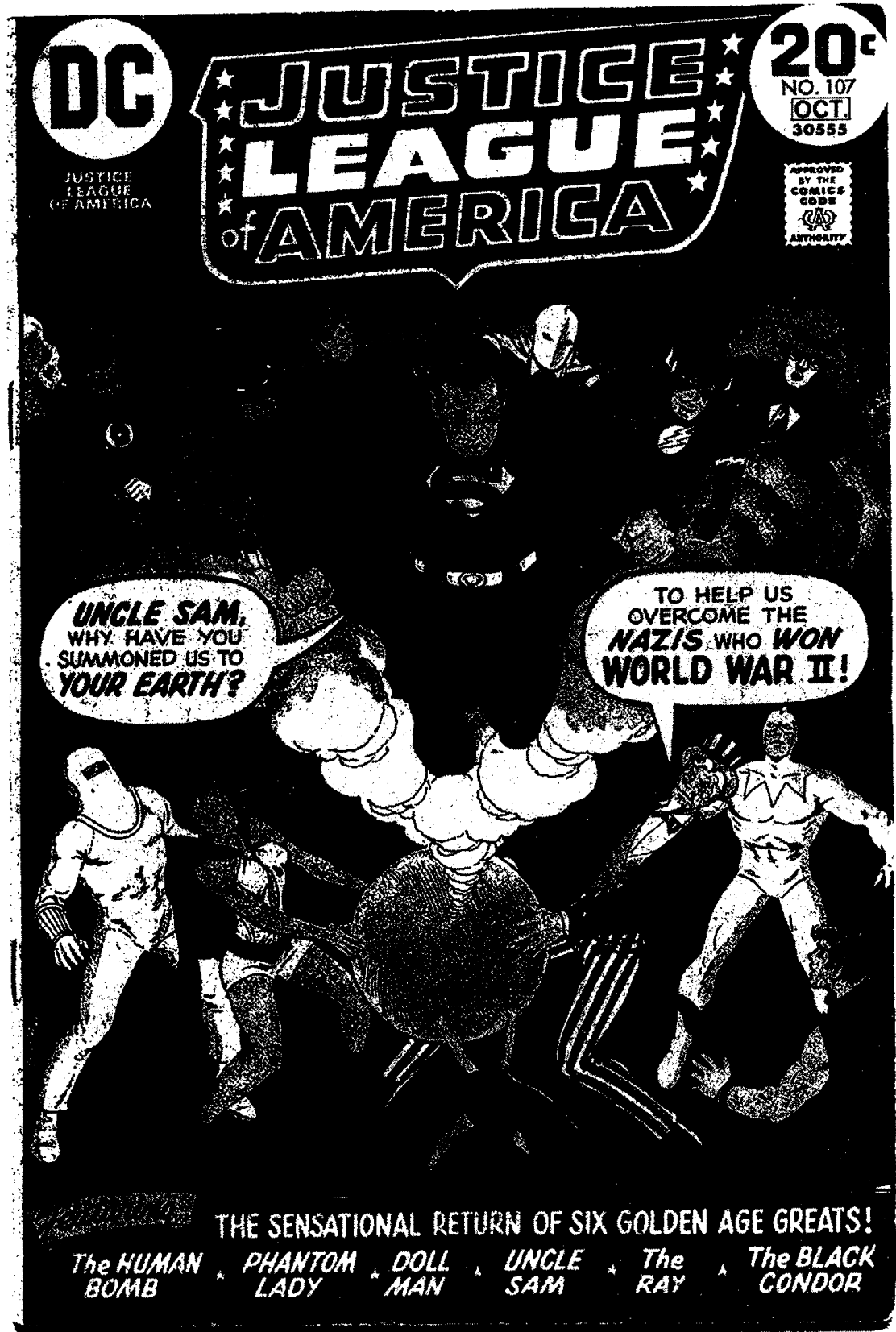


Figure 8 Cover of the comic book story, "Crisis on Earth-X," in the *Justice League of America*, Nr. 107, October, 1973.

Earth-X from the Nazi menace). The story's writer, Len Wein, moreover, did not intend it to convey any particular political message.⁵⁹ In general, then, the story was largely significant for confirming the reigning allohistorical view that a Nazi-ruled world would have been hell on earth.

All in all, up through the early 1970s, American alternate histories were united in their depiction of a Nazi victory in World War II. By representing Nazi rule as fanatical, evil, and omnipotent, these accounts expressed a clear sense of moral revulsion against it. This is not particularly surprising given that many of the authors of these tales belonged to the generation that had experienced the traumas of the Nazi era firsthand.⁶⁰ More importantly, these narratives served to vindicate America's real historical decision to intervene in World War II against Germany. After 1945, the ominous scenario of a Nazi wartime victory gave Americans a sense that (like the British) their real, historical triumph over the Germans constituted a "finest hour" for them as well. Especially in a cold-war era of renewed tensions and worries, the function of this scenario was particularly welcome. For even if the present constituted a source of anxiety, the nightmare premise of a Nazi victory served to remind Americans that it could have easily been much worse.

RECEPTION

Significantly, the positive response of American readers to these narratives demonstrated the existence of a considerable degree of support for their broader conclusions. The tales of Kornbluth, Dick, Ellison, and Norden largely met with a positive reception during the first postwar decades. *The Man in the High Castle*, for example, won the prestigious Hugo award for best science fiction novel of 1962 at the World Science Fiction Convention.⁶¹ Ellison's screenplay for "The City on the Edge of Forever" won the Writers Guild award for best dramatic teleplay for the 1967-68 season. Meanwhile, the episode itself was a phenomenal hit, having earned the reputation not only of being one of the most beloved of the original *Star Trek* series, but one of the most memorable broadcasts in American television history.⁶² Reviews of the era's literary works were also effusive. The most acclaimed was Dick's novel, which, originally hailed as "one of the finest works in [the] . . . field [of science fiction] in a long time," has since come to be recognized as the classic expression of the allohistorical scenario of a Nazi victory in World War II.⁶³ Positive reviews were also received by Eric Norden for his "bone-chilling novel," *The Ultimate*

Solution, which one reviewer termed a “marvelous read.”⁶⁴ Kornbluth’s short story was less widely reviewed but today is acknowledged as a classic pioneering work in the field of alternate history.⁶⁵

The one major exception to the otherwise uniformly positive reception of early postwar narratives was William Shirer’s essay in *Look* magazine, “If Hitler Had Won World War II.” Shirer’s essay had a mixed reception, largely due to readers’ diverging views on the essay’s political implications. As was the case with Shirer’s magnum opus, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, his *Look* piece also sparked international controversy. The furor erupted in 1961 when the German news magazine *Stern* blasted it in a cover story entitled “Swastika over New York.”⁶⁶ In criticizing the piece, *Stern*’s reporters cited the same reasons mentioned by most German critics of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* – namely, it was the work of an alleged German-hater who was “poisoning . . . public opinion in the United States” towards Germany at a sensitive moment in the cold war.⁶⁷ *Stern* sniped at Shirer’s speculative description of the Nazi defeat and occupation of the United States, retorting that “neither Shirer nor any other qualified historian has ever discovered a single serious reference to plans for the occupation of America.”⁶⁸ Certain American readers agreed with this assessment. Among the letters sent by readers to *Look*, one stated that the essay was “nothing but hair-raising madness,” while another insisted that “Shirer is just as dangerous to the peace of the free world as Hitler or Goebbels was. He is the typical propaganda man: half-truths mixed with imagination.”⁶⁹ At the same time, other American readers praised the piece for preserving the memory of Nazi crimes despite cold-war pressures to ignore them. Thus, one called the story “tremendous” and concluded that it would “awaken the American public to the fact that we face a menace today, as great as the one that faced the free world in those dark days of World War II.”⁷⁰

The reason Shirer’s piece sparked more of a mixed reaction than the era’s other equally critical accounts of a Nazi victory likely had to do with exposure. “If Hitler Had Won World War II” was published in a magazine with a circulation of seven million readers and probably reached many more.⁷¹ Its ability to shape American views of the Germans was thus substantial. In contrast, many of the other allohistorical narratives of the era were comparatively obscure, reached far fewer readers, and thus did not possess the same capacity to shock. Whatever the case may be, the polarized reaction to Shirer’s piece was highly exceptional in the early postwar period. On the whole, the moralistic, interventionist depiction of a Nazi-ruled world conformed to the horizon of expectations of most readers and was largely accepted.

THE POSTWAR YEARS: ALTERNATE HISTORY AS
SELF-CRITIQUE, 1972–89

As the 1970s progressed, however, allohistorical accounts of a Nazi victory in World War II began to portray the scenario in markedly less frightening terms. Many of these accounts ceased depicting the Nazis as fanatical demons and instead portrayed them as rational pragmatists. Some of these tales even portrayed a Nazi victory as not such a bad thing after all. Other accounts went further still in abandoning the ethically informed narrative approach of the past, adopting the mode of satire and portraying the victorious Nazis in humorous terms. To be sure, certain works continued to view a Nazi victory in negative fashion; but they were now in the minority. These shifting allohistorical depictions of a Nazi wartime victory reflected the onset of a normalizing trend in the American memory of the Nazi past.

By the 1970s, the fears of Nazism that had survived World War II and that had been revived during the late 1950s and 1960s were beginning to fade. Contributing to this trend were both generational and political factors. By the 1970s, the passing of time had enabled the emergence of a generation of Americans who lacked any personal memories of the war. Unlike the producers of early postwar narratives, such as Shirer and Kornbluth, who had witnessed Nazism's evils firsthand in Europe, many of the writers in this later period viewed the scenario of a Nazi victory from a more detached perspective. At the same time, this generation – and society at large – was confronted with new, present-day concerns that helped to displace traumatic memories of the Nazi era. As was true in Britain after the mid-1960s, the flurry of new alternate histories that appeared in the United States in the 1970s coincided with, and strongly reflected, the emergence of a pessimistic national mood. In domestic affairs, the scandal of Watergate and the oil-crisis-driven stagflation in the early 1970s spawned an atmosphere of acute crisis that persisted through the economic malaise of the Carter years. In foreign affairs, the trauma of the Vietnam War continued to cast its shadow over the nation well after its conclusion in 1975, while escalating cold-war tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 led to renewed fears of nuclear conflict. Out of such events, finally, emerged a broader skepticism towards government and a general opposition to war, both of which found ample expression in the popular culture of the period.⁷² It was hardly surprising, therefore, that increasing numbers of Americans began to reconsider how good the “good war” against the Axis powers had really been.

In this climate of crisis, alternate histories now assumed a new function. As in Britain, the scenario of a Nazi wartime victory in the United States ceased to be used for the purpose of self-congratulation and was instead now used for self-critique. In contrast to the situation in Britain, however, where the central themes were collaboration and resistance, the American counter-narratives of this period generally focused on the question of whether the United States should have intervened in, or stayed out of, World War II. Significantly, these accounts offered highly divergent answers to this question. A good number of them voiced support for the isolationist position that the United States should have remained on the sidelines and allowed the Germans to defeat the Soviets, even if it enabled them to become the masters of the European continent. These anti-interventionist accounts, whether rightwing or leftwing in origin, clearly reflected how the cold war elevated the Soviets above the Nazis as objects of fear in the American consciousness and relativized the Third Reich's historical evil. Other allohistorical tales, by contrast, continued to defend the traditional interventionist position that fighting the Germans was in the nation's best interests. Yet in doing so, they adopted a more self-critical stance, abandoning the triumphalism of early postwar accounts in favor of a more polemical tone. Even if they continued to depict the Nazis as an evil enemy, they did so less to vindicate the real historical decision to fight against them than to criticize present-day American decline. In short, even though the narratives of this period differed widely in content, they strongly resembled each other in function. Instead of validating the present by depicting its superiority to a horrific past that never was, they criticized the present by implying its inferiority to a better past that could have been.

THE REHABILITATION OF ISOLATIONISM

The first example of the new normalizing trend was provided by distinguished American political scientist Bruce M. Russett's 1972 book *No Clear and Present Danger: A Skeptical View of the U.S. Entry into World War II*.⁷³ Although not specifically a work of alternate history, Russett's study liberally used counterfactual reasoning to criticize the previously sacrosanct cause of American intervention in the war. Calling his book a "retrospective analysis of 'might-have-beens,'" Russett right from the outset presented its bold thesis – namely, that "most Americans probably would have been no worse off, and possibly a little better, if the United States had never become a belligerent [in World War II]."⁷⁴ The reason for Russett's upbeat conclusion was his contention that even if American neutrality had

allowed Germany to remain undefeated in the war, the Nazis would never have been able to deliver a knockout blow that would have defeated the Soviet Union for good.⁷⁵ Indeed, the result would have been "a mutually exhausting war that would have left the Russians even more battered than they were from their victory in 1945, and the Germans hardly better."⁷⁶ Even if in control of Eastern Europe, Germany would have suffered from the divisive forces of nationalism, as well as from the heavy burdens of reconstruction, and would not have been able to threaten the continent for some time to come.⁷⁷ More important still for Russett was the fact that Nazi Germany never posed a serious threat to the United States. Not only did Hitler have no intentions of invading America, he lacked the means to do so, having failed to develop the atomic bomb. For these reasons, American intervention ended up being an enormous mistake. President Roosevelt had failed to anticipate that, by defeating Germany, "American intervention . . . would bring Russia into Central Europe to fill the vacuum."⁷⁸ As history turned out, "American participation in World War II brought the country few gains" and made it "no more secure . . . than it could have been if it had stayed out."⁷⁹

In arriving at his revisionist conclusions, Russett openly cited the traumatic experience of the Vietnam War. As a member of the generation that came of age after the end of World War II (he was born in 1935), he was less concerned with the war's legacy after 1945 than with the contemporary crises of the postwar world. Russett's leftwing political tendencies further reinforced this orientation. A scholar writing in the isolationist tradition of Charles Beard, Russett saw the debacle of Vietnam (like American involvement in the cold war more broadly) as directly attributable to the interventionist legacy spawned by the decision to become engaged in World War II.⁸⁰ Russett thus declared his intent to "reconsider my old myths" about America "fighting for its very existence" in World War II and to question whether it was necessary at all.⁸¹ In so doing, of course, he clearly revealed how the trauma of Vietnam diminished the horror of Nazism in American consciousness. While early postwar alternate histories emphasized Nazism's inherent evil, Russett's study relativized it, insisting that "Nazism as an ideology was almost certainly less dangerous to the United States than . . . Communism."⁸² Moreover, throughout his analysis, Russett de-emphasized moral factors in arriving at his real-political conclusions. Thus, while he recognized that separating "ethics from an objective assessment of the threat Germany . . . actually posed to American national security" might get him labeled "a first cousin of the Beast of Belsen," he reminded readers that moral considerations were not involved

in the American decision to fight against Germany in the first place (news of the atrocities emerging only late in the war) and that the United States sided with the equally unethical dictator, Stalin, to defeat the Germans in the end anyway.⁸³ In short, *No Clear and Present Danger* directly challenged the moral-mnemonic consensus of the early postwar years.

A similar set of concerns animated the next allohistorical discussion of a Nazi wartime victory, well-known conservative historian John Lukacs's speculative essay "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?"⁸⁴ Published in 1978 in the runaway bestseller, *The People's Almanac*, Lukacs's essay was based upon the premise that Hitler won the war by immediately invading Britain following his victory at Dunkirk in 1940.⁸⁵ From this point, Lukacs's "plausible tale" outlined an allohistorical vision that was surprisingly upbeat. Although "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" fleetingly sketched a brutal scenario for German-occupied Eastern Europe – epitomized by the "killing [of] large numbers of Russians and even larger numbers of Jews" – its overall assessment of the Nazis' European empire was relatively rosy. "Things were not as unbearable as had been expected," Lukacs wrote, for, after their victory, the Germans declined to remain in a perpetual state of war and instead devoted most of their energies to economic expansion, building "gigantic superhighways" and "Volkswagen factories." Indeed, despite the aging Hitler's exhortations for continued brutality, his rhetoric fails to appeal to most Germans, who "after 10 years of relative peace . . . were no longer at arms" and preferred to enjoy the soulless consumerism and pop culture enabled by postwar prosperity. With Hitler's death in 1952, it is the defenders of this materialistic and technocratic order, such as Albert Speer, Claus von Stauffenberg, and Wilhelm Canaris, who triumph over the ideologues, led by Himmler and Goebbels, and who "proclaim . . . that the destiny of the German people . . . [is] to uphold law and order in Europe instead of ruling over other peoples by force alone." This pragmatic Nazi government, in fact, succeeds in "laying the ground plan for the eventual unification of Europe" and enables "an era of peace and prosperity [to] . . . dawn . . . upon the world." So peaceful is Europe by the mid-1960s that a non-German for the first time is elected president of the European Union, and former Field Marshal Erwin Rommel feels no qualms about describing World War II as "all a big mistake."

In its overall conclusions, Lukacs's essay offered a strikingly benign view of a Nazi wartime victory. This was most clearly visible in his marginalization of the Holocaust from his broader narrative. Unlike the tales of the late 1950s and early 1960s, which focused on the Nazis' genocide to

underscore the regime's brutality, Lukacs largely ignored it. Even though his essay essentially implied that the Nazis end up completing the Final Solution of the Jewish question throughout Europe (Hitler, after all, lives through the end of the war), this horrific fact does not prevent Lukacs from concluding that everything in the end works out fairly well. Lukacs's rather cavalier attitude towards the Final Solution was echoed in his essay's intermittently lighthearted tone. At certain points in "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" Lukacs found room for humor, liberally peppering his description of German hegemony with such satirical flourishes as the Germans "forcing the French to consume huge quantities of inferior German beer" and Himmler's English SS recruits "establish[ing] themselves in Liverpool, where they eventually turned their savage energies to making music."⁸⁶ By virtue of the inclusion of such comical asides, Lukacs's essay lent a degree of humor to a scenario that had once been viewed solely with horror.

Lukacs's reasons for submitting such an uncritical depiction of a Nazi victory are difficult to discern. He has noted that he wrote "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" as "*a jeu d'esprit*" – that is, a lighthearted or witty intellectual game with no broader political significance.⁸⁷ Yet the essay contained a clear political message. In fairly unambiguous fashion, "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" defended the lost cause of isolationism and thereby criticized the interventionist character of American foreign policy in World War II. In Lukacs's essay, the Germans end up winning the war in Europe because America (respectively governed from 1940 to 1944 by a much more hesitant Roosevelt, and from 1944 to 1952, by the strongly isolationistic presidents Charles A. Lindbergh and Robert A. Taft) declines to fight against them. Yet, defying conventional wisdom, Lukacs characterized this decision in positive terms. Although American isolationism allows Germany to dominate Europe, the victorious Reich brings about the same processes of European reconstruction and integration that occurred in real history. Moreover, thanks to America's refusal to fight the Germans, the world is spared the cold war, for, after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Stalin flees to the Siberian city of Omsk, where he has little ability to threaten world peace. The Nazi victory in World War II thus ends up for the best.

It is difficult to know whether the isolationist political message contained in "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" was intentional. Although Lukacs's own political views defy easy categorization, he has long stood firmly on the conservative wing of the political

spectrum.⁸⁸ His conservative views manifested themselves in various ways, but they included a strong opposition to the Soviet Union's domination of Eastern Europe – a stance that reflected his personal background as a native Hungarian who fled his homeland as a twenty-three-year-old in 1946.⁸⁹ Lukacs was not only opposed to Soviet communism, of course, but was critical of Nazism as well. Yet his views of the Third Reich have long been regarded as highly idiosyncratic.⁹⁰ The possibility thus exists that as cold-war tensions were intensifying in the late 1970s, Lukacs's opposition to Soviet communism overshadowed his distaste for Nazism and found its way into his broader allohistorical narrative. Whether intentionally or not, "What if Hitler Had Won the Second World War?" can plausibly be seen as reflecting how heightened American fears of communism during the late 1970s could contribute to the waning memory of Nazism's historical evil. In relativizing the horrors of Nazi rule – indeed, in affirming that a Nazi victory in World War II would not have been that bad for Europe, despite the completion of the Final Solution of the Jewish question – Lukacs's essay attested to the role of the cold war in hastening the normalization of the Nazi past.

This political instrumentalization of the premise of a Nazi wartime victory continued in the next major work to appear, well-known science fiction writer Brad Linaweaver's 1982 novella *Moon of Ice*.⁹¹ Set in America in the 1980s, *Moon of Ice* tells the story of the Third Reich's turbulent evolution after its wartime victory through the eyes of Hilda Goebbels, the estranged daughter of the Nazi propaganda minister. As the novel opens, Hilda has arrived in New York City to meet with an American newspaper editor named Alan Whittmore in the hope of securing a book deal to publish the final postwar section of her recently deceased father's diaries, as well as her own autobiography. As Whittmore settles down in a hotel room to review Hilda's manuscripts, he learns much unsettling information about recent events in Nazi Germany. The most sensational revelations concern a major power struggle that erupts after Hitler's death in April 1965. The Nazi empire of the mid-1960s is a powerful but threatened entity. The Nazis dominate Europe, having successfully used atomic weapons to defeat the Soviets and the British, and to force a nuclear stalemate with the United States. But in the wake of his titanic victory, Hitler has become "indolent" and permitted his underlings to run the affairs of state.⁹² Germany has thereafter begun to suffer from imperial overstretch and has fallen behind the Americans in economic strength.⁹³

In this climate of uncertainty, civil strife emerges in the Nazi empire with an attempted *coup d'état* led by fanatical SS men from Burgundy, an independent state (created after the Nazi victory) whose SS rulers are eager

to pursue an antimodern, occultist, and mystical agenda of world domination. The Burgundians believe that postwar Germany has become weak owing to the abandonment of its holy racial mission in favor of pragmatic, technocratic policies.⁹⁴ The Burgundians thus decide to kidnap Goebbels (whom they regard as a traitor to the Nazi religion) with the intent of ritually sacrificing him alongside Hitler's stolen corpse in order to redeem the nation and send the Führer to Valhalla. Meanwhile, the Burgundians are busily preparing a final, mystical *Götterdämmerung* with the help of a brilliant but deranged geneticist, Richard Dietrich, whom they have entrusted with developing a final plague virus to kill all human beings on earth except for blue-eyed, blond men and women. The conclusion of this confrontation occurs with the Burgundians' defeat (and Goebbels' inadvertent rescue) by a ragtag coalition of anarchist, Marxist, and Zionist guerrilla groups led by his daughter Hilda. At this point, the manuscript comes to an end, and Whittmore, breathless from its astounding revelations, realizes that the woman in front of him, Hilda Goebbels, may well in fact have prevented World War III.

Despite its sensationalistic dimensions, *Moon of Ice* concludes by asserting that a Nazi victory in World War II would not have been the nightmare so feared by previous generations. As in Robert Harris's *Fatherland*, the Nazi empire after its wartime victory is far from being an omnipotent force, being plagued by worrisome economic and political problems. Linaweaver went beyond merely debunking the image of Nazi omnipotence, however, by asserting, like Lukacs, that the Nazi regime's postwar policies actually end up promoting the general European good. This outcome is made explicit at the conclusion of the novel when Hilda, in a postscript written to Whittmore in the year 2000, provocatively declares that "Adolf Hitler achieved the opposite of all his long-term goals . . . by winning World War II." As she explains, "economic reality subverted National Socialism," for as the Nazis united Europe under German rule, their New Order "knock[ed] down the barriers of ethnic and national separation" and thus worked to dampen their racialist ideology. Over the long term, she notes:

Nazi Germany was becoming less National Socialist with every passing decade. For all the talk of Race Destiny, it was the technical mind of Albert Speer and his successors at the controls of the German Empire. Ideology would surface long enough to slow down the machine . . . but in the end technical management would reassert itself.

According to Hilda, the victory of the pragmatists in Nazi Germany enables a remarkable thaw to occur. "Historical revisionists" have popped

up within Germany and have begun to criticize Hitler's policies, while in the sphere of international relations, German and American scientists are cooperating in the development of space colonies. The capstone to the defeat of the ideologues is the founding of a Jewish state in space, an event which happily confirms that "*Der Jude* could not be stopped by a mere *Führer*." These events, for the hopeful Hilda, signal the emergence of a "sane new world" recovered from the disasters of the recent past.⁹⁵

Moon of Ice's optimistic portrayal of a Nazi victory in World War II largely stemmed from its author's background. Born in 1952, Linaweaver belonged to the generation that did not experience the Nazi era firsthand and thus easily adopted a more detached perspective in portraying it. More important still were Linaweaver's conservative political beliefs. Like many science fiction writers, Linaweaver was a committed libertarian whose faith in the principles of limited government and free-market economics was on clear display throughout the novel.⁹⁶ This political stance manifested itself most obviously in his narrative's juxtaposition of the present-day United States and Nazi Germany. *Moon of Ice* depicted the United States as a libertarian paradise, having reduced the power of the Federal Government dramatically since the impeachment of President Roosevelt (for covering up his foreknowledge of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor) and having liberated private corporations from state restrictions.⁹⁷ By contrast, the Third Reich remains stagnant, unable to complete mammoth state construction projects due to its slavish adherence to the Nazi collectivist ideal.⁹⁸ As Josef Goebbels himself notes in his diary, "The American Republic was thriving, even as our economy was badly suffering."⁹⁹ The most important key to America's postwar success, however, is its libertarian hostility towards using the power of the state to promote an interventionist foreign policy. This view is made clear through the character of Whittmore (described as a "professional advocate of limited government"), who defends the American government's isolationist stance (inaugurated by Presidents Dewey and Taft) of remaining disengaged from German affairs.¹⁰⁰ As he says, "Nonintervention opens doors that an empire would close."¹⁰¹ By the end of the novel, the reform of the Nazi state is not brought about by any state power but by libertarian forces. Thus, the anarchist philosophy of Hilda Goebbels and her various comrades is credited with defeating the Third Reich's ideological fanatics, while free-market economic forces ultimately bring about the reform of the Third Reich from within.

The libertarian message of *Moon of Ice* reflected Linaweaver's own comparatively value-neutral view of Nazism. Overall, Linaweaver imagined a

Nazi wartime victory in relatively upbeat fashion. Like Lukacs, he represented America's isolationist decision not to fight against Nazism as well conceived. For one thing, Linaweaver seemed to share the common isolationist belief that the Third Reich never posed a serious threat to American interests. As Josef Goebbels notes in his diary at one point, "We never intended to subjugate decadent America anyway. Ours was a European vision."¹⁰² Moreover, by remaining distant from Europe's conflict, the United States profits handsomely. Even if American isolationism enables the Germans to achieve European hegemony, it nevertheless enables the nation to prosper economically and avoid the cold war. In the end, the United States merely has to sit back and wait while Germany, racked by internal division, eventually reforms itself from within. This optimistic conclusion reflected how cold-war fears could displace the memory of Nazism's horror. To be sure, Linaweaver recognized the evil character of Nazism, but he finally considered communism to be a far more threatening political movement. Linaweaver came to this position less as a result of any precise political events in the late 1970s than out of a general turn towards conservative politics, which itself was rooted in the broader tensions of the cold-war years, specifically his disagreement with American leftists over the conflict in Vietnam.¹⁰³ As a result of his conservative political turn, he came to the conclusion that Nazism hardly had a monopoly on evil. As Whittmore says at one juncture, "The Nazis are evil but no more so than the Communists."¹⁰⁴ In the end, however, *Moon of Ice* did not so much place Nazism and communism on a comparable footing as evil ideologies as relativize the horror of the former.

INTERVENTIONISM AS SELF-CRITICISM

While the neo-isolationist works of Russett, Lukacs, and Linaweaver constituted one type of self-critical response to the cold war, other accounts combined self-critique with support for interventionism. The first such narrative to appear was famed American science fiction writer Ward Moore's 1975 short story "A Class with Dr. Chang."¹⁰⁵ This bleak tale portrays the difficulties faced by a Chinese-American professor of history named Chang Liango-ho as he attempts to deliver a lecture on recent (allo)historical events to the surly students in his introductory history class at the University of California at Monterey. In Professor Chang's world, Nazi Germany has won World War II because of its shrewd decision to ally with China instead of Japan. Thanks to the "Berlin-Peiping Axis's" successful attack against, and conquest of, Japan, the bombing of

Pearl Harbor never takes place and the United States ends up sitting out the war as a neutral power. America's isolationist stance, however, has the adverse effect of leading the country down the path towards fascism. This outcome is made clear in the story by the angry reaction of Professor Chang's students to his sober historical survey. When he describes the Germans as "a people moved by their . . . mystical yearnings" and "fascinated . . . with the celebration of heroic death," students wearing "ALL" buttons (designating the "American Loyal League") drown him out with the cry "America First!" and respond that the Germans' success was due to their single-minded commitment to getting "rid of all the foreign elements – the Jews, Gypsies, Slavs and such who were corrupting . . . the racial will with their foreign philosophies."¹⁰⁶ Their fervor building, the students go on to vent their disgust at America's failure to enter the war, exclaiming, "We should have fought. Fought for the glory of fighting. Bled, sacrificed, gotten rid of all . . . the tainted blood, and come through as one people, totally united . . . so that every American felt and thought like every other American – 'ALL' for one and one for 'ALL.'"¹⁰⁷ At the tale's grim conclusion, the students' hatred boils over and they seize Dr. Chang and lynch him – together with a Jewish professor and a black teaching assistant – on an improvised gallows.

In writing his short story, Moore most likely intended to offer a critical commentary on what he believed to be worrisome social and political trends in the United States in the wake of the Vietnam War. A lifetime supporter of leftwing politics, Moore provided hints of a broader political agenda in his story by having the racist 'ALL' students use the same rhetorical phrases employed by conservative supporters of American involvement in Vietnam to attack leftwing members of the antiwar movement in the 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁰⁸ For example, one student decries "pink draft dodgers and flag haters" for their refusal to purge America of "foreign elements," while later on, a large group of students call for "an all-American university for all Americans" and begin rhythmically chanting, "Love it or leave!" "Love it or leave!"¹⁰⁹ By showing such phrases being used in racist fashion in alternate history, Moore clearly implied that their real historical usage during the Vietnam years was equally politically suspect, if not outright fascist. Moore's approach to the allohistorical scenario of a Nazi victory in World War II was thus quite novel. By showing America's failure to intervene in the war as having calamitous domestic political consequences, he sided with earlier writers like Kornbluth, Dick, and Shirer in defending American interventionism. Unlike them, however, he did so not to ratify the reality of the postwar world, but rather to condemn it.

A similar example of this trend, but from the opposite political camp, was provided several years later by a satirical piece that appeared in the October 1980 issue of the humor magazine *National Lampoon* entitled "If World War II Had Been Fought Like the War in Vietnam."¹¹⁰ Written by well-known humorist P. J. O'Rourke, along with Tod Carroll, and illustrated by Rick Geary, "If World War II Had Been Fought Like the War in Vietnam" was a comic-strip critique of what the authors perceived as the insufficiently vigorous American military campaign in Vietnam. In a series of fifteen illustrated panels, O'Rourke and Carroll expressed their primary contention that if the half-hearted policies in Vietnam had been used during World War II, the Nazis would have won the war. Beginning with the inadequate response of the United States to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (American military advisers are merely sent to Midway Island "to assist natives in strengthening their defense against possible Japanese aggression"), American involvement in World War II steadily grows. Troop morale remains low, however, especially following such events as the court-martial of an American bomber pilot for "murdering civilians in . . . Dresden," the visit to Germany of a high-profile "delegation of prominent peace activists," including Charles Lindbergh and Ezra Pound, to inspect bomb damage, and the eruption of antiwar protests at the 1944 Democratic National Convention. Before long, the United States pulls out of World War II with its tail between its legs, attempting to evacuate its diplomats from London as it would from Saigon in 1975. (At this point, the strip notes, "Unfortunately, helicopters have not been invented yet," and the diplomats are depicted waiting on the embassy roof for nothing.)¹¹¹ The tale sarcastically concludes by commenting, "German occupation of most territories was peaceful, although some people who were identified as having 'democratic tendencies' were temporarily placed in re-education centers" (here, a Jewish family is being directed to an extermination camp). And the last panel concludes, "Today, 36 years after the end of American involvement in the controversial Second World War, the country finds itself at peace, once again a unified nation" (depicted above this line is a Washington D.C. street scene full of advertisements for German-made products).

Like "A Class with Dr. Chang," "If World War II Had Been Fought Like the War in Vietnam" supported interventionism not to validate the past but to critique the present. The comic's grim depiction of a Nazi victory was intended less to remind readers of the evils of the 1940s than the mistakes of the 1960s and 1970s. This agenda is suggested by the staunch conservative reputation of the tale's best-known author, P. J. O'Rourke,

who clearly used the narrative to advance his belief that the American government had not been resolute enough in prosecuting the battle against communism in Vietnam.¹¹² For if the nation had fought in the cold war as decisively as it had in World War II, the United States would never have let the communist Vietcong emerge victorious. Overall, "If World War II Had Been Fought Like the War in Vietnam" illustrated the role of the cold war in normalizing the memory of Nazism. By drawing a parallel between the Vietcong and the Nazis, the piece dramatically effaced the considerable differences between them. Indeed, it universalized the significance of Nazism, shifting attention away from it for its own sake in order to direct it towards an unrelated cause. O'Rourke and Carroll's comparison of the two eras, in short, illustrated the declining specificity of World War II in the consciousness of some Americans at a time of new worries and concerns.

Another work that used the premise of a Nazi wartime victory for self-critical purposes was American writer William Overgard's 1980 novel *The Divide*.¹¹³ In many ways, *The Divide* was the last of its kind – a novel that followed in the tradition of Kornbluth, Shirer, Dick, and Norden by depicting the United States losing World War II to, and being brutally occupied by, the Germans and Japanese. Overgard, however, did not merely restate the premise of America under Nazi rule but used it in order to explore new concerns. Set in the year 1976, the novel's plot focuses on the emergence of a homegrown American resistance movement thirty years after the United States' humiliating defeat in World War II. A rough-and-tumble group, the resistance is led by the aged but crafty American, Wayne Kenneth Stubbs, and his adopted son, Cooper, both of whom spend the majority of the novel planning to sabotage a high-level political summit in the middle of the country (known as "the Divide") between the dottering Führer, Adolf Hitler, and the more gracefully aging Japanese premier, Hideki Tojo. Stubbs and Cooper attempt to enlist the cooperation of the last official representatives of the United States military who have hidden out for the last thirty years in the "National Redoubt" deep within a mine shaft in the Rocky Mountains. After decades stuck underground, the aged generals have lost the will to fight, but they permit the resisters to take with them the sole prototype of the American Manhattan project, a nuclear weapon created by the Jewish scientist, Isaac Blum, together with his daughter, Lisa. Stubbs and Cooper devise a bold plan to load the bomb onto an aging freight train and ram it into the armored railroad car carrying Hitler's entourage to meet Tojo on the Great Plains of Kansas. Yet the Nazis foil the plan, discover the bomb, and seem poised to

force a terrified Lisa to divulge the secrets of its creation. At the novel's conclusion, however, Stubbs and Cooper succeed in assassinating Tojo at the festivities (though not Hitler, who escapes) and sparking a general revolt of the crowd against the assembled Nazi dignitaries. This revolt culminates when Lisa, still in captivity, detonates the atom bomb in the presence of Hitler's designated successor, Rausch, killing him and everyone else for miles around.

The overall plot of *The Divide* superficially resembled the classic interventionist narratives of the early postwar years. Like these works, Overgard's novel supported interventionism in rendering the allohistorical origins and consequences of the Nazi triumph in World War II. *The Divide* directly blamed isolationism for the United States' defeat, portraying President Burton K. Wheeler (who defeats Roosevelt in the election of 1940) as having failed to prepare the nation for foreign invasion.¹⁴ The novel further supported the cause of interventionism by depicting the Nazis' occupation of the United States as inordinately brutal. Unlike the Japanese, who defeat the United States using relatively conventional means, the Germans use powerful new weapons – such as ME-262 fighter planes and deadly V-4 missiles – to devastate Washington D.C. and Kansas City (the seat of Wheeler's government in exile). After dividing up the country along the Rocky Mountains into two occupation zones, the Nazis complete the Final Solution of the Jewish question and proceed to exterminate other undesirables, especially Native Americans, who are targeted in the "Great Herding" and turned into soap and dog food at a massive 1,000-acre extermination facility at Cedar Bluff, Kansas.¹⁵ Only a certain percentage of minorities are permitted to survive: several thousand sterilized blacks who labor at the Cedar Bluff facility and even fewer Native Americans, for the purpose of anthropological study.¹⁶

Despite resembling earlier alternate histories in its forbidding portrayal of Nazi-occupied America, however, *The Divide* differed in significant ways. The most notable was its avoidance of black-and-white depictions of evil German perpetrators and virtuous American victims. The novel painted an extremely unflattering portrait of the American people under Nazi occupation. Instead of resisting the Nazis, the American people largely collaborate. At their worst, the Americans are depicted as inveterate racists who support the Nazis' agenda of ethnic cleansing. As the novel's protagonist, Cooper, recalls at one point, "In the beginning, the racial purification program had been resisted, but . . . the great mass of surviving Americans were glad that the country had been cleansed of minorities and misfits . . . How many times had he heard the phrase *Hitler was right about*

one thing . . . ”¹¹⁷ Moreover, most Americans tolerate the Nazis’ crimes in exchange for the unseemly motive of economic gain. The Nazis’ decision to “create a showcase of National Socialism” by pumping billions of marks into reconstructing the economy of the eastern zone largely succeeds in earning them the political quiescence of the American public.¹¹⁸ Commenting upon the political apathy of the American masses, Cooper exclaims:

They’re fat and happy down there, they got jobs and Volkswagens. Shoot! They’ve even convinced themselves that it was all for the best – they’ve accepted the elimination of other races, ‘dangerous’ minorities, political ‘criminals’ – anything that don’t include them – euthanasia, sterilization . . . all that stuff – as long as it ain’t used on them – they’ve forgot the Constitution and the rights of man and the U.S. way of life. It ain’t the enemy we got to instruct in freedom . . . it’s our own people.¹¹⁹

The Divide’s self-critical portrait of the American people under Nazi occupation was most likely intended to serve as a pessimistic commentary on the American malaise of the late 1970s. Overgard’s personal background suggests that he would have been especially disaffected by the nation’s postwar decline. A longtime novelist, cartoonist, and screenwriter, Overgard belonged to the generation that lived through World War II – in his case, serving as a sailor in the United States navy during the years 1944–45.¹²⁰ Having witnessed the United States’ heroic achievements in the past, Overgard may have projected its allohistorical moral and political collapse under Nazism in order to criticize the nation’s decline in his real, historical present.

At the same time, the novel also expressed its author’s hope for national recovery. Overgard exhibited an unambiguous patriotic streak in his writing that placed him on the conservative – if not libertarian – wing of the political spectrum. In many ways, his novel was a traditional celebration of American individualism. Overgard’s depiction of most Americans as self-interested collaborators was meant as a foil to highlight the efforts of those few patriotic Americans who intended to “relight the torch of liberty.”¹²¹

The Divide’s valorization of ordinary Americans went hand in hand, moreover, with a strong distrust of the official representatives of the state. It was revealing that the established military brass continue to hide out impotently in their mountain bunker, while the more virile average citizens undertake the heroic struggle against the enemy. Finally, Overgard’s patriotism was obvious at the novel’s end when Stubbs, having just witnessed the detonation of the atomic bomb, enthusiastically exclaims,

"We got 'em! We got the damn Germans and Japs! Hell, we got 'em all! . . . We built it! Made in America! The good old U.S. of A!"¹²² Just as this passage clearly expressed the desire of the novel's protagonist to restore the nation's wounded pride, so too did it likely express a similar wish on the part of its author. In the end, to be sure, Overgard offered no panaceas, only a sober message of the necessity of tireless struggle. Even though *The Divide* concludes with the American resistance dealing a severe blow to the Nazi occupation, the Germans remain strong. Not only does Hitler survive the attempt to assassinate him, his successors are lined up and ready to go. In the novel's last lines, Germany's most highly decorated war veteran, Hans Loftner, is shown stroking the pregnant belly of his wife – Hitler's daughter, Ilse – who, the reader is led to assume, will shortly give birth to the future Führer. In short, the struggle against the Germans – like the struggle to revive the spirit of America – has only just begun.

Overgard's critical portrayal of America in the wake of a Nazi victory in World War II was echoed several years later by another biting tale, science fiction writer David Dvorkin's 1987 novel *Budspy*.¹²³ Yet where Overgard criticized American decline during the cold war from the political right, Dvorkin did so from the political left. Set in the year 1988, *Budspy* was a spy thriller that focused on the cloak-and-dagger exploits of its protagonist, Chic Western. Chic is a high-ranking employee in the so-called Ombudsman Commission, an agency founded by American President Joseph McCarthy in 1957 to root out corruption within the Federal Government. It is in the capacity as a "budspy," or "budman," that Western is sent to Nazi Germany to investigate the leak of sensitive military secrets from the United States embassy in Berlin to the Soviet Union. Although Chic is of Jewish descent and has negative feelings about Germany (his parents were Polish Jews named Weintraub who survived the war), his concerns are quickly dispelled soon after his arrival in Berlin, for Nazi Germany in the year 1988 is the world's pre-eminent superpower. In strolling through the nation's capital, Chic is awestruck by the monumentality of its architecture, the healthy appearance of its blonde-haired, blue-eyed citizens, and the general atmosphere of orderliness. As he learns from his German acquaintances, the nation's success is largely due to the efforts of Germany's ruler of forty years, Kurt Nebel. The onetime secretary to Martin Bormann, Nebel succeeds Hitler after the Führer's death on the eastern front near Stalingrad in 1943 thanks to his skillful negotiation of a separate peace with the British and Americans that enables the Nazis to defeat the Soviets and win the war in Europe. In the wake of the Nazis' victory, the Reich under Nebel's leadership undergoes a radical

metamorphosis, abandoning "the more extreme and distasteful ideas of the older generation" and adopting "the milder, technocratic, cosmopolitan world-view of . . . Albert Speer."¹²⁴ The most significant development in this broader process is the Nazis' turn away from antisemitism. Not only has Nebel's government officially stated its regret about the extermination of 10–12 million Jews during the war, it has backed the creation of the state of Israel as a refuge for Holocaust survivors and a strategic base to protect German oil interests in the Middle East. Impressed by these achievements, Chic's initial caution about Germany gradually yields to moderate enthusiasm. Tolerant, prosperous, and powerful, the nation of 300 million people, he begins to think to himself, may well in fact be "the Master Race."¹²⁵

Yet, as *Budspy*'s narrative unfolds, Chic slowly begins to recognize that the brilliant appearance of the Reich hides a more sordid reality. As a result of his burgeoning relationship with his anti-Nazi American girlfriend, Judy, Chic comes to learn of the existence of an underground resistance movement known as the "Yellow Rose," whose members are involved in agitating against the regime. Through Judy, Chic personally comes to know some of the German dissidents, who alert him to the cruel exploitation of Slavic forced laborers in Germany and the continued resistance of Soviet partisans in German-occupied Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, through his own sleuthing in the American embassy, Chic discovers a hidden letter in his office suggesting that Hitler's death in 1943 was in fact part of a larger assassination plot engineered by Nebel. Yet despite unearthing the lies that underpin the Nazi regime, Western does not stray from his mission to expose the leak at the embassy, which turns out to be the work of his on-and-off-again girlfriend Judy and her co-conspirators in the Yellow Rose, whom he promptly betrays to the secret police. Although he effectively sends Judy and her colleagues to their deaths, Chic displays minimal regret for the consequences of his actions, convinced, as he is, that his work is helping to purify America. Only at the end of *Budspy* does he realize that his cooperation with evil has corrupted him, and he resolves to atone for his sins. At the novel's jarring climax, set twenty-four years later, in the year 2012, a television broadcast of the sixty-ninth anniversary celebrations of Hitler's death from the Adolf-Hitler-Platz in Berlin reveals that the man presiding over the festivities, the Führer of the Reich, is none other than Chic Western himself. Having symbolically changed his name to Karl Busse (a name denoting repentance), Chic has taken control of Germany in order "to systematically destroy . . . [it]" by deliberately undermining the continuing war against the Soviets. Through these actions, the onetime

budspy and now Führer of Nazi Germany, Chic Western, hopes to vindicate his life's work by proving that cooperating with evil can ultimately lead to good.

In its imaginative rendering of a Nazi wartime victory, *Budspy* submitted a leftwing critique of contemporary America. At first glance, this agenda could easily be missed, owing to the novel's resemblance to the more isolationist accounts of Lukacs and Linaweaver. *Budspy*, after all, also showed the victorious Third Reich to be a relatively moderate place ruled by rational technocrats instead of fanatical ideologues. Yet Dvorkin did not present a positive image of Nazi Germany to vindicate America's allohistorical neutrality in the war but to condemn it. *Budspy*, indeed, portrayed the American government's decision not to fight the Germans as calamitous. In the text, the reason the United States and Britain make a separate peace with the Nazis is their fear of communism (which becomes acute when the Soviets nearly defeat the Germans at Stalingrad in 1943).¹²⁶ But giving in to fears of communism has far-reaching consequences, for it soon brings Joseph McCarthy to the presidency, whose policy of cozying up to the Nazi regime gradually ushers in a period of steep national decline. Under the rule of McCarthy and later conservative administrations (the current president in 1988 is named Helms – presumably Jesse), the United States succumbs to the ills of poverty, homelessness, and race riots.¹²⁷ America's economic health lags behind that of Germany as well.¹²⁸ The root of the problem is suggested at one point by Chic's girlfriend, Judy, who proclaims, "We are corrupted by our accommodation with evil."¹²⁹ This accommodation, Dvorkin suggests, represents a betrayal of fundamental American values. As Judy tells Chic, "Remember what America was supposed to be? . . . The land of freedom, the place where people went to escape Old-World oppression? Look at it nowadays. We're just a minor-league version of the Reich."¹³⁰ Compared with the ills of contemporary America, Nazi Germany actually looks quite good. Chic's admiration for the Nazi Reich, in fact, largely stems from his disgust with America's social problems; it is partly due to his frustration with the poverty, filth, homelessness, and drug abuse of the American capital, Washington D.C., that Western so admires Berlin.¹³¹ Overall, Chic envies the Germans' adherence to the ideals of National Socialism precisely because America seems to be drifting away from "the ideals of her founders."¹³² By the time he is back in the States he is so distraught by the sight of its forlorn cities that he is moved to exclaim, "What went wrong with America?"¹³³

In writing *Budspy*, Dvorkin was partly inspired by political goals. A self-described liberal, Dvorkin portrayed the victorious Reich as superior to the

United States in order to criticize the adverse impact of the cold war on American society.¹³⁴ Having written *Budspy* during the Reagan era, Dvorkin was partly targeting some of the worrisome social and political developments of the 1980s. But more broadly, he was taking aim at the many political and moral compromises made in accordance with cold-war anticommunism. As Dvorkin has noted, "I was using . . . alternate history . . . to comment on the America of the time, but . . . it's a more longterm, general problem. Even before Viet Nam . . . thrust itself on our awareness . . . [I was] upset by the general American pattern of supporting evil regimes because we thought they were better than the alternative."¹³⁵ Dvorkin's present-day political concerns obviously shaped the plot of his alternate history. Just as anticommunism led the United States to undertake questionable alliances in the cold war, so too does America's anti-communist-based alliance of convenience with Nazi Germany lead to its allohistorical decline. In the end, the Nazis emerge as victorious not so much through military successes (though they achieve those as well) as "by infecting the world and making the West into an etiolated copy of the Reich."¹³⁶

In utilizing the scenario of a victorious Nazi Reich to criticize American political trends in the 1980s, however, Dvorkin ended up producing a strikingly non-judgmental portrait of Nazism. His unfavorable comparison of America with Nazi Germany was intended to critique the former, but it inevitably worked to relativize the evil of the latter. To be sure, this result was far from Dvorkin's primary intention. The writer's Jewish background gave him little reason to be sympathetic to, let alone serve as an apologist for, Nazism.¹³⁷ Yet his portrait of the Third Reich did partly reflect a deliberate attempt to provoke. As a writer who has openly declared his ambivalent sense of Jewish identity, Dvorkin was particularly eager to challenge what he viewed as the undue centrality of the Holocaust in American Jewish consciousness.¹³⁸ Dvorkin rejected the widespread notion among many American Jews that the Holocaust was unique (he insisted that "there were other[s]" as well) and declared that "it's past time for Jews to forget."¹³⁹ His representation of the Nazis as less than absolute evil (epitomized by the regime's apology for the Holocaust and its establishment of a Jewish state in Israel), therefore, can be seen as part of his desire to challenge the postwar view among Jews that barbarism was predominantly a German (as opposed to a universal human) trait. Dvorkin's rendering of the victorious Reich, however, did not merely reflect his iconoclastic tendencies. It also reflected a more personal attempt to work through what he has described as his "fascination" with its aesthetic allure.¹⁴⁰ In

confessing to this fascination, of course, Dvorkin was hardly alone, for his exploration of the Reich's aura of power mirrored the same psychological dynamics that underpinned the Hitler Wave of the 1970s and 1980s. While it is impossible to determine whether it was Dvorkin's desire to universalize or aestheticize the Nazi era that was more influential in the making of his novel, it is clear that both were involved in making *Budspy* one of the most normalized tales of the period.

Yet even *Budspy* was trumped by the most anomalous, and yet perhaps the most telling, allohistorical account of the period – a brief comedy sketch aired on the NBC television show *Saturday Night Live* entitled “What If: Überman.”¹⁴¹ Unlike the other narratives of the era, the sketch took no stand on the issue of interventionism or isolationism. Instead, it was most significant for reducing the premise of a Nazi wartime victory to the stuff of humor. Originally broadcast on January 27, 1979, “What If: Überman” portrays a television talk show called “What If?” that is devoted to the weekly exploration of what its host, Joan Face (played by Jane Curtin), describes as “a hypothetical question about a specific historical event.” As the sketch opens, the host introduces her panel of experts, Brigadier-General Kevin Temple (played by Garrett Morris) and Wellesley College history professor Eileen Houton (played by Gilda Radner) and invites them to address the question of the evening: “What If Superman grew up in Germany instead of America?” In short order, the show answers the question by staging a dramatic re-enactment of Nazi Germany winning World War II. The re-enactment commences in Hitler's Berlin Chancellery, where a young clerk in the Ministry of Propaganda by the name of Klaus Kent (played by Dan Aykroyd), together with his colleagues Lois Lanehoff (played by Laraine Newman) and Jimmy Olsteyn (played by Al Franken), is ushered in to meet the Führer (played by guest host, Michael Palin) who has just concluded a meeting with his top generals. After some humorous banter, Kent uses his X-ray vision to notice the presence of a bomb inside a suitcase left in the room by one of the generals in the attempt to assassinate the Führer. At this moment, Kent ducks into a nearby closet, strips off his clothes and leaps out into the room again proclaiming, “I am Überman! I . . . fight for untruth, injustice, and the Nazi way!” (see Figure 9). Thereafter, he shields Hitler by jumping onto the bomb, exposes Jimmy Olsteyn as a Jew by using his X-ray vision to look through his pants, and motivates the amazed Führer to declare, “What an amazing stroke of luck. We might win this war after all!” Within a brief span of time, indeed, Überman helps the Nazis win World War II, as is revealed by a series of newspaper headlines from the Nazi newspaper *Der*

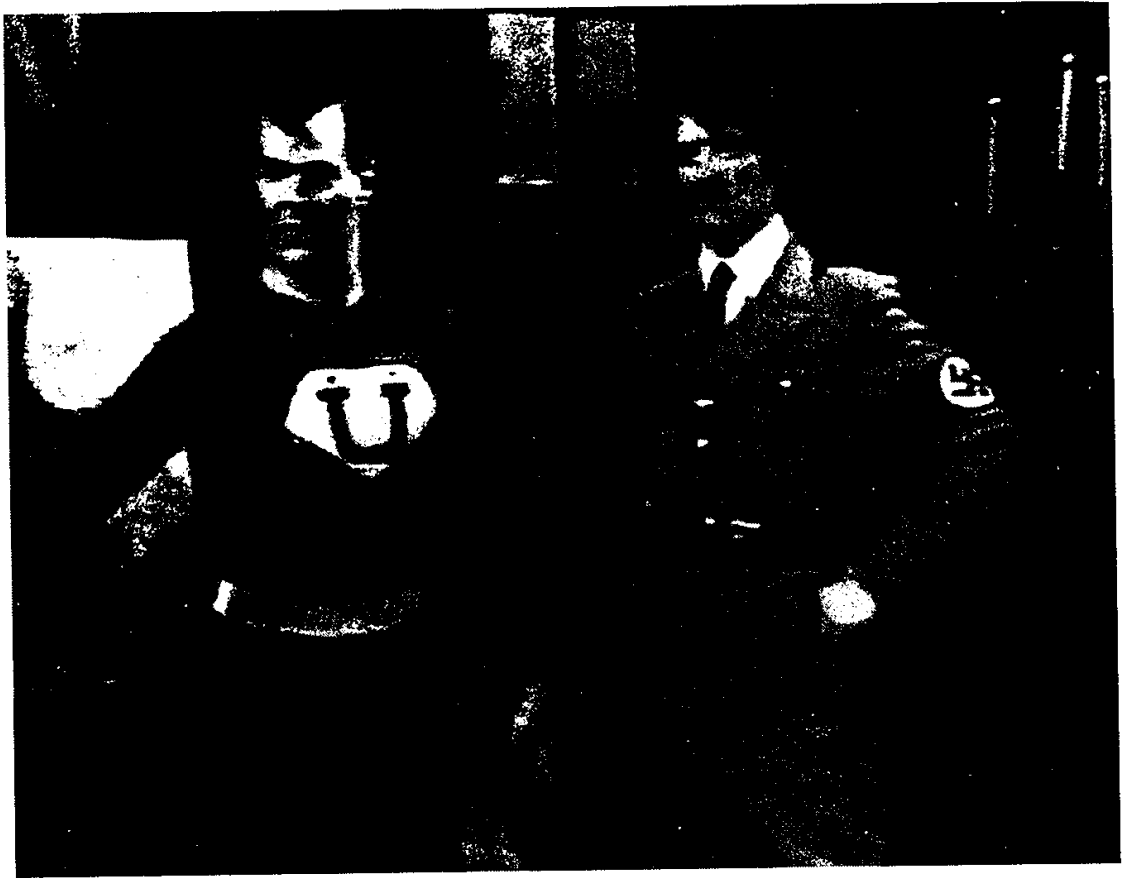


Figure 9 Überman (Dan Aykroyd) and Adolf Hitler (Michael Palin) in the Berlin Reich Chancellery in the *Saturday Night Live* skit "What If: Überman," originally broadcast on January 27, 1979.

Daily Planet, superimposed over documentary newsreel footage, which read: "Überman Takes Stalingrad in 5 Minutes: Diverts Volga," "Überman Rounds Up Two Million Jews: Total Past 6 Million," and "Überman Kills Every Person in England, U.S. Next."

The significance of the *Saturday Night Live* episode had less to do with its schematic plot than with its transformation of a Nazi wartime victory into the subject of comedy. The skit's writer, Al Franken, has noted that he wrote it primarily to entertain.¹⁴² But the very ability to poke fun at a scenario long regarded as a nightmare attested to the increasingly relaxed perspective towards the Nazi era in American consciousness. Indeed, "What If: Überman" proved that the scenario of a Nazi-ruled world no longer had to serve moral or didactic purposes, but could be used for pure entertainment. Viewing the Nazis as funny, of course, was more imaginable during an era in which they had been displaced as the epitome of evil by the Soviet Union. Such a sketch would have been impossible twenty years earlier, when current events revived Western fears of the Germans. In short, then, while the

comedy sketch made no references whatsoever to the cold war, its presence can nevertheless be sensed in the blithe manner in which the old avatar of evil, namely Nazism, was reduced to an off-color joke. The *Saturday Night Live* sketch was an exception in its era. Most allohistorical depictions of a Nazi-ruled world would not be devoted to entertainment but rather to political critique. Both, however, illustrated the role of the cold war in fostering a less morally judgmental view of the Nazi era.

RECEPTION

The generally positive response of readers and critics to the alternate histories that appeared after the 1970s demonstrated a willingness to accept their normalized depictions of a Nazi wartime victory. Of all the works of this period, the most widely praised was David Dvorkin's *Budspy*. Hailed by one reviewer for its "subtlety" and "insight," *Budspy* received the most glowing review from famed American science fiction writer Norman Spinrad, who, in 1988, called it a "masterful novel" that was "superior to just about everything short of *The Man in the High Castle* itself."¹⁴³ Tellingly, much of the praise singled out the novel's nuanced depiction of the Nazi regime. Thus one critic commended the novel for depicting "a successful Third Reich . . . more evenhandedly," while another declared that "through [the protagonist] . . . we come to admire the new Reich."¹⁴⁴ But it was Spinrad who, more than any other reviewer, analyzed the significance of the novel's unconventional approach to its subject. As he wrote:

Dvorkin's Nazi Germany is *alluring* . . . to the reader . . . He subtly gives us a perhaps somewhat uncomfortable understanding of its attractions as well as its horrors which raises our understanding of the real Nazi Germany to a new level. For after all, the central enigma of the Third Reich is not why we find its memory repellent, but how a whole nation could have been seduced by its charms.

Dvorkin's evolved Nazi Germany has genuine virtues. The most monstrous abuses are long past. It is the highest civilization on earth in terms of science, technology . . . [and] art . . .

Dvorkin gives . . . us an evolved Nazi Germany that, like all evolved societies, is a mixture of vice and virtue, visionary impulse and decay, national pride and national guilt, good and evil. Making the trenchant point thereby that *no* culture is really a black-and-white cartoon reality.¹⁴⁵

Such favorable comments indicated a wider willingness after the mid-1970s to depart from the early postwar era's understanding of Nazism.

The response to the period's other works was more mixed, but they too earned enough critical support to further illustrate this trend. Brad

Linaweaver's novel, *Moon of Ice*, received favorable blurbs from science fiction legends Robert Heinlein and Isaac Asimov and was hailed as a "fine" novel that provided a "complex, credible look into . . . the Nazi era."¹⁴⁶ Bruce Russett's *No Clear and Present Danger* was praised as "a model of logic and clarity" as well as a work of analytical "sophistication" that contained "relevant lessons."¹⁴⁷ Both works, it should be noted, also earned skeptical responses. One reviewer of *Moon of Ice* criticized its libertarian subtext as heavy-handed, and a reviewer of *No Clear and Present Danger* found its central proposition to be "repellent."¹⁴⁸ Such comments revealed that readers at the time were hardly unanimous in accepting a less morally judgmental view of the Third Reich. Yet, aside from the works of Dvorkin, Linaweaver, and Russett, few of the other works of the 1970s and 1980s generated any negative response. The lone exception was the *Saturday Night Live* sketch "What If: Überman," which received isolated expressions of complaint.¹⁴⁹ On the whole, the relatively scant criticism of the era's works suggests a growing receptivity of audiences to their normalized representation of a Nazi wartime victory.

ALTERNATE HISTORIES SINCE THE END OF THE COLD WAR, 1989–PRESENT

After the end of the cold war in 1989, alternate histories of a Nazi triumph in World War II changed still further. The works of this period reflected the complex realities of the post-cold-war world. The fall of communism was a joyous event that, in much of the West, encouraged the optimistic belief that liberalism had triumphed and ideological struggle – if not history itself – had come to an end. This sense of triumphalism was bolstered in the 1990s by the patriotic surge in attention towards World War II, which was occasioned by the arrival of the fiftieth anniversary of its central events and marked by the appearance of such bestselling books as Stephen Ambrose's *Band of Brothers* (1992) and Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation* (New York, 1998), blockbuster films like Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and the commissioning of the national World War II memorial on the Mall in Washington D.C. in 1995.¹⁵⁰ Yet however much Americans in these years embraced a nostalgic view of the recent past, they simultaneously displayed growing concerns about the present. In foreign affairs, the eruption of the Persian Gulf War and the Yugoslav Civil War revealed that the end of superpower tensions by no means heralded a new era of peace. Within the United States, meanwhile, the disappearance of the traditional external enemy of the Soviet Union allowed internal

problems to assume greater visibility and intensity. During the first half of the 1990s, as the nation was buffeted by economic recession, urban riots, and fierce debates over multiculturalism, many began to speak worriedly about the "disuniting of America."¹⁵¹ The end of the cold war, in short, ushered in an ambiguous era poised between optimism and pessimism.

The alternate histories of a Nazi wartime victory that appeared in the years after 1989 directly reflected this ambiguous atmosphere. Most accounts during this period exhibited a return to moralism. In contrast to the works of the 1970s, whose value-neutral depiction of a Nazi victory in World War II reflected a self-critical view of American interventionism, most of the narratives after 1989 vindicated American intervention by portraying a Nazi triumph as a calamity. The new triumphalistic streak of these accounts largely reflected the euphoria produced by the victory over communism and expressed the conviction that history had ultimately worked out for the best. Yet the optimistic post-cold-war climate paradoxically contributed to the broader process of normalization as well. For while most accounts portrayed the Nazis' wartime triumph as a disaster, they broke new ground by depicting the victorious Reich eventually becoming a weakened and highly vulnerable entity. Some, indeed, went so far as to show Nazi rule being challenged, if not overthrown, by anti-Nazi resistance movements. This new tendency of American accounts to embrace happy endings reflected the obvious influence of the Soviet dictatorship's collapse – an epochal event that provided writers with a model for what might have happened eventually to the Nazi empire after its military triumph. At the same time, the fact that these narratives painted a comparatively mild portrait of the victorious Nazi regime reflected the fading memory of the Third Reich's historical evil.

Not all works of alternate history in this period, however, portrayed a Nazi triumph in World War II in self-congratulatory fashion. Indeed, alternate histories of a more self-critical variety continued to appear, as they had in the 1970s. The majority of these accounts used the occasion of the cold war's end to once more question America's decision to intervene against the Nazis in World War II. These neo-isolationist tales insisted that the Third Reich had never constituted a threat to American interests and that the United States should never have fought against it in the first place. Had the United States only refrained from doing so, the terrible course of postwar history – most notably, the long struggle against Soviet communism – could have been avoided. In making this claim, these narratives expressed some of the pessimism of the post-cold-war era. At the same time, they illustrated the fading horror of the Nazi era in the consciousness of some

Americans. Not all self-critical accounts in this period, however, reflected feelings about the cold war. One major work in particular used the scenario of a Nazi wartime victory to criticize domestic trends in the post-9/11 world. In so doing, it highlighted new ways in which the scenario may evolve in the future.

THE RETURN OF TRIUMPHALISM

One of the first works that illustrated the era's return to triumphalism was Leo Rutman's 1990 novel *Clash of Eagles*.¹⁵³ In many ways, *Clash of Eagles* was a throwback to the accounts of the war years. Like *Invasion or Lightning in the Night*, it described the Nazis' conquest of the east coast and midwest along with a lengthy account of life under occupation. Set in Nazi-ruled New York City, the novel's 530-page plot portrays the new Nazi order in familiar bleak terms, featuring American civilians being executed in Central Park, tortured by the Gestapo, and subjected to all manner of sexual degradation by assorted Nazi sadists. At the same time, though, most of the novel chronicles the successful mobilization of resistance to Nazi rule. Although Rutman hardly idealizes the resisters – portraying them as composed of rough-and-tumble Irish nationalists, two-bit American crooks, assorted mafia dons, and average working-class joes – he portrays their rebellion against the Nazis as quite effective. The novel was notable for being the first postwar account since C. M. Kornbluth's "Two Dooms" to conclude with a happy ending. *Clash of Eagles* offers numerous scenes of Americans avenging themselves against their German oppressors before finally concluding with the lines, "The city ran riot. All its children and its people. They were surging from Harlem to the Bronx, from Coney Island to Washington Heights . . . Torches burned brightly in the night . . . held proudly by the people of New York. The Americans had taken their city back."¹⁵⁴

In closing with this upbeat ending, Rutman's novel exhibited many of the ambiguities of the post-cold-war era. Its portrayal of the brutal Nazi occupation of America clearly vindicated the United States' real historical decision to intervene in the war against Hitler's Germany in 1941. Yet Rutman's depiction of Nazi vulnerability suggested the possible influence of the Soviet Empire's collapse. The author has denied that his novel was in any way "ideological" and noted that it was mostly intended to be an entertaining drama. Whatever the case may be, *Clash of Eagles* was notable for its comparatively de-demonized portrayal of the Nazis. Unlike previous writers such as Dick and Shirer, who emphasized the significant danger



Figure 10 The Nazi regime's nuclear-bomb-equipped stealth bomber in Stephen Cornwell's 1993 film *The Philadelphia Experiment II*.

posed by the Germans to the United States in World War II, Rutman confidently insisted that "Hitler could not have conquered the East Coast, much less America."¹⁵⁵ Of course, Rutman was writing at a time in the late 1980s in which most Americans viewed Germany as a reliable ally, in contrast to the situation in the early 1960s, when such confidence was in shorter supply. While Rutman still portrayed the scenario of a Nazi victory in World War II in moralistic terms, therefore, his depiction of the Germans as eventually succumbing to American counter-attacks reflected how the passage of time had diminished the sense of Nazism's horror.

The same upbeat tone seen in *Clash of Eagles* was visible in another work that appeared three years later, Stephen Cornwell's 1993 film *The Philadelphia Experiment II*. In this film (a sequel to the 1984 film *The Philadelphia Experiment*), a super-secret experiment of the United States military to test newly developed teleportation technology goes horribly wrong when it accidentally sends a stealth bomber equipped with nuclear weapons back in time to Nazi Germany in the year 1943 (see Figure 10). The result of this snafu is the catastrophic alteration of history, for the



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Nazis use the bomber to nuke Washington D.C. (killing some 15 million people) and defeat the United States in World War II. Most of *The Philadelphia Experiment II* is set fifty years later, in Nazi-occupied Southern California, and focuses on the attempt of its protagonist, an unfortunate naval officer named David Herdeg (played by Brad Johnson), to extricate himself from the alternate world into which he has somehow been propelled. Compared with *Clash of Eagles*, the film is less heavy-handed in depicting the brutality of life under the victorious Nazi regime. The worst that Americans experience under Nazi rule is forced labor and a steady barrage of propaganda messages ("health, hygiene, happiness") administered by the state. Little of the outright terror seen in prior decades' accounts is visible in the film. Ultimately, indeed, the film's priorities lay elsewhere. Like *Clash of Eagles*, *The Philadelphia Experiment II* was mostly concerned with offering viewers a redemptive ending. Thus, at the film's conclusion, Herdeg plays the hero when he outwits his opponents, teleports himself back to Nazi Germany, and destroys the stealth bomber before it can take off and attack the United States. Having dramatically corrected the course of (alternate) history, Herdeg is quickly sucked back through time to his own world and is reunited with his overjoyed son, a Little League baseball player who, in the film's final scene, provides the hokey redemptive gesture by hitting a home run.

With this happy ending, *The Philadelphia Experiment II* resembled *Clash of Eagles* in ratifying the real historical record of American interventionism in World War II. In many ways, *The Philadelphia Experiment II* clearly expressed the buoyant climate of the early 1990s. Produced after the United States' victory in the cold war catapulted it to unrivalled global pre-eminence, the film differed from the triumphalistic tales of the early postwar years, whose proximity to the Nazi era and lingering concerns about the Germans lent them a bleaker character. At the same time, however, the film can also be seen as responding to, and providing consolation for, those domestic problems in the United States that persisted in the wake of communism's collapse. Herdeg expresses this presentist subtext explicitly when he attempts to convince one of the government officials responsible for altering history to correct his mistake by saying, "There's a different world . . . with a different history. I was just there yesterday. It's better than it is here . . . It's not perfect, it's got its problems, but not like this. It's a nightmare here." For a nation that was just emerging out of economic recession, race riots, and culture wars, this message was no doubt appealing. The film's portrayal of an alternate world inferior to that of contemporary reality clearly vindicated the latter as the preferable alternative.



Figure 11 The aging Führer, Adolf Hitler (Rudolf Fleischer), looks on in grim resignation as American President Joseph Kennedy's motorcade bypasses his Berlin reviewing stand in Christopher Menaul's 1994 film *Fatherland*.

The American penchant for happy endings continued with the release of Christopher Menaul's 1994 cinematic adaptation of Robert Harris's novel *Fatherland*. First broadcast on the American cable network HBO, the film was notable for adding a much more redemptive ending than the book. Harris had originally concluded his novel on a grim note by critically portraying isolationist President Joseph Kennedy visiting Berlin to improve relations with Hitler. By contrast, the television version portrays the protagonist, Charlie MacGuire (played by Miranda Richardson), interrupting Kennedy's imminent meeting with Hitler by rushing up to his limousine and providing him with incontrovertible photographic evidence about the Nazis' genocidal crimes against the Jews. An aghast Kennedy then motions the limousine driver to continue driving past the waiting Führer, who ends up getting snubbed by the head of the world's other superpower (see Figure 11). While the reasons for this change in plot can only be guessed at, the fact that other Hollywood studios had found *Fatherland*'s original ending too depressing (and had insisted that it be made more upbeat in order for it to get produced) no doubt was involved.¹⁵⁵ The ending also dovetailed with the broader tendency in the

wake of the cold war's conclusion for Americans to view their own past from a more triumphalistic and less self-critical perspective. Released at a time of great commemorative attention to the fiftieth anniversary of the events of World War II, the film expressed the abundant patriotism that existed within the nation about its role in helping to keep the world safe for democracy. By portraying the Third Reich as an evil empire (and underplaying the likelihood that any American government would have collaborated with it), *Fatherland* provided a self-congratulatory vindication of America's intervention in the war.

Following *Fatherland*, the most prominent work of alternate history to partake of the renewed patriotic trend appeared one year later with the publication of then Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Newt Gingrich's novel *1945*.¹⁵⁶ Co-written with science fiction writer William Forstchen, *1945* portrays a world in which Hitler's temporary elimination from power (due to serious injuries suffered in a plane crash on December 6, 1941) keeps the Germans from declaring war on the United States and, in turn, enables them to concentrate all their attention on defeating the Soviet Union, which they do in 1943. Given that the United States defeat the Japanese in the same span of time, a showdown between the world's two superpowers becomes merely a matter of time. Finally, in 1945 the treacherous Nazis decide to defeat their last remaining enemy once and for all. Aware that the Germans are considerably lagging behind the Americans in atomic weapons research and development, a recovered Hitler orders a pre-emptive strike against the American research facility at Oak Ridge, Tennessee (as well as against the facility at Los Alamos, New Mexico) to decisively render the enemy powerless to defend itself against the vastly superior conventional weapons of the Nazis. Led by the reliable villain, the malicious Austrian SS killer, Otto Skorzeny, an elite team of Nazi assassins, supported by a fleet of long-range German bombers, penetrates deep into American territory and destroys the Oak Ridge facility in a fiery inferno. Only due to the heroic efforts of the novel's protagonist, an American naval intelligence officer named Jim Martel, are the Americans able to learn of the attack soon enough to organize a semblance of resistance that prevents the assault from being a total fiasco. The novel's final outcome, however, is highly ambiguous – on its final page appear the words: "to be continued." Still, while the ending is never spelled out, *1945* implies that the Americans face a dire situation in the wake of the German attack. Not only do they now trail the Germans in the race to develop the bomb, but they lag far behind in conventional weapons capacity and have no capable allies to help them face the Nazi menace.

In its ominous description of the Nazi threat to the United States, *1945* emphatically endorsed the United States' real historical decision to fight Nazi Germany. Throughout the novel, Gingrich and Forstchen criticized isolationism. The main supporter of isolationism – the chief of staff to President Andrew Harrison, John Mayhew – is depicted as morally corrupt and treasonous. Meanwhile, the President himself muses at one point, "Were it not for Hitler . . . isolationism would look pretty good. As things were, he had to run with the internationalist crowd."¹⁵⁷ In the end, the evil of Nazism makes intervention an obvious choice. As Winston Churchill puts it to a vacillating President Harrison at one point in the novel, "There is no clearer enemy than Hitler."¹⁵⁸ At the same time, the authors justified interventionism by underscoring Nazi brutality. The American hero, Jim, proclaims that "Hitler and his scum . . . [are] evil incarnate," and the American General George Marshall adds, "We are in a de facto state of war with a power that makes the Japanese Empire at its height look like a Gilbert and Sullivan threat."¹⁵⁹

Gingrich and Forstchen's motives in defending the historical struggle against Nazism spanned a range of political and personal concerns.¹⁶⁰ As was true of the Anglo-American accounts of the 1960s, portraying the Nazis as the incarnation of evil helped accentuate the heroic quality of America's struggle against them. It was significant that *1945* valorized the American resistance. When the Germans invade Oak Ridge, local World War I veterans, led by none other than war hero Alvin York, help repel the German assault, rescue Oak Ridge's atomic scientists, and preserve the nation's hopes of restarting the Manhattan project in time to defend the homeland against future German attacks. The desire to glorify America's struggle against the Nazis was further suggested by the fact that *1945* denied the Soviets a role in defeating them. By having the Soviet Union conclude an armistice with Germany and bow out of the conflict in 1943, Gingrich and Forstchen spared the Americans the obligation of having to share the credit for defeating Nazism with its real historical communist ally and instead give it the exclusive glory of doing so alone.¹⁶¹ As Jim says at one point, "We [Americans] are all that stands between the world and Hitler."¹⁶² This fantasy scenario partly reflected a smug sense of satisfaction about the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war.

This sense of triumphalism, to be sure, was not unalloyed. Written in a period of the early 1990s in which conservatives were bemoaning the threat to American values by big government, multiculturalism, and other "liberal" dangers, *1945* partly expressed the era's conservative cultural pessimism. At one juncture, the authors charge the federal government under

Roosevelt with incompetence due to its misguided decision to pass gun-control legislation in Oak Ridge, thus making its citizens more vulnerable to Nazi attack.¹⁶³ Still, *1945* was less of a libertarian rant against big government than a patriotic celebration of the American character. As shown by the vigorous defense against the Germans mounted by the local inhabitants of Oak Ridge, *1945* seemed to say that, even when challenged, ordinary Americans exhibited a strong capacity for valor. Furthermore, at the end of the novel, the authors affirmed the important role of the central government in choosing the best and brightest to devise new ways of defending the nation from external attack.¹⁶⁴ On the whole, *1945* was an affirmative rather than a self-critical tale. It expressed a sense of nostalgia for a simpler time where there was a unity of nation and state. Epitomizing this was Gingrich and Forstchen's dedication of *1945* to "the generation that fought the Nazis in the real world, especially our parents" – a gesture that allows the book to be placed within the broader wave of attention to the "greatest generation" of Americans that began to surge in the mid-1990s.¹⁶⁵ Given his underlying faith in the virtues of the American people, there is little doubt that Gingrich would have carried the narrative of *1945* through to its logical conclusion – namely, an American triumph over the Nazis – had he ever produced the promised sequel to it. But even in its abridged version, *1945* implied this happy ending in clear enough terms.

Since the turn of the millennium, this upbeat view has continued to find confirmation in other novels. Two that provided further evidence of the decreasing frightfulness of a Nazi wartime victory were Arthur Rhodes's 2001 novel *The Last Reich: America Strikes Back*, and J. N. Stroyar's 2001 novel *The Children's War*. Both books portrayed Nazi rule in familiar fashion as defined by great brutality, but their focus was directed less towards the crimes of the perpetrators than to the heroic resistance marshaled by the victims. For its part, Rhodes's novel resembled Rutman's *Clash of Eagles* by portraying the Nazi occupation of the United States as ultimately being overthrown by American resistance forces in the 1960s.¹⁶⁶ Stroyar's mammoth 1,149-page novel was far more intricate in its characters and plot; its portrayal of Nazi barbarism, in particular, was extremely vivid and bordered on the gratuitous. Yet it too ended on a redemptive note. After spending hundreds of pages describing the Nazi persecution of the Poles, Stroyar finally portrays the Polish resistance as successfully infiltrating one of its members, a man by the name of Richard Traugutt, into the highest circles of the Nazi leadership. By the end of the novel, Traugutt seems poised to become Germany's next Führer and inaugurate a