Teaching About The Nazi Holocaust in the Context of Comprehending and Overcoming Fascism

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How Can We Address the Horror?
". . . the Holocaust bears witness to the *advance of civilization* . . ."

-- Richard L. Rubenstein

All teaching, as Dewey noted, involves the interaction of methodology and curriculum. One cannot be successfully split from the other. When the interplay is halted, when praxis becomes mechanical recitation, or aimlessness, teaching does not merely break down, but in an inequitable society becomes oppressive (Dewey, p. 9).

Education is an imminent task, not simply immediate, but projecting into some sense of the future, employing notions of the past and the present. In this, educational work parallels the construction of history. The two templates are remarkably similar. An educator with specific talents and expertise meets a unique child in a given particular community, and in their interaction, always surrounded by some paradigm that seeks to make sense of the interplay, learning may take place. A historian with specific passions and concerns confronts a unique event, using a given standpoint, offers it to an intellectual community for critique, and history is made. Building history and teaching: both are imbued with a desire for some kind of future.

Yet educators do not enjoy the historian's luxury: historical distance. Educators often must face immediate events and draw them out, using not only lessons of history, but also recognizing the incompleteness of all history, the superficiality of every fact. Facts can always be deepened. This is the underpinning of the power of Paulo Freire's method of "problem posing" pedagogy, treating each fact and each method, not as fixed, but as a question subjected to continuing critique.

This essay addresses the problem of teaching about fascism, in order to overcome fascism. Overcoming is not simply absorbing, but going beyond, critically analyzing, adapting, rejecting, negating; based on ethical, political, social, and economic categories. The notion of overcoming within the essay is rooted in inclusion, connectedness, democracy, and equality; understanding what must be absorbed as distinguished from what must be remembered, but rejected. Toward what end? Toward a society in which creativity, labor, desire, and the struggle for what is true can be freed from the daily drudgery of work as we know it, where time is not a commodity inequitably allotted, and where demagogues' calls for peace and freedom can become real for all.

What follows is a quotation from a comment paper submitted by a graduate student in my social studies methods course. The writer, Chad, a tenured secondary social studies teacher, just finished reading Daniel Goldhagen's award-winning *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. This was our third class.

> Although the author's analysis cannot be definitive from lack of data, students can be shown that divergent viewpoints do occur; so they must seek the 'truth' while examining every available resource. Were the Nazis overzealous? What was there [*sic*] responsibility for the spread of antisemitism? Were they really responsible, totally? These are questions students must decide for themselves. As educators, it is our job to present material, but pupils' responsibility to make choices. Today, we need to teach tolerance and diversity.

This weaves together serious yet common problems of philosophy, history and pedagogy. Chad thinks, as I verified in later e-mail conversations, that one philosophical outlook may be as good as the next, that history is constructed by a quantity of resources. He teaches that the Nazis may or may not have been over the top--except in regard to the death camps. He believes his students are offered sufficient freedom to settle, on their own, the preponderance of evidence, from the data that he, mostly, provides them. Chad reached this standpoint after years of training in curriculum and instruction in Carnegie I research schools: The University of Michigan and Wayne State University in Detroit.

Chad's thoughts challenge those who wish to teach openly, using constructivist student-centered methods inviting student honesty, yet who do not wish to abandon Dewey's notion that the teacher, and the subject matter, have interactive roles in education as well--those of us who want to work assertively not just against fascism, but to comprehend and overcome it (Dewey, pp. 21-22). Chad adopts a philosophy of history that is relative, open to infinite interpretations, an unhinged vision that is unable to judge overzealous Nazi activity; one interpretation, one opinion, is likely to be as good as the next. One literally weighs the research. He suggests that the students in his class might decide that, no, the Nazis were not overzealous--or perhaps they were after all. If they were, then the remedy is to vaccinate against intolerance.

I also teach an elementary social studies class. In 1998 and 1999, I selected, *If This Is Social Studies, Why Isn't It Boring?* a whole-language based text which demonstrates authentic student-centered approaches to the social studies.

In one chapter, the authors discuss a sixth-grade class whose teachers decided they should learn the "basic facts" about WWII and the Shoah. (Henceforth I will use Shoah and Nazi Holocaust as terms superior to Holocaust, which I believe is a misnomer, etymologically related to burnt offerings to god, also suggesting that there are many other holocausts, but the Shoah/Nazi Holocausts were planned murders of a specific population.) The teachers found themselves doing research. One concluded, "I realized that most Germans . . . had been bystanders. . . ." Then the teachers engaged the class.

They used role-playing, "so a kid can try out being a Nazi or a concentration camp victim" (Steffey/Hood, p. 32).

The teachers were pleased the children began to address the process and characters of the Shoah as complex, but the educators' own limited understanding of the war against the Jews confined the children to a superficial examination of responses to domination. At base, the teachers' own limitations created a vision of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders, but hardly a hint of resistance or victory against racist, anti-semitic, and anti-communist domination. Within their framework, it was reasonable that the teachers were gratified that they had created an atmosphere for inquiry and learning, where children's investigations were nurtured. Encapsulated on a narrow theoretical and historical ground, some educators take up secondary issues (what did the children wear in the camps, how was the food?). They miss the theoretical debates that ask the principle questions: Why? What to do?

Again, this is an intersection of curriculum/student/educator that Dewey repeatedly insisted is problematic. Right he is. This article recreates that intersection as it travels from theory to practice, and from instruction to curriculum, reflecting the complex interplay of a classroom.

As past issues of *Social Education* (April 2000) indicate, fascism and the Shoah are key issues in social studies classrooms. While I have witnessed dozens of engaging pedagogical efforts, I am concerned that many honest educators like the teachers above are not prepared to take up the serious study of fascism and the Shoah in other than contemplative, extraordinarily detached, ways. In the classrooms I have observed, a series of disconnects take place: the Shoah is disconnected from examinations of fascism. Anti-semitism and racism are disconnected from profiteering. Specific responsibility is muted by caricatures of collective responsibility. Elite U.S. complicity in the rise of fascism and the Shoah is largely erased. Good nationalism is thinly contrasted with bad. Communist and Marxist anti-fascism goes unsaid. Tolerance is offered up as an antidote, when clearly the necessary historical countermeasure was massive anti-fascist violence. The mark of one side on the other side in WWII is never seen. The U.S. forces, for example, carefully segregated their blood supplies, marked them by racial categories, and never let one infuse the other. The sheer opposition of one side to the other, the fascists and the anti-fascists, is never shown in its critical limitations, nor is the study of conditions offered up as a way for the imagination to consider the utter overcoming, beyond annihilation, of fascism. At best, when the history is considered at all, it is: We won, they lost. But the downfall of fascism did not mean the end of fascism, "a spirit of freedom did not spread across Europe" (Horkheimer, p. 221). The "Advance of civilization" that Rubenstein notes in the opening of these pages continued apace.

Cynthia Ozick, in her essay, "Who Owns Anne Frank?," sees a tendency to "infantalize, Americanize, sentimentalize, falsify, kitchify," and finally deny the horror that truly confronted Anne Frank. Frank's earlier contention that, "in spite of everything, people are truly good at heart," was a comment written in hiding, before the death camp.

Frank can then be set up as the thought of "an All-American girl" (Ozick, p. 98). This outlook is mirrored in most of the classrooms I study.

Fascism in most classrooms is presented as an issue of the past, with little or no analytical currency today other than the deviant appearance of an occasional Klansman in the news.

Most educators I have interviewed believe that children need to be shielded from the kind of education that would suggest that children themselves played significant roles in the fight against fascism, or in many of today's battles against oppression (Heck, 1988). Most educators particularly were very wary of making the use of violence, even anti-fascist violence, a complex question in the classroom, preferring a conciliatory rubric of tolerance. They were, however, willing to discuss both child victims and perpetrators, especially the Hitler Youth. Such educators, earnest as they may be, pass along to their students feelings of accomplishment that are, at best, dubious.

Other educators unthinkingly followed the path that prominent historian Stephen Ambrose highlighted with a recent call for a monument in Washington, D.C. to the "greatest heroes of the twentieth century, those Americans who won WWII." This is simply not good history, not a fact. Americans were important to WWII, but they alone surely did not win it. So the problem of teaching about fascism becomes redoubled: teaching, methods, facts (May 19, 2001, *New York Times*, A21).

In this paper, I seek to reposition the Nazi Holocaust in a context that I hope will cause some educators to rethink how and why they teach the life and death issues that underlie their material. I want to make some educators more certain about their subject and their pedagogy, others more uncomfortable about the complexities of the content and methods they choose.

Like the text, *If This Is Social Studies, Why Isn't It Boring?*, the October 1995 issue of "Social Education" contains an illuminating series of articles which demonstrate the possibilities of a pedagogy which says "Never Again" to genocide. Yet, in frequently lifting the Shoah above the development of fascism in both ideological and material terms, the articles can only offer a limited practical response.

One text that was used by many of the educators I observed focused on the film, "Schindler's List," yet never stepped outside the internal issues of the movie, never used the words "fascist" or "fascism" (*Facing History and Ourselves*). Other works, typified by a web page by a Maryland social studies teacher that several educators I interviewed for this project referenced frequently, suggest that the Shoah rose from "The beast within," deepening the implications of the collective guilt of all humanity, a site which prominently displays Elie Wiesel's comment, "In a world of absurdity, we must invent reason; we must create beauty out of nothingness;" a sentiment I will discredit (<http://www.fred.net/nhhs/html/beast.htm>).

In this article, I seek to reconnect the Shoah with the development of fascism, in philosophy and social practice, to demonstrate the interrelationships of the development of fascism not only overseas but in the U.S., showing that fascism is not an alien outlook. In doing this, my project in part is to transgress the limits of anti-genocide education to anti-fascist education, and then to the understanding of deepening problem-posing education to *overcome* fascism.

I suggest that the role of Marxism in theory, and communists in practice, cannot be extinguished from anti-fascist education. Communists, after all, were among the first targets of the Nazis, the first internees in Dachau, and played the cardinal role in demolishing the fascist movement, not only in Germany and Italy, but Japan as well. The war against the Jews was always linked to the war against the communists (Weiss, pp. 93, 293, 357; Goldhagen, 148, pp. 291, 313). Philosophically, I hope to link the battles and debates of the past with the present, showing that nothing comes from nothing and that ideas or actions spiral into the future.

Finally, I submit that an informed, open, and critical *form* of pedagogy, melded with a *content* which locates hope within investigations of the contradictions of the present situation, which promotes honest classroom exchanges while simultaneously helping students to unravel the complexities of their own material interests, is the kind of revolutionary pedagogy that can link *why* with *what to do*, and that with *overcoming.*

My pursuit here reflects three years of action-research in metro-Detroit schools, urban and suburban, partially funded by the Joyrich Family, which made it possible to observe Shoah curricula in Michigan classrooms and to conduct weekend seminars with pre-service and practicing teachers. In these seminars, I was honored to work with Dr. Sid Bolkosky, one of the foremost experts on the Shoah and its survivors.

My observations in classrooms led me to see that the problems raised by Chad's comments and those in the whole language text on social studies were endemic; that is, the Nazi Holocaust was presented as having no real beginning, but a clearly defined ending, as a horrible event separate from the unfolding of the surrounding socio-political context, a moment for which everyone is responsible, yet no one is responsible--and language, not active resistance, is promoted as a way to settle disputes between people whose differences could not, in fact, be resolved with words alone. At the end of most Shoah curricula are heavy pressures to feel guilt and calls for tolerance, unbounded by questions of what might be intolerable. The curricula I observed suggested that education coupled with multi-culturalism, identified more properly as pluralism--or cultural nationalism--answers the question that is too often posed as a simple statement: "Never again?"

"Faith is harder to shake than knowledge"

-- Hitler

The Shoah was a part of the logical unfolding of fascism. The historical record of fascism is at least the history of two profoundly hostile yet related matters, philosophical and political in nature. On the philosophical field rises the conflict of organized irrationalism versus the manifestations of the idea that people (in these cases guided by Leninist parties) can struggle to comprehend and transform reality--best expressed within the tradition of historical materialism: Marxism. On another field, political economy, the requirements of a systematically inequitable and authoritarian socio-economic system, capital, faced intense internal contradictions as well as external challenges by purportedly egalitarian and democratic forces, socialism. In short, various representatives of fascism were met by the sundry deputies of what was then known as communism. Fascists encountered the anarchists, socialists, and communist parties in Spain. Then fascist armies met the red armies of the Soviet Union and China, the centers of anti-fascist resistance. In theory and practice the sides rebounded against one another, and influenced one another. The centrality of this interchange, as both fight and interplay, is clear in history: decisive battles like Stalingrad, total combat losses at 20 million on the Soviet side, sharply competing ideologies; but these centripetal issues are frequently ignored in k-12 Holocaust studies.

Racist exterminationist anti-semitism, a popular vision that Horkheimer described as "the self-assertion of the bourgeois individual integrated within a barbaric culture," was directly connected with war profiteering, serving but a tiny few (Horkheimer, 169; Simpson, 1993, p. 87). Socialist ideology promised a democratic and just society, but as socialism met fascism, it became less democratic, less just. At odds, not just above the battlefields but on them, were erudite philosophical issues like the location of reality and truth, or whether or not anything can be seen or understood; political/military issues: if and how to resist, when, and how to live--or die? In philosophy, the Nazis formalized irrationalism, rooted in the individualist notion that nothing can be known, attacked the Soviet and Chinese parties, which located truth within the central committees. This allowed the Hegelian scholar Rudolph Siebert to say, later, that perhaps the Hegelian right met the Hegelian left in WWII (Siebert, p. 1). Primarily in deadly opposition, each camp housed secondary elements of the other. National socialism at one time held a hint of socialism, the Soviet and Chinese camps both were home to more than ghosts of nationalism (Perlman, p. 2). But people chose, then, to take sides, based on rather obvious principal tendencies within each. They fought and died. While there were victors, as well as good choices and bad, neither side obliterated the other. The war made possible the subsequent revolution in China, with all its strengths and weaknesses.

One of the leading methods used in social studies classrooms to introduce the Shoah is the Spielberg film, "Schindler's List," widely adopted as an official part on the curricula in many states, mostly due to the Spielberg's efforts (Martello). It was a center-piece in most of the classrooms I observed. "Schindler" is a diversion from reaching an understanding of the origins of fascism. The film, as I will demonstrate, does not offer viable suggestions as to what was or should be done about fascist ideology. The film counsels actions which hardly challenge fascism, indeed, "Schindler's List" proposes actions that tend to recreate the bulwarks of fascism. "Schindler's List," now the official text of the event, is in many ways the "ET" of the Shoah.

"Schindler's List" opens with fascism fully developed, death camps are open and running. The gaze of the viewer is drawn to the common horror, the apparent dichotomy of domination and oppression, girded neither by a grasp of how the oppressors came to power, nor how the dominated were set up in ideology and science to be seen as less than human. Contrary to Spielberg's ahistorical movie, the Shoah did not rise from the mists. It was a vile part of a greater social event, the construction of modern fascism which, to understand the Nazi Holocaust, should be interrogated in theory and practice. We will return to Spielberg after a theoretical intermission.

Fascist ideas which made the Shoah possible are thoroughly tied up with the practical if irrational needs of the privileged who must justify inequality and oppression, who simultaneously need science and racism. While there is a relationship of privilege and irrationalism, it is not an even equation. Instead, the interplay is frequently unbalanced, the material tending to pull the theoretical, but the latter often dislodging the former. It is difficult to tell whether a member of an SS battalion became an exterminator primarily because of his commitment to fascist ideology, or because he was first able to filch the home of the Jews living next door--a move made possible by Aryanization laws of his chosen government.

Pulling apart fascist theory and practice for purposes of understanding is an artificial construct, not unlike freezing moments of reality while begging the common understanding that, although reality has probably shifted enough already to make our estimate somewhat incorrect, we are not so dismayed as to be paralyzed. In the same sense, I propose to interrogate fascism in two brief parts: ideology and material necessity, hoping that this broken dialectic of theory and practice is understood as less profound than the interwoven reality. First, let us turn briefly to the ideological battleground.

"Education is the most fascist of fascist reforms"

-- Mussolini

The beginnings of contemporary fascist ideology are presented by Isaiah Berlin in the essay "Joseph de Maistre and the Origins of Fascism" in Berlin's brilliant book *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, and by Georg Lukacs in the splendid, if ponderous, *Destruction of Reason*. Berlin traces modern fascist ideology, at least in part, directly to de Maistre, whose own intellectual base is Catholic dogma. Schooled by Jesuits in the mid-nineteenth century, de Maistre "may have spoken the language of the past, but the content of what he had to say presaged the future" (Berlin, p. 96).

Born in 1753, writing in bitter opposition to the egalitarian and democratic optimism of the French Revolution, de Maistre, in concise terms, attacked all of the cornerstones of enlightenment thinking: science, the inherent decency of people, equality, democracy, freedom, perfectibility, optimism, revolution, and, above all, the possibilities of reason. Opposing the enlightenment, de Maistre offers these sacred celebrations: irrationalism, mysticism, superstition, war, pain, suffering, innate evil and original sin, darkness, intuition above evidence, the adulation of sheer power, enforced obedience to authority--

especially to the divine Pope. This was an ideology marshaled by organizer-missionaries who, in reasonably pacified areas, discovered effective ways to turn people into instruments of their own oppression. Hence, "It was only when the authority of the Roman Church had become firmly established that slavery could be--and was--abolished." Priests make it possible to abolish slavery, but to maintain master-slave relations in newer ways, and the improvement made de Maistre proud (Berlin, pp. 96, 134, 152). Although Berlin does not take note, de Maistre laid the groundwork for Pope Pius IX, who, in the 1870's, declared himself God's interpreter, infallible; who in turn made possible the career of Pius XI and XII. Pius XII engineered in 1933 the concordat with Adolph Hitler that meant fascism would be unopposed by German Catholicism, other than the communists the most powerful counterbalance to the Nazi takeover (Cornwell, p. 7).

Kin to some postmodernists and the right-wing of Hegelianism, de Maistre saw language as the initial moment of humanness; that is, de Maistre says that the tautology of invention-thinking-language, and vice versa, can only originate with God--whose earthly interpreter is the Pope. In the beginning is the word (not the world), and the reader of the word requires a tithe to enlighten others about it. This closed and truly essentialist thinking was a prescient dogmatism, not merely passive, but calling for direct action. De Maistre wanted to move beyond retarding science, toward retarding the future itself through violence. Where rationalism arose, de Maistre proposed its abortion. Indeed, de Maistre recognized the pivotal position of educators and urged that the sword and the shield of the church, the Society of Jesus, alone be entrusted with the care of children. The Pope at that time authorized child-kidnaps, and conducted one himself, as a method of recruiting for the Church (Kertzer, p. 5).

For de Maistre, the economic system is the perfect and logical match for genetic development, hence both might need some protection from earthly overlords--the might of papal intervention and its legion of practical and ideological weaponry. This activism coupled with a modernist sense of the need for organized persistent action to destroy opposition in any form, but particularly opposition which might bring science and reason to the common folk, is what makes Berlin see DeMaistre as an original thinker, the true progenitor of modern fascism.

Even so, Berlin falls short in investigating the deeper beginnings of de Maistre's fascism and in determining what might feed it. Berlin is weak in the investigation of de Maistre's fascist origins in Christianity. He does an insufficient job of pointing in any detail to de Maistre's ground in the most of encrusted of all pre-fascist formations, the Catholic Church, riddled with mystical orthodoxies, ruled by paradox and power. While it is true that there was Catholic resistance to fascism, the evidence demonstrates that much of this was the fear of one cult being replaced by another. Indeed, if the Catholic leadership had taken direct action, it is possible the Nazis would never have been able to hold power (Zahn, Cornwell).

In addition, Berlin falls short in contending with the material conditions which might make fascism possible, even necessary to at least a segment of a population. For example,

Berlin does not turn to the biblical John whose specific form of irrationalism is steeped in anti-semitism, demonizing Jews as the Devil's spawn (John, 8:44); or Augustine who condemns the Jews to inferiority, more mildly suggesting that Jews be scattered but not slain outright.

Jews throughout written Christianity are criminalized for killing God, or worshiping the wrong one. Berlin fails to grapple with research offered by Gordon Zahn who, in *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars*, makes it clear that the massive support of German citizens for fascism was urged by the top leaders of the Catholic church. Berlin does not take up the problem of the raw anti-semite, Martin Luther, whose nationalism made his hatred of Jews especially dangerous in the formation of 20th century German Culture (Weiss, p. 24)

Nor does Berlin, in an elegant essay, grapple with what it is that underpins the need for an ideology so rooted in authority and circuitous reasoning. We are left with evil ideas simply reproducing evil ideas; that which is aberrant in specific offshoots of organized Christianity produces de Maistre who produces Nazis. Berlin dismisses investigation of the underlying tendencies. In many ways, Berlin's outlook set him up to become what he opposed. Perhaps this comes from Berlin's right-Hegelian outlook, that ideas determine reality, which he expressed elsewhere as "positive liberalism":

> First, that all men have one true purpose and one only, that of rational self-direction; second, that the ends of all rational beings must of necessity fit into a single universal, harmonious pattern, which some men may be able to discern more clearly than others; thirdly that all conflict, and consequently all tragedy, is due solely to the clash of reason with the irrational, or the insufficiently rational--the immature and undeveloped elements in life--whether individual or communal, and that such clashes are, in principle, avoidable, and for wholly rational beings impossible; finally, that when all men have been made rational, they will obey the rational laws of their own natures, which are one and the same in them all, and so be at once wholly law-abiding and wholly free. (Berlin, p. 154)

Georg Lukacs offers, in a tome, a deeper understanding by historicizing ideology. In *Destruction of Reason*, the author of the currently more de rigueur *History and Class Consciousness* traces the historical case of irrationalism, linking the respectability of organized philosophical and practical resignation to absurdity, to the needs of developing capital, the struggle between the many who produce and the few who own, and the resultant ideological battlefield. Positioned at the command center on one side are the older Hegel and Nietzsche, immediately trying to reverse the egalitarian ideas and practices of the French Revolution. On the other side are Marx and Engels, drawing on the history of left-Hegelianism, both designers of historical materialism. "We [Lukacs] mean to show . . . that the various stages of irrationalism came about as reactionary answers to problems to do with the class struggle. Thus the content, form, method, tone, etc., of its reaction to progress in society are dictated not by an intrinsic inner dialectic

. . . but rather by the adversary, by fighting conditions imposed by the reactionary bourgeoisie" (Lukacs, 1955, p.156).

Lukacs argues that irrationalism is an international phenomenon, an ideological system which must have a structural relationship to the needs of power in the development of class inequality. Remarkably, writing earlier than Berlin, Lukacs too points at de Maistre as a key source (Lukacs, 1955 p. 16). Here Lukacs traces a philosophy which demands a turn to faith, rather than praxis, the interdependence of reason and action, as evidence, proof, and a social design which must explain inequality and misery as a natural state, presently unresolvable, but promising better days in a world after death where there are no days. Lukacs attacks the irrationalist foundation of the reification of the mysterious, approaching reality with this predetermined understanding: what is not quickly interrogated belongs only to the mastery of God. He suggests that to not know a thing completely is well within the scientific process of engaging the truth: practice into theory into corrected practice--in which the matter in motion always contains elements more complex than our grasp--and demonstrates that the decision to enlist explanatory eternal values or revealed truth (usually revealed through the eyes and mouth of one who collects heavy dues) is the partisan position of a class with a particular need to ensure their own eternity. Again, Lukacs connects class inequality with the turn toward faith as twin sources of fascist thinking. Obscurantism is in the interest of social classes who have a stake in obscuring, for example, racism, whose profits can be expanded by making racism part of the natural background. Lukacs supplements and moves well beyond Berlin in his understanding of the potency of irrationality in modernity--and in suggesting ways out.

Lukacs inquires how it is that anti-rationalism could gain a grip on masses of people when all of the advances in their lives had been coupled with a more and more rational explanation of their situations; for example, workers organizing on the job for greater power for the greater good. Lukacs points blame directly at reformers in the ranks of labor, those who insist on the possibility of reasoning away the irreconcilable contradictions of class struggle in the name of national unity, "to retreat and withdraw in the face of the rise of fascism, to avoid danger and not to tempt the beast from his lair." He also condemns those sections of the intelligentsia which embraced the despair inherent in the crisis of their own social positions and thus urged on masses of people the idea that the world was incomprehensible (Lukacs, 1955, p. 80).

The Destruction of Reason traces modern irrationalism through its turn away from the analytical strengths of Hegel's detailed study of dialectics (change) to Nietzsche's reverence for divine power, and into the Nazi philosopher Heidegger's move away from social analysis into the idealist dreams of consciousness determining being (I think therefore I am) (Lukacs, 1955, p. 503).

Lukacs does not merely investigate the nature of the arcane needs of any particular religion, which he regards as mysticism unraveled by a dues collector, religious beliefs which must locate reality in the space of an Other and truth in the received doctrine of the earthly decoder. While he sees a willingness to suspend consciousness and praxis as a

key foundation of fascist ideology, he links this belief system to the organization of modernity in philosophical and social systems. At the crux of the philosophical issue for Lukacs is the battle between idealism (the notion that ideas are the creator of reality, i.e., in the beginning was the word, or, the world is a creation of your mind) and dialectical materialism (material reality is external to human consciousness and is decisive, yet consciousness, as part of the material world, recreates material reality).

Lukacs attacks falsely neutral terrain, counterfeit neutrality. The modern Martin Heidigger (who sought to live his life cloaking his own Nazi past) offered contemplative agnosticism (maybe I think therefore I am) as a third position in regard to the antithesis of idealism (I think therefore I am) and materialism (being determines consciousness--I am therefore I think). Lukacs suggests that, while ideas are key to life, no idea has ever been conceived that did not have precursors in the daily social practice of masses of people. Ideas elevate practice, become practice, but do not precede practice. Indeed, as with any understanding of any fact, an idea can always be deepened by practice (Farias,1987, p. 289).

Let us pause to brief the idealist side of the debate again. Idealism asks: why has the mind a body? Nothing exists except as created and tested in thought (Kneller, p. 83; Lukacs, 1955, p. 493; Minio-Paluello, pp. 69-73). Codified modern idealism is the highpoint of irrationalism, best personified in the early works of Hegel (Lukacs, 1959). The resolution of practical disputes can only be found in a turn to faith or superstition. Consider Hitler's doubling of mysticism with "Race is a feeling, not a reality" (Kneller, p. 219). In politics we get Hitler's or Hirohito's authoritarianism and the Farben's aiding in the complex design of death camps--opposed by the claims of egalitarian and democratic principles emanating from the Soviet and Red Chinese armies.

"Now the state is not an end but a means, the end is *VOLK.*"

-- Hitler

The debate between those who think things exist and things change (dialectical materialism) and those who believe their minds construct reality and hence things do not substantially change (idealist philosophy insisting on the priority of consciousness) is demonstrated by positions taken by authors of two widely used texts today, Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* and John Weiss' *Ideology of Death*. Goldhagen makes his stance clear in a closing passage, "This study of the Shoah and its perpetrators assigns their beliefs to the highest importance. It reverses the Marxist dictum in holding that consciousness determines being" (Goldhagen, p. 454). Goldhagen's book, the genesis of an award-winning Harvard dissertation, received massive coverage in the U.S., and Germany. Weiss' book, with a more modest publisher and less intense marketing campaign, is the more subtle of the two, and the less well known. Goldhagen drew international praise and criticism (*New York Review of Books*, November 1996 through January 1997). Weiss' book, issued nearly at the same time, drew much less notice.

Goldhagen's thesis is that the cardinal cause of the Shoah was widespread German anti-semitism. He insists his thesis is novel, ground-breaking. Goldhagen then works through a volume of proofs that the German people knew about the Shoah and were complicit. His proof, he believes, shows that the murder of the Jews, a passion Goldhagen locates in the German psyche, was the prime motivator of the Third Reich. Even so, Goldhagen simultaneously offers important evidence that this is only partially true. For example, Goldhagen's honest presentation of his own research indicates that Bolshevism, communism, was linked almost inseparably with anti-semitism, and that the Germans (as a whole people, not merely the Nazis) were dead set on the annihilation of both. Specifically, the Germans killed 2.8 million Soviet POW's in their camps, in eight months (Goldhagen, p. 291). Perhaps more to the point, Goldhagen shows that fascist rhetoric consistently linked Jews and communists, and the targets were, at least, both. Like "Schindler's List," Goldhagen's work suffers from an absence of historical analysis--a cornerstone of idealist outlooks which, since all may be illusion, have problems with history. Fascism is not in the process of being constructed in Goldhagen's book; it is there, overwhelmingly popular, and the masses of German people are more than willing to assist in the murder of the Jews. Remarkably, Goldhagen in later editions closes his book insisting that there has been an almost miraculous turnabout, and now the German character would choose to do otherwise. This makes sense only if fascist exterminationism is a product of the mind, and idealist drive, disconnected from the world's social developments.

There are several problems with Goldhagen's effort, each related to the outlook that consciousness determines being. His claim that it is new to insist that the masses of German people were "willing executioners" is not new at all, ably shown many years ago by Raul Hilberg, one of the most widely read scholars on the processes of the Shoah, among many, many others. Secondly, the absence of a historical and materialist analysis leads Goldhagen to a teleological move that urges us to believe that German people have a natural cultural propensity to become eliminationist anti-semites, yet with a simple change of heart, they stop. Norman Finkelstein, in a sharp critique, locates Goldhagen's thesis in dogmatic Zionism. Finkelstein attacks the move to make the war on the Jews the central issue of fascism, which was far more complex. The Zionist maneuver, Finkelstein suggests, obscures the deep chasms in the Jewish community, and allows dubious behavior during and after the Nazi Holocaust to slip beyond critique: the collaborationist *Judenrat* (Jews who worked with the Nazis to organize the ghettos and the transports to death camps) on the one hand, the attacks on the Palestinians in the name of Homeland on the other. Like Finkelstein, Breeseth believes that the isolation of the Shoah from the development of fascism is a partisan maneuver of Zionism (Bresheeth, 1998).

Weiss' *Ideology of Death* traces the rise of German racist irrationalism in theory and practice with chilling scholarly precision. Weiss carefully challenges the commonplace dispensations for the behavior of the German people, excuses ranging from the notion that the Pope was quietly opposing fascism to Goldhagen's magical idea that exterminationist fascism was nearly genetic. Weiss notes that the shift from anti-semitism to racist anti-semitism was a deliberate project that drew on Christianity's historical brutalizing of the Jews, and modern exterminationist "science." Educators were

overwhelmingly complicit with the project, working this theme with enthusiasm: "Equality is death. Hierarchy is life." The success of the Nazis, Weiss suggests, was to link the problems of daily German life with racist anti-communist, anti-semitic solutions (p. 271). This was not the banality of evil, but a deep commitment to racism. As a counterpoint to religious irrationalist practice, Weiss points out that those who consistently acted in opposition to the rise of fascism were those who were the least religious, communists of many stripes in the forefront (p. 353).

That historical debate aside, it is clear from my classroom observations that the role of the Quisling organization, the *Judenrat*, is rarely mentioned, and sanitized when it is. The almost sterile approaches to Anne Frank in classrooms contrast the possibilities offered by other texts written by people nearly Frank's age with more sophisticated political consciousness. Alan Adelson's remarkable *Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak* addresses the *Judenrat* in clear style as "the big shots and fat cats of the ghetto who gorge themselves while the masses starve" (Adelson, p. 8).

This is the main line in a complex weave of philosophical and political combat. As part of that complex mix of relationships came the Shoah, but the fascist war swirled around and beyond the Shoah. Fascism and the Shoah had roots not only in the minds of people, but in their wallets. Education which treats the Shoah as something separate cannot begin to comprehend what created fascism and its attendant mass murders, nor can it, and in fact nor did it, create the kind of consciousness necessary to oppose, resist, and win. Shoah education which does not offer a critique of fascist thinking cannot offer a way out.

Thus ends, for a time, the first theoretical intermission. Back to the movie.

A brief examination of "Schindler's List" supports my contention above. On 24 March, 1994, the fictional "Schindler's List" was used by the most popular television news program in the U.S., "60 Minutes," as proof that the Shoah indeed occurred (in rebuttal to "revisionist historians" who argue that the Shoah is a hoax). This reached a new plane of stripping history from the public consciousness, fiction replacing reality which itself is made barren. It is a new stage of reification, beyond forgetting to recreating what was forgotten--as a commodity and a social invitation. Later, CBS carried the movie with only one long interruption, an advertisement from Ford Motor Company, a horror that will wait description.

In my classroom observations, the film was never addressed as a problem open to critique. Several teachers did not know the film was based on historical fiction. Most teachers did not know the film had been banned in most of the Middle East and repeatedly attacked in Israel, or that the maker of the profound film, *Shoah*, had denounced both Spielberg and his movie. *Shoah*'s Claude Lanzmann believes Spielberg deliberately misportrays the Nazi Holocaust, the repetition of which Lanzmann feels is just question of time. My interviews with Shoah experts who left Spielberg's fold during filming indicate that Spielberg was obsessed with creating a relatively happy ending, and

when they resisted his view, they were removed (Lohsitzky, 1997, p. 201; Bolkosky, 1999).

"Schindler's List" is an adaption of a novel based broadly on historical events. But, like the treatment fascism usually receives within public schools (students in most states are required to see it), and like Goldhagen, the film offers no understanding of how fascism came to power or how German, Italian, or Japanese fascism was crushed. The movie avoids any mention of the resistance and the centripetal role communists played in its leadership (Foote). Within the vacuum of resistance, the film offers an anti-Semitic vision of Jews. The only developed Jewish characters are swindlers, cheats, collaborators, connivers: stereotypes. Working-class Jews, as in all of anti-semitism, are fleeting vapors.

Spielberg's choice of a soundtrack meant little to most audiences in the U.S., but elsewhere he made his standpoint quite clear when, at the close, he plays "Jerusalem of Gold," a paean to the victory of Zionism in the 1967 Israeli war. The only audience in the world that did not hear this soundtrack was in Israel. Apparently Spielberg knew the audience would be appalled by his crass maneuver. Attacked, Spielberg later withdrew the soundtrack, replacing it with a more internationalist closing (Loshitzky, pp. 45, 205).

The Soviet Red Army, which did in historical fact liberate "Schindler's Jews" (an ironic possessive adopted by the survivors themselves), is ridiculed at the end of the film through its representation as a solitary military man on horseback, suggesting the survivors travel "neither east nor west" on Hitler's surrender. Finally, as a solution to the Shoah, Schindler invites three beliefs: capitalism ("If only I had made more money I could have bought more of them"), religion (prayers for the dead), and passivity--more pointedly the willingness to turn one's own fate, and critique, over to another who has, obviously, grown wealthy from exploitation. ("Schindler will care for us--we are his property.) These are, remarkably, three of the propellants of fascism's surge to power. So, we have fictionalized fascism replacing de-historicized fascism, both proposing action which can only fuel fascist development.

Apart from the internal problems of the movie, Schindler was actually no angel of mercy. He was a Nazi profiteer, an early enlistee in the fascist movement, never needing to be dragged along. Contrary to the film's central thesis, "The list is the ultimate good," not all of "Schindler's Jews" were survivors. In one SS sweep, 700 of them were turned over, sent to a death camp and killed. This created openings on the famous list. Desperate victims had to bribe their way onto it. While Schindler's munitions factory was mostly dysfunctional, he simply purchased black market munitions and sold them to the Germans, hardly the act of sabotage presented in the film. It is clear that for "his" Jews, Schindler created not only competition when collective resistance was key, but also a false sense of shelter which, in turn, separated them from potential allies and made effective mass resistance less possible.

Schindler did not become a list-maker, an apparent ally of Jews, until after the battle of Stalingrad, the turning point of World War II when every thinking German knew

defeat was at hand. Schindler did not begin to act in earnest until matters were even more desperate for the Nazis, mid-1944, after Nazi Field-Marshall Rommel had committed suicide. At war's end, Schindler, disguised as a concentration camp victim and accompanied by friends, fled west--as did many war criminals--fearing arrest by the Soviets. He continued his dissolute alcoholic life portrayed in the movie, made yearly trips to Israel to collect accolades and money, and died in 1974. At least some of "his" Jews felt the loss of another Nazi was no loss at all (WPIX).

The issue here is not simply to counter the Spielberg movie, but to suggest that the absence of problem-posing pedagogy which questions Schindler in any depth is itself a problem in addressing the Nazi Holocaust in classrooms. While some educators do interrogate his character, it is always within the interior text of the film, encapsulated critique that circles on itself.

"Race is a feeling, not a reality."

-- Alfred Rosenberg, Nazi theoretician

**"The history of the twentieth century has taught us
that people who are rendered permanently superfluous are condemned
to segregated precincts
of the living dead or exterminated outright."**

-- Richard L. Rubenstein

Fascism did not fall from the sky and it was not defeated by Schindlers. Above all else, it rose from an unrestrained battle for profits made sophisticated by modernist technology, coupled with racist, cabalistic deliberately irrational ideology which sought successfully to have the masses of people adopt the mythology of their oppressors as reality. Pure selfishness became policy. As Horkheimer said, "If in the end self-preservation has been automated, so reason has been abandoned by those who, as administrators of production, entered upon its inheritance and now fear it in the persons of the disinherited" (Horkheimer, p. 32).

That people did act on this mythology, in mass, was not Goldhagen's discovery, but quite obvious to people like those in the German Social Democratic (communist) party at the time. What is equally important to know is that at every step, people fought back, usually led by working people and their organized leadership: communists (Rosenhaft, Foot, Werth).

Resistance to fascism and its defeat rose out of the very real determination of masses of people who believed they could join together, make huge sacrifices, comprehend the world and act on it: fight and win. The big lie about Jews being sub-human, the crux of all racism, can only be underlined by Spielberg's portrayal of the absence of Jewish resistance. All of history demonstrates that oppressed people will resist. Every historical relationship of the Master and the Slave is riddled with resistance. The canard that Jews

did not resist is a bulwark of anti-semitic polemics. Resistance to fascism movements has largely been hidden in history and in U.S. classrooms (*New York Times*, arts, p. 3, October 7, 2000). But there was resistance: both Jewish and secular. Non-communist resistance, that which had no center in Moscow or Beijing, was sporadic, isolated, unsophisticated, not especially effective, as most scholars will concede (Foot, p. 11). The communist resistance, which began long before the murder of most of the German Communist Party, was more powerful. Indeed, in the midst of the anti-fascist wars, there was a communist revolution in China. Though the resistance and the revolution did not uproot the source of fascism, it is important in understanding the rise of fascism and the Shoah that both were halted, even if temporarily, by people, in unity with the development of rational scientific advances, most of them working-class people of all religions and nationalities, people who did win, but did not entirely overcome. This effort is worth remembering. Schindler can only be a negative example. As a counterpoint to "Schindler's List," required of most teachers, those who seek a more rewarding portrayal of mass resistance to fascism might want to see the film, *Escape from Sobibor*, or read Yuri Suhl's *They Fought Back*, both demonstrating the historically grounded resistance in the death camps, culminating in whole uprisings, and the relationship of resistance and communist understandings.

Comprehending fascism must go beyond the popular culture that "Schindler's List" represents. In the classroom, pedagogy and content interpenetrate as praxis, but content overbears form in the choices educators make about what it is that will be addressed. Like the historian who culls facts subjectively but in all earnestness, the educator's vision of what is to be done rises from a political understanding of the world and itself fixes the content of any lesson--which finally often over-determines the form.

Therefore, I seek here to offer an admittedly incomplete problematizing entre into the teaching of the history of modern fascism. In part because none of the teachers I have ever interviewed knew anything about the role of anti-fascist communism, I offer this suggestion: that the classroom debate about fascism include those who fought it hardest: communists of one stripe or another. Twenty million Russians did die, after all. The Chinese body-count has never been certain, some say as high as 40 million. In philosophy and history, the Marxist recognition of the central contradiction of the development of social being (ever more collection methods of production, transportation, and exchange) contradicted by private ownership (of the means of production, creating an atmosphere of alienation and exploitation) is especially illuminating in studying the human relationships and crises assembled by capital in crisis, in studying the rise of fascism, the birth mother of the Shoah (Ollman, Lukacs).

Organized communists knew early on that fascism was a powerful force. They engaged in sharp debates about what to do about it. This distinguishes them from most bourgeoisie operatives, who sought ways to build or accommodate it (Simpson, 1993, p. 119). R. Palme Dutt, a leader of the British Communist Party, Georgi Dimitroff, a Bulgarian communist, and the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky all proposed competing analyses of fascism in the 1930s.

The debate between communists, made eloquent and urgent by the fact that communists stood as the first target of fascists, frames subsequent discussions about the ontology of fascism. Their differences are now so interwoven and in the background of public consciousness about fascism (and the successful campaign to treat communism as a monolith) that it may initially appear that Dutt, Trotsky, and Dimitrov have little to dispute. Indeed, there are critical moments of agreement. However, their vital differences, and the people who followed their lines of thought, form key paths of understanding and social practice that border the debate today (Dutt, 1934; Dimitroff, 1934; Trotsky, 1931).

In the early thirties, the polemic about the rise of Mussolini, Hitler and Japanese fascism was intense in the communist movement, particularly sharp in the Communist International, which was preparing for its Seventh World Congress of 1935 (remarkably, a long seven years following the sixth congress). Decisions at this congress would set the line of march for socialist states for as long as they lasted (Claudin, p. 162).

Trotsky's position, tactically and strategically seen as a renegade stance because of his ostracism by the Bolshevik Party, was well-known. Trotsky argued thus in *Fascism, What it is and How to Fight It*: fascism rises out of the crisis of the petit-bourgeoisie, the middle class, a crisis itself caused by an economic collapse inherent in capitalist development. The middle class (small shop-owners, teachers, dentists, lawyers, etc.), incrementally ripped apart in quantitative capitalist maturation--as capital expands the gaps of rich and poor--sees itself under intense attack in capitalist crisis. This class vacillates, tending opportunistically towards the shifting powers of the working class and wealth in continuing class struggle, suddenly faces the prospect of its own annihilation and turns toward jingoist, obscurantist, demagogic elements rising from its own ranks for leadership. For Trotsky, then, at the heart of the composition of fascism, was the shop-keeper class, the petit-bourgeoisie, about to be de-classed and desperate to preserve uncertain privileges.

Trotsky predictably points toward the inevitability of this crisis rooted in the developing contradiction of the private ownership of the means of production and the collective nature of the mode of production. However, he also is ensnared by what is best called dogmatic Marxism, the theory of productive forces (Cohen, p. 188). This notion, once a favorite among Soviet economists, is widely held even today. The idea is that capital, as a revolutionary system, requires technological leaps which are the motor of social change. Socialism, in this theory, requires massive industrialization which provides the basis of abundance, and that can be shared out later. For technology to grow, certain levels of inequality must be promoted within the socialist system. Managers and technicians and doctors, experts, need special rewards--as does the party leadership. The ends Marx described, a world open to the creative freedom of work, knowledge and love, became lost within the discourse of national economic development.

The theory also insists on the immutable nature of capitalist crisis. In brief, this means that for socialism and capitalism the ownership of factories, land, etc. is in the hands of a few, while the methods of work bring together masses of people who neither control the processes or products of their work. Over time, within capitalist systems, as technology is

revolutionized by competition and crises, social movements arise which necessarily fight revolutions for egalitarian and democratic societies: socialism. In socialist societies, the leadership at some point declares that society will move to "each according to their need." Stalin declared that class struggle in the USSR came to an end in the mid-1930s, a higher stage of socialism which whistled past the graveyard of reality, as 1989's Soviet collapse demonstrated.

The role of conscious human activity in the theory of productive forces plays only in deep-background, described as a part of the *superstructure*, apart from the *base* in production. While it is correct that people are born into circumstances that they do not choose, into historical conditions they did not create, it remains that conscious human praxis, reason and action, are the sole final stages of the Master-Slave relationship that has arched over most of history, and philosophy.

Trotsky proposed that the communist movement, rising from this understanding, must form a united front with Social Democrats (today's "progressives" and liberals) in order to create counter-pressure. ". . . [W]e were ready to conclude practical military alliances with the devil and his grandmother. . ." (Trotsky, 1934, p. 171). Moreover, Trotsky, who claimed to be the father of the idea of permanent revolution, argued that the Communist Movement must abandon its call for world revolution in order to obtain friendly relations with important Social Democrats. That Trotsky's proposals were not formally accepted by the Comintern, itself controlled by the Bolsheviks under Stalin who had exiled Trotsky, and later ordered his murder, should be of no surprise.

The Britisher, R. Palme Dutt, in *Fascism and Social Revolution*, posed a dramatically different argument: fascism is the logical and necessary logic of capitalism--as a system--in crisis, a stage itself which is an *inevitable stage of capitalist development*. Dutt, too, relies heavily on the theory of productive forces, arguing that production, science, and ideology are, at a given point, necessarily fettered by the collapse of capitalist expansion (with the concomitant twins, overproduction and mass unemployment). "Fascism is capitalism in decay" (Dutt, p. 69). Fascism in this view is a deliberate, requisite, device rising out of the material interests of the class of wealth in power, and inter-imperialist rivalry; not a political outcome of mass middle-class sentiment provoked by a passing crisis as seen in Trotsky. While Dutt does argue that economic struggle, rising from the crisis of productive forces, over-production for example, must be superceded by political struggle which outstrips reformist action like militant trade unionism--revolution that is--he never-the-less leans heavily on the side of materiality in the contradiction of material and ideological development. Technology, mechanization, driving the working class together in cities and the military, set the stage for socialist revolution. Largely absent is what people will need to know about the wage system in order to abolish it, the point Lukacs tries to address in much of his work, especially *History and Class Consciousness*. Per Dutt, capitalism produces fascism which produces revolution which produces socialism. Dutt argued that fascism was necessary--but simultaneously inevitably defeated by its own internal contradictions. Dutt not only missed the ongoing presence of fascism, or fascist social relations, but he also missed the tension of formal capitalist

democracy with the persistent tyranny at the work place where few capitalist democratic niceties apply.

To defeat fascism, for Dutt, was necessarily to destroy capitalism--a project itself more historical inevitability than not. Hence, a revolutionary party must identify all of the allies of capitalism as enemies. High on that list are liberals, progressives, who, for Dutt, are cat's paws for fascism, people who initiate the corporate state (the unity of labor, business, and government, in the National Interest), who create both the material conditions for fascist repression with their ultra-statist demands for nationalization, and divisions within the ranks of the working class by disarming workers, literally and figuratively, by urging them away from revolutionary communist leadership. Liberals simultaneously draw the working class into alliances with the bourgeoisie, urge anti-communist action, and promote pacifism, a largely ineffective policy in the hindsight of some research (Rosenblatt). For Dutt, it followed that a Bolshevik position of the early 1930s, that liberals (Roosevelt for example) are "social fascists"--enemies of the first order--should be continued.

Then came Georgi Dimitroff. The Bulgarian enjoyed a sensational reputation--he had been accused of burning down the German's Reichstag. At his show-trial, his ringing counter-accusations caused the close of the proceedings and his expulsion from Germany (Carr, pp. 101-104). His outlook served the particular needs of the Soviet party which was in search of a position that would not shatter its purportedly socialist ideological foundations but would allow it to find allies among capitalist governments for purposes of mutual defense against Germany.

Dimitroff helped turn the course of history. In *United Front Against Fascism,* he argued that the base of fascism lies in the fear, among rightist sections of the ruling class, of leftist revolution, especially the revolution represented by the Soviet Union. Fascism, as a weapon of the most reactionary wing of the ruling class, comes into being in part from the crisis of capitalism, in part as a response to revolutionary socialism. He said that fascism is the result of deep contradictions within the capitalist class and that imperialist war and fascism most frequently obtain only when the reactionary wing prevails over the progressive wing of the capitalist class in their control of the state.

Since fascism is also unleashed on social democrats, liberals, progressives, pacifists, etc., it is thus in their interest to take steps to defeat fascism at once--in combination with communists. Thus, Dimitroff proposed an alliance with one set of capitalists against the others, and offered to abandon calls for the dictatorship of the proletariat as a pre-condition of the alliance (Dimitroff, p. 31). In short, somewhat like Trotsky, Dimitroff offered to call off the class war and, in bourgeoisie-democratic countries, build class collaboration. Again, in the fight against fascism, all sides marked all others. Stalin, in some ways, adopted Trodsky's position, after driving Trotsky out of the USSR.

Stalin sided directly with Dimitroff. Things changed quickly. The Communist International which had mostly been directed by Dutt's position for six years, changed direction. In one day, the Communist Party USA stopped denouncing Roosevelt as a

"Social fascist" and declared him a progressive ally. Dimitroff's lesser-evil position was thenceforth the ideology which drove the international official communist movement, largely unchallenged but for brief outcries from the Chinese (who habitually praised, and ignored, Stalin) and Albanians.

The ideological sharpness in Dutt, especially his stress on the role of liberalism in the construction of fascism, is critically supported by some sectors of the left today, in the U.S., the Progressive Labor Party (PLP, on-line). Indeed, it does not take much to see the corporate state in the works of liberal former Labor Secretary Robert Reich or the calls for "Teamwork" in Total Quality Management and New Unionism plans. The notion that, "We are all in this together," wrapped in national flags, can be a dangerous one: the corporate state, the ideology of the high-stakes test and standardization movement (Gibson, 2001). Nor is it a leap to see the similarities of Mussolini's schools and proposals from the right wings of multiculturalism which elevate secondary differences like race and language over the unity offered by the centrality of social class (Reich, Kneller, Perlman).

There are clear areas of agreement between Dimitroff and Trotsky. While Dimitroff stressed the right wing within the bourgeoisie as the source of fascism and Trotsky identified the source as the middle class, both concluded that the Comintern should move from the "United Front From Below" policy of building the communist party itself by denouncing liberalism and directly recruiting workers into the revolutionary organization of communism, to the "Popular Front" vision of building alliances with the leadership of mass liberal organizations for mutual self-defense. There is a strain of Soviet nationalism, defending the Soviet Motherland, running through both arguments. Even Trotsky, dispossessed and identifying Stalin as the source of the Bonaparte reaction in the U.S.S.R., refused to move away from the view that the revolution he helped bring to life was anything other than a deformed workers' state.

However, while Trotsky, Dimitroff and Dutt appeal directly to ideology at varying degrees, they all deny the importance of ideology within the context of developed capitalism, the condition of world-wide capitalist relations which all three would agree prevailed at the time of their writing. It was through appeals to particular understandings of the developing productive forces, not to the development of rational consciousness, that each made his case. In other words, it would be the development of production and technology, not egalitarian-democratic ideas, that would set back the fascists. The dogmatism then prevalent in institutionalized Marxism fell into the trap that E.P. Thompson described:

> . . . men had abandoned human agency. They could not hold back change, but change went with the shuffling gate of circumstance. . . . Events seemed to will men, not men events. For meaning can be given to history only in the quarrel between "ought" and "is". . . (Thompson p. 184).

There were, in retrospect, clear internal flaws in each presentation. Dutt's idea, fascism equals capitalism in decay, could not explain a fascist society not in collapse. Trotsky and

Dimitroff at once underestimated the role ideas in disowning the pivotal role of class struggle with calls for multi-class unity, and overestimated ideology in believing they could lure sectors of the ruling class into operating against their own interests. Interestingly, both Trotsky and Dimitroff, to differing degrees, adopt the fascist argument that national socialism is the popular expression of the masses in a nation in crisis.

This debate does seep into much of the popular consciousness about fascism. Many people eclectically pick up bits of each position and apply them uncritically, as did teachers I observed. Given that each position leads to a different line of march, this eclecticism will not serve us well should we seek to comprehend or overcome fascism effectively. Even more, many intellectuals who specialize in promoting an understanding of fascism miss the sources of their beliefs. Popular education writers like Jonathan Kozel, and Herb Kohl and Jean Anyon all describe conditions in the U.S. today which, if not fascist developments, certainly parallel them. They then offer liberal solutions (pacifism, voting, literacy programs, charity) which never address the roots of the problems in exploitation and alienation, the processes of capital. Perhaps that is because no current education commentator that I have encountered tenders a clear statement of what fascism is and where it came from.

Liberal historian, Stanley G. Payne, while suggesting that defining fascism has usually led to failure, attempts to do just that early in his book, *A History of Fascism* (p. 7, 487). His definition has three sections which stress fascism's (a) negations, like anti-Marxism, anti- liberalism, and anti-conservatism (b) ideology and program, such as nationalism, a positive evaluation of war, imperialism and corporatism (c) style, the organized party linked to a mass movement, and wide-spread use of symbolism. Payne also offers a one-sentence definition, contending that it is "a form of revolutionary ultra-nationalism for national rebirth that is based on a primarily vitalist philosophy, is structured on extreme elitism, mass mobilization and the *Fûhrerprinzip*, positively values violence as end as well as means and tends to normatize war and/or military virtues."

I find the liberal interpretation inadequate, sterile. Payne's outlook seems to be the height of detachment, contemplation; a privileged view secluded from the reality that fascism, at least in a long historical moment, needed to not only be understood, but fought. So below I offer preliminary ideas in developing a definition of fascism. I tender it as a framework for debate in investigations which see fascism as a problem *and* a fact (see also Berlet; Togliatti, pp. 3-12).

WHAT IS FASCISM?
"Blood and soil, folk and homeland are from the hands of God, from which we have everything that we are."

-- Bernhard Rust (Nazi educator)

Fascism is the unchecked rule of the rich--a full-scale assault on poor and working people. Parliamentary institutions are usually set aside. Wealth issues direct orders, frequently through a populist leader. Wages, social safety nets, working hour laws, labor

laws; all come under legal (and extra-legal) attack. The stick replaces the carrot. Severe censorship and surveillance strikes at opposition of all kinds. Even between capitalists of the same nation, struggle intensifies: bigger fish eat smaller fish, faster. Still, fascism in its early stages has been popular among masses of people deceived by nationalism and racism. These ideologies are key to the construction of fascism. But, war means work for some, which may also explain its initial popularity.

Fascism requires and is built on the support of capitalist elites. No dominant class had clean hands in the rise of fascism, including elites in the U.S. Henry Ford, the Dulles family, scions of the Catholic Church, and masses of American Bundists, among many others, were early supporters of fascism (Loftus, Lee, Simpson, Poole, Carlson). However, although those who personify capital from moment to moment are indeed important in their idiosyncracies, it is equally critical to investigate the processes of capital: alienation, exploitation, expansion, overproduction, commodity fetishism. Marx's analytical tools are key.

Fascism and capitalism are inseparable. There has never been a form of capital that was not built on a pre-fascist or fascist base--from slavery in the U.S. to today's varieties of imperialism. All major capitalists have fascist ties, the U.S. in Latin America for example--or Saudi Arabia. While fascism may not be the predominant form of capitalist government, elements of fascist ideology (biological determinism, rabid nationalism, a culture agog with spectacles, etc.) and fascist organizations (police, skinheads, Klan, etc.) are always present, ready to be called to the foreground. Nazi eugenics ideology, bio-determinist racial hygiene aimed at exterminating the "unfit," by declaring them "life unworthy of life," had its origins in the U.S. (Kuhl, p. 101, Biesold, p. 74). Capitalist governments do not require a revolution to institute fascism.

Frequently, fascism does rise up in capitalist crises, for example the moments when the struggle for production reaches a point when the workers can no longer purchase the products they produce, a crisis of over-production and declining profits resulting in an intense expansionist battle for cheaper labor, raw materials, and new markets, that is, war (Eatwell, p. 279). However, neither war nor capitalist crisis is a pre-condition of fascism. In addition, it is possible to live under mostly fascist conditions within a nation that is not itself fascist, that is, to live as a jobless black youth in southeast Detroit in 2000.

Fascism deceptively calls for the national unity of social classes, class-collaboration, but actually promotes the division of people by race, sex, disabilities, culture, nation or religion. Fascism was, under Mussolini and later Hitler, conceived as the "corporate state," that is, all the resources of the society, the unity of labor, government and business, were directed toward the support of corporate profits. In order to motivate warriors and bolster profits, fascism conceals the tensions between those who own and those who work.

Fascism frequently is employed as a strategic base for war. Fascist shifts in government grow with war preparations and execution (Germany, Japan, Spain, etc.).

While no one would seriously argue that the U.S. was a fascist nation during WWII, for Japanese-Americans interred in western U.S. camps, it probably was in many ways.

Violence and terror, made tolerable by racism, nationalism, and sexism, typically become public policy--beyond popular, they are encoded in law. Violence and reverence for power, discipline, and authority are matched by philosophical and educational calls for submission and obedience to an often charismatic leader, to a *volk*-race, or to a nation (Kallis, p. 200). Fascism is built on a long history of exclusion, racism, and murder. Concentration camps of a variety of kinds, absent the death ovens and high science, were an integral part of western civilization, Indian reservations or the Belgian King Leopold, for example. Nothing comes from nothing.

Fascism relies on mysticism, a culture which turns to superstition and reveres irrationality (celebrations of misogyny, death, degeneracy, and hopelessness--serving to explain apparent systematic despair). Fascism retards science and social production in order to mask its own decay. Naked self-interest in day to day life merges with incoherence in outlook. Indeed, following Dutt, fascism *is* organized decay. In the process, fascism turns to a profoundly misogynist fear of sexuality. Fascism is also history in rot, manufacturing a mythologized background of former glories. Life is held in contempt. The Spanish fascist slogan was, "Long Live Death." In Italy, Japan, Spain, and Germany, each of which developed somewhat idiosyncratic forms of fascist irrationalism, all theory was consistently built on idealist, that is, irrational, footing.

There is no consistency to fascist ideology, other than to preserve capitalism and to attack working-class action. Irrationalism is irregular, except in its main aims which cannot be unraveled in theory, but only in relation to social practice.

Fascism is virulently anti-communist. Communists, who have been consistent anti-fascist fighters, are among the first targets of fascism.

Fascism has only been defeated internally (primarily by the actions of indigenous national resistance), perhaps, twice: in China and Albania. However, resistance movements have changed fascism and halted its birth. There is nothing inevitable about fascism. It is a political movement, reaching from productive forces into the mass consciousness, and can be combated physically and intellectually. There is evidence that combined ideological and physical struggle causes fascism to retreat (Rosenhaft, p. 111).

There should be reasonable clues for action to be drawn, if these factors are true, which relate to how resistance to fascism was historically most successful. Theoretically resistance would be based on a class analysis of society, an internationalist perspective, a multi-racial, organized approach (as opposed to ephemeral coalitions based on sex, race, religion), willingness to use violence (yet simultaneously abhorring the hopelessness that is built into deadly violence) and the grasp of the critical role of ideology in combating fascist/ capitalist practice. At base, the target would be overcoming capitalism, not its personifications who may or may not be fascists.

That of course, was not the historical case in the WWII era. Resistance to fascism from the socialist camp was never ideologically clear-cut; socialism served up a mixture of egalitarianism, democratic, and internationalist anti-racist polemics, brewed with nationalism, capitalist relations of production, and authoritarianism. Socialism, which never pretended to be more than capitalism with a benevolent party at its head, represented an internal class struggle that later resolved itself as capitalism with the party become the capitalist class. Lenin's New Economic Policy, which clearly restored capitalist relations shortly after the Soviet Revolution, became the collapsed U.S.S.R. Mao's New Democracy, which followed a similar, but not the same, path in China, became the "to get rich is glorious" policy of the Chinese Communist party. In the war against fascism, each side indelibly printed on the other. The Soviets reintroduced motherland nationalism to motivate anti-fascist fighters. The U.S. arrested large segments of its Japanese-American population and placed them on neo-reservations, used a segregated military to fight the arch-segregationists, and promoted racist anti-Japanese caricatures in mass propaganda (Minear, Molasky). This result suggests another look at what it is to analyze and fight fascism.

Similarly, the post-war actions of the U.S., like reinstating the fascist emperor Hirohito and glossing over the war crimes of his minions, refusing to investigate masses of German war criminals after the hangings of a few, and, more to the point, running covert operations to ensure that thousands of known war criminals like NASA's Wernher von Braun could be safely brought to the U.S. and work in peace and comfort, not only sets up the antifascist ideological pronouncements of the western allies as dubious, it foreshadows a reverberating effect that Christopher Simpson describes as *Blowback*, the impact that these organized, witting fascists had later on in North American society (Simpson, p. 33). The clean-hands approach that the closed nature of "Schindler's List" suggests has little basis in fact. Ignorance alone must be the reason that classes about fascism in San Diego do not address the fascist leanings of the man for whom the local airport is named: Lindbergh. Students who are urged to travel to see the enshrined bones of St. Theresa, whose remains continue to tour the world, visiting San Diego in September 2000, might be made aware that her cult is steeped in ultra-right wing mysticism (Cornwell, p. 174). A sanitized version of the study of the Shoah and fascism that I witnessed in many Michigan classrooms, one that ignores the anti-union, anti-communist fascist radio-priest Father Coughlin in nearby Royal Oak, or the racist anti-semite Henry Ford who published the *International Jew, the World's Foremost Problem* in serial form in his newspaper the "Dearborn Independent," does not simply conceal a tidbit of history, but recreates alienation, strips students of a sense of currency and agency that should encourage deep study (Levstik, p. 11).

Why Did People Become Fascists?
"You will love this Holocaust museum. You don't have to make choices. The museum tells you to do everything."

-- Docent at Wiesenthal Holocaust Center

None of the mainstream political analyses offer a reasonable explanation to the routine question above. Some deny that many people did become fascists. For example, supporters of this line suggest that the German working class consistently resisted and that after WWII, at least in E. Germany, they became communists. To trade the swastika for Soviet colonization does not seem a major shift in the long term. Others say that people were fascists, but only superficial ones, and that they changed their minds after the war. This would seem to reestablish superficiality as an analytical tool. As Hilberg, Bolkosky, Goldhagen, Browning, and many others have demonstrated, people in fascist countries, once the communist movement was killed off, became willing accomplices in exterminationist government policies. This even though penalties for refusing to join in were, in many cases, minimal, scorn from peers perhaps, but little more. Faced with directly contributing to the obvious genocide, some people did choose to ask for other tasks, and often got them, with minimal retribution. However, the socio-economic and cultural explanations, which direct analysis at economics, class struggle, and religion, simply do not explain why people became fascists, repeatedly, all over the world.

"How the World Loves a Cage"

-- Maude, in "Harold and Maude"

Marxist geographer David Harvey suggests that the reason the caged bird builds its own cage rises from the economic and social relationships created by capital, a stage in the relations of people and nature in the struggle to survive and produce. He locates the origins of alienated life, the recreation of relations of domination by those who suffer from them, in capital's contradictory relationships between workers and owners which require that labor be paid less than its full value, creating a surplus value that is silently seized by capitalists (Harvey, p. 37). Those who become instruments of their own oppression, like those who working class Germans who voted Nazi, do so because their social relationships, beginning with their relationship to production, are pre-arranged to make them lifelong marks, to blind them to the totality of the relationship. Marx, per Harvey, says that the only way out is to break the iron discipline of capital, to abolish wage labor (Harvey, p. 385).

Here is Marx on the capitalist system as a whole: "This organic system as a totality has its presuppositions, and its development to its totality consists precisely in subordinating all elements of society to itself, or in creating out of it the organs which it still lacks; this is historically how it becomes a totality" (Marx, p. 278).

But Marx, the revolutionary, surely contrasted totality with completion, encapsulation. If, on the one hand, people are driven toward a war of all on all, because the working class is propertyless and must sell itself one by one to capital, and capital itself is always characterized by big fish necessarily eating little ones, on the other hand, Marx is also very clear that the organization of the working class, the revolutionary nature of technological development under capital, the internationalization of communication and transportation, the processes of the Master-Slave relationship in which the day-to-day

labors and deepened knowledge of the slaves' social practice offer perspectives of change and a wider horizon: revolution.

Harvey submits that the hidden relationships of labor and ownership requisite to capital are rather easily cloaked in analyses of distribution and exchange, where the pretense of freedom can be at least artificially upheld. However at the level of production, where neither freedom nor democracy can be authentically allowed, the realities of exploitation and greed become crystalline.

But this does not explain why, in a cultured, literate society permeated by purportedly communist activity struggling mightily to point at contradictory economic and social interests, as Germany was in the 1930s, masses of people chose, wittingly, to become fascists.

Istvan Meszaros, Lukacs's student, roots the seeds of fascist irrationalism within the contradiction of capital's desperately expansionist need to accumulate even more capital, by exploiting surplus labor to achieve surplus value, against human needs. His way out: to overcome the, "hierarchical structural subordination of labor to any alien controlling force whatsoever, as opposed to . . . simply changing the form in which the extraction and appropriation of surplus labor is perpetuated, as it always happened in the past (Meszaros, 2001, p. 4; Meszaros 1995, pp. 141, 833).

Remarkably, Meszaros is very close to situationist-anarchist Fredy Perlman whose *Continuing Appeal of Nationalism* locates the source of fascist development in "Marx's observation (that) every minute contributed to the capitalist production process, every thought contributed to the industrial system, further enlarges a power that is inimical to culture, to nature, to life. Applied science is not something alien; it is an integral part of the capitalist production process. Nationalism (too) is part of that process" (Perlman p. 58). Perlman roots his analysis, like Meszaros, in the hierarchy (and turns to notions of superiority) inherent in the social relations of capitalist production.

Even this, though, is insufficient to explain why it is that masses of people, working people, have been willing to march in front of their bosses, in repeated waves, often to their death. Why it is that people continue to become mediums of their own oppression remains a problem.

Wilhelm Reich, once Freud's prize pupil, believed that the reason working people do not strike when denied what is rightfully theirs, the reason the hungry often do not steal, the reason youths volunteer to meet the desires of millionaires, the inhibition of all critical faculties, is embedded in the tyrannical family, commanding obedience and fear of sex at the outset. For Reich, the authoritarian family is to the mind what capitalist production relations are to work. Organized mysticism, religion, etc., finds its foundations in dictatorial fathers. Reich is especially trenchant in his investigation of the interrelation of sexuality and racism in the Nazi lexicon, which treated them (and usually communism) simultaneously: racial/political purity traced by bloodline. Sexual sin is condemned and simultaneously promoted, fetishized, unrepressed sensuality is possessed

by alien races, anchoring the repressed and irrational personality. Reich demonstrates that in times of crisis, ruling powers commonly loosen sexual strictures within their class, while at the same time they step up their demands for morality, strong family values, etc. If, Reich says, the working people lost their sexual strictures at the same time they lost their jobs in times of economic collapse, any dictator would be threatened. Reich sees a direct line between abstinence and irrationalism. Reich is equally sharp on the failures of socialism. The Bolsheviks knew (and cared) only a little about the mass dread of freedom, fear of critical critique, and did little to address it--volunteering to replace one father with another. This would explain how a society instructing its members in Marxism, knew so little about what may reasonably be called the humanitarian goals of Marxism in freedom and creativity, why so few pointed to the naked new emperor and demanded communism, not capitalism. The way out for Reich is a process of analysis (social and psychological), and struggles for freedom (social and sexual). People need to liberate work, knowledge, and love. People must demand real gratification for every key aspect of life--and accept responsibility for it (W. Reich, p. 266). Escape from the vassal structure's triangle of patriarchy, monogamy, and sexual repression, bonds more powerful than coercion, grows from the transformation of everyday life, a positive, constructive, anticipatory project (Brown, p. 142). Despite Reich's late-life turn to his own forms of meglo-mania, his contributions to understanding why people willingly entrap their own fates form benchmarks for future investigations.

Fascism and Education
"All the youth for the Fuhrer"

-- Baldur von Schirach, 1937

"The purpose of our education is to create the Nazi political soldier."

-- Hitler

Teachers in Germany, overwhelmingly, did not resist fascism. Indeed, most were early volunteers in the Nazi party. By 1937, 97% of the teaching force were Nazis, and Jews were thrown out of the profession, with barely a whimper from their colleagues (Mann 51). In Italy, there was some resistance from teachers and religious instructors. However, fascista volunteers dominated the teaching force there too, almost totally by 1934 (Minio-Paluello). In Germany teachers watched their Jewish colleagues segregated, then exterminated. While that horror of fascism is hard to imagine, so is the day-to-day school life in which, for example, teachers deliberately demanded that Jewish elementary children join other kids in milk and snack lines, then as the Jewish kids approached with empty cups raised, the teachers told them, "Run along, Jewess, next please." This went on day after day (Mann, p. 103).

The historical record of fascist education systems in Italy and Germany demonstrate similar tendencies that can be summarized in predictable fashion. Indeed, in the classes I teach, after reading Weiss's *Ideology of Death*, students are asked to construct the outlines of a fascist educational system. Below is a list taken from my most recent 2001

class, with parenthetical validating references to Kneller's *Educational Philosophy of National Socialism*, Mann's, *School for Barbarians*, and *Education in Fascist Italy*, by Minio-Paluello, which the class I was teaching had not read.

> Volkist-racist and nationalist, focused on the common good (Kneller, p. 45, 145, Mann, p. 59)
>
> Anti-intellectualism, with a concentration on the "practical" (Kneller, p. 206)
>
> Attentiveness to heroes and homeland (Kneller, p. 208)
>
> Devoutly irrationalist and anti-communist (Kneller, pp. 246, 249)
>
> Elitist, hero-worshiping, yet stressing obedience and internal divisions, tracking, as well as race/nation unity, i.e., contradictory theory and practice (Kneller, pp. 143, 163; Mann , p. 58))
>
> Nation over religion, but emphasizing Christianity and the family (Kneller, p. 147)
>
> Militarized schooling (Mann, p. 67)
>
> Standardized testing as a benchmark for performance and promotion (Kneller, p. 121, Minio-Paluello, p. 171))
>
> To meet industrialists' demands for workers (Kneller, pp. 120, 149, 207)
>
> Forced labor, "volunteering," for students (Kneller, p.165)
>
> Sex and class segregation in teaching methods, content, and school selection
>
> Anti-semitism linked to anti-communism (Mann, pp. 78, 79)

The current usefulness of that outline is open to interpretation. What my students rarely predict (and I did not either) is that the policy, if not the practice, of fascist education in many ways mirrored student-centered action-oriented curricula. The Nazis, for example, insisted that education should not be conducted using a disjointed transmission model, but should reflect an integrated curriculum that is a pedagogy, "aimed at a balanced development of thought, desire, and behavior." Schools were to have deep ties to communities, understanding their "social tensions, a school reconcilable with life as it is" (John W. Taylor quoted in Kneller, p. 209; Mann, p. 59). Mathematics education mixed the practical and theoretical (Mann, pp. 67-69). Considering that most shifts in education are met with at least passive resistance from teachers, fascist schools

nevertheless used the vocabulary, if not the practice, of many forms of whole language instruction, as well as critical pedagogy. This I pose as a *problem* to educators today.

The dialectical, interactive, approach that is urged by some tendencies within the whole language movement is at its heart merely a somewhat deepened consideration of Hegelian idealism, dialectics abstracted from the material world. If we consider the interaction of the reader, the text, and the poem, detached from the social and economics relations that make the reader and the text possible, we witness dialectics disconnected from the material world. Those sections of whole language which ignore their political roots, are positively and negatively utopian: positively in that it holds out what might be in better days; negatively in that it pretends that those days have already arrived (Gibson, 1997).

Whole language proposes important connections: educator and student, mind and body, affective and cognitive, school and community, theory and practice, whole and parts, multi-sensory investigations, etc., in opposition to traditional pedagogy which demands each area be disconnected from the other. However, form cannot overbear substance, pedagogy cannot step outside of the totality of the political, social, and economic world that it is born within. It is possible to use tendencies within whole language--Hegelian idealist dialectics, approaches detached from questions of inequality and segregation--to reach seriously erroneous conclusions.

What is missing is the vision of the general which arches over the particular, the complexities of the material world in which dialectics operate. More specifically, what is missing is class consciousness, an understanding of the processes and substance of historical materialism, the totality in which a profound grasp of the relationship of ideas and social practice can make sense (Lukacs, 2000, pp. 112, 117; Gibson, 1994). Even so, the humanitarian goals of most tendencies within whole language, those that suggest building caring communities within capital's insistence on the war on all, seem to me to match Marx's own hard-hitting analysis that insists nothing can come from nothing, and if there is to be a better world, it must be identified within the processes of today.

Here is how Lukacs sets up the unity and struggle of dialectics (the study of change) and materialism (in the material world):

> It is only the comprehension of the concrete whole, to which the simple categories of dialectics belong, that makes possible the knowledge of the simple ones, and not the other way around, even if . . . its exposition must often take a reversed path (Lukacs, 2000, p. 112).

Totality is essence, doubly out of reach. First, totality is itself in constant flux. Since practice necessarily trails change, ideas about reality never quite catch up with a reality that is always changing, human understanding is always incomplete. Secondly, the complexities of essence, in its completeness are too profound for any one to fully grasp. No one sees the totality of an event. However, this does not mean that one cannot act or

comprehend, or even predict certain kinds of change. Fascism existed. It changed over time, yet people made life and death decisions about what it was.

This begins to open the struggle of not simply opposing fascism, but toward overcoming it, to break the circle, in the sense Hegel initially proposed: to overcome is to incorporate the past, yet more than to assault it, to go beyond triumph, to enter a new higher stage (Kojeve, p. 208). Today is, of course, composed of yesterday, but it is not yesterday. Overcoming, for our purposes, involves at least these issues: Pedagogy as related to History (how shall we come to know something and what will that be?), Philosophy (what is true and how shall we locate it?), Practicality (What shall we do?), all interacting within the whole. This, and more, is the complexity of praxis which every educator must, consciously or unwittingly, address each day. The question, "Who am I and what are my relations with others?" is too often unasked in teacher education programs, setting teachers up to be missionaries for capital, their minds replaced by the minds of textbook authors, standards writers, test promoters.

Perhaps a turn to historian E.H. Carr is helpful. Carr suggests, in regard to the construction of history, that the historian's work is always subjective, incomplete, made partisan by standpoint. Even so, while the historian cannot sort through the "whole of experience," she can sift through significant causes, understand her own circumscription and see into the essence of the question at hand. The historian who most fully understands her era writes the best history (Carr, p. 136).

How does this relate to the way we teach about *overcoming* fascism and the Shoah? To understand the Shoah, one must understand the universe into which it fit, a universe where nothing come from nothing. To teach about overcoming the Shoah and fascism, we must consider the relationship of what people are to know, with *how they come to know it*, which surely must be a significant issue in overcoming fascism intellectually. The historian's interaction is much like that of the teacher.

While a minor thrust of this critique is aimed at whole language, or constructivist pedagogy, it must be emphasized that comprehending even the most rudimentary of the profound complexities of the relationship of fascism to the Shoah is not possible for students subjected to the curricula that sweeps across most world history in preparation for an in-and-out standardized exam, where truth is presupposed to be inside the test and not a social construction always in flux. With the constructivists, it is clear that once an intrinsic *why* to learn is established, an exploratory, interactive, multi-sensory method seeking to find meaning even in these perplexing and horrid events is sensible. However, within this context (and this codicil is important) content must interact with and sometimes overbear form. Problem posing is not directionless. The lighthouse beacon of historical materialism, class consciousness (which includes the democratic processes that insist that what one knows is deeply influenced by how one comes to know it) is a classroom necessity--if it is itself open to criticism and testing.

Per Lukacs, the working class alone had a stake in a full grasp of the truth about fascism, just as the Slave alone holds the truth of the Master--the easily understood fact

that one has an interest in freedom and liberation and the other, solely in domination (Lukacs, 2000, pp. 53, 88; Kojeve, p. 47). Lukacs, of course, roots the way out in the interaction of work, labor, and consciousness. This should be important to educators whose work is all about consciousness. It implies taking sides.

But Lukacs, too, much to the likely dismay of the right-wing postmodernism which so wants to claim his notions of consciousness (but not *class* consciousness) as their own, supported the role of the Leninist (and later) party as the storehouse of truth, in apparent contradiction to his repeated convictions that truth is a mediation of people and nature and society (Lukacs, 2000, pp. 74-76, 79). The role of the party, as a mediator of what is true, remains a problem within the organized left today. Shall truth emanate outward from the party? Shall the party test for truth in relationship with the mass of people? (And will the material basis of that interaction be egalitarianism or privilege, in economic and decision-making life?) The Leninist party, in setting out to oppose fascism, did not, at the end of the day, address *overcoming* it, and, while there was certainly mass struggle, never went beyond capital in labor relations or in class consciousness to the point where capital's dominance was transcended.

The methodological interaction of the particular teacher and the unique student, and their interaction with their community, is important, indeed a spark to learning. However, none of this occurs outside the struggle that remains fixed between those who own, and those who must work to live, the age old relationship of the Master and the Slave. Content is the dominant side of the contradictory relationship of form and substance, and that of pedagogy and curriculum, which is why so much of this piece is directed at the latter.

This brings us back to our beginning, with Chad, who believed one outlook to be as good as the next and that tolerance is the vaccine for fascism. These two ideas have no credence in history or philosophy--or pedagogy--although they have plenty of currency now. Intellectual ambiguity, uncertainty, cannot excuse the reality of praxis in the classroom and out. Tolerance is only a thin veil that does not protect overcoming, but shields us from its view. Tolerance and compassion are not the same thing.

Teaching against fascism is to demonstrate that, in E.H. Carr's words: "It moves" (Carr, p.102). Things change. Nothing comes from nothing, and the shadows of the past carry forward into the future. The people of the democratic world defeated fascism, using mass violence, a persistent reality that should reposition the teaching of victimization that underlies much current Shoah studies. What people understood during the rise of fascism largely fixed their behavior under the various fascist regimes. There are no bystanders, no random atoms. There were revolutionaries, people who resisted, who were victimized, and perpetrators. How they came to think and analyze their social positions and interests is significant. In many ways, the fight against fascism was victorious, triumphant. Yet fascism was not overcome.

What to do? Educators were left lighthouse beacons as a legacy to teach and work with: solidarity, democracy, equality, historical critique, community, and most

importantly, overcoming, which I think is love. That is the basis of overcoming, the reason the last battle might actually be the last. I believe both the young Hegel and Marx understood that. Structural issues are as significant as cognitive issues in a classroom, but as the whole language practitioners understand, the affective side is both an opening and a barrier. If, as the old "Internationale" suggests, the working class is to become the human race, it cannot do so with sheer opposition--must go beyond the clash of thesis/antithesis/synthesis, which has never fairly represented dialectical interaction.

Teaching well, as Anyon has said repeatedly, means to address the totality of the teaching situation, that doing educational reform without doing reform of the economic and social conditions of schooling is like "washing the air on one side of a screen door." Addressing this totality, a relationship of what is inside the classroom with what is outside it, and often alien to it, is a matter not only of professional commitment, but an act of love.

This is why both Che Guevara and Paulo Freire insisted that the true motivation of the educator and the revolutionary is love, why the heart of the Christians' Golden Rule and Acts 4-4 (from each according to commitment to each according to need) offer standpoints from which to integrate and overcome the past: true in history, true in the classroom. Only the Slaves have an interest in *overcoming*, never recreating, the contradiction of the Master and the Slaves (Gibson, 2001a). The imprints of the remnants of WWII's fascist theories and practice are with us now, as is the question of one Nazi Holocaust--many genocides. Hence, teaching in ways that deepen understanding counts. Demonstrating that there are rational ways for people to understand and act on the world can be a matter of life and death (Internationale, on line; Freire, p. 77).

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