

all out of line."

Lindorff is not an obscure, solitary blogger. The author of *Killing Time: An Investigation into the Death Row Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal*, he has contributed to *The Nation* and *Salon*, and has appeared on National Public Radio. And Counterpunch is not an obscure website. It is edited by the leftist journalist Alexander Cockburn, features writing by Edward Said and Philip Agee, and claims to attract 60,000 visitors each day. Nor was Lindorff's Bush/Hitler reference an aberration at Counterpunch. The day before Lindorff's article appeared, another author, Wayne Madsen, wrote that Bush is "borrowing liberally from Hitler's play book." The FŸhrer, Lindorff said, "would be proud that an American president is emulating him in so many ways."

A significant portion of the "Bush is a Nazi" rhetoric has its origins in the antiwar movement. One antiwar site, Takebackthemedias.com, which attracted some attention in the press during the run-up to war in Iraq, features a variety of anti-Bush "flash movies." One, entitled "Bush is not a Nazi, so stop saying that," begins with ominous music and the warning: "The media will not tell you of the Bush family Nazi association." The movie goes on to accuse the Bushes of first financing the Third Reich — and then coming up with a clever plan to conceal their treason: "To offset their reputation as World War II traitors, former President Bush joined the U.S. Navy as a pilot." Then the viewer sees a series of statements equating the current President Bush with Hitler. "Both leaders had catastrophes occur allowing them to remove many civil rights," the movie says, showing side-by-side pictures of the Reichstag fire and the World Trade Center attacks. The screen switches to a photo of Bush with a young woman athlete and a picture of Hitler with an adoring young fan. "Imperialism seems to be a real turn-on," the text says. Later, the movie shows Bush with a small child alongside a picture of Hitler with a young man; the caption reads, "You don't mind if I kill your brother/father/uncle to get rich, do you kid?"

Such material will undoubtedly seem crazy to most readers. But it received a kind of scholarly seal of approval with the recent publication of a study of political conservatism — written by professors at Stanford, Berkeley, and the University of Maryland — that likened Hitler and Mussolini to Ronald Reagan and Rush Limbaugh. All were "right-wing conservatives," the authors wrote in the American Psychological Association's *Psychological Bulletin*, and as such shared traits like "mental rigidity and closed-mindedness," "increased dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity," and "fear, anger, and aggression." "One is justified in referring to Hitler, Mussolini, Reagan, and Limbaugh as right-wing conservatives," the professors concluded, "because they all preached a return to an idealized past and favored or condoned inequality in some form." If the nation's leading scholars can lump together Hitler and Reagan, why not Hitler and George W. Bush, as well?

[Author's note — As if to prove the contention that Bush-hating which starts on the Internet fringe can move into the mainstream, shortly after this article was written, Vanity Fair magazine, on page 146 of its September issue, featured a letter from a reader who said he noticed something interesting about a photo of Bush administration military adviser Richard Perle. The picture reminded the reader of a famous Alfred Eisenstaedt photograph of Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels. "Here it is: the same arrogance, the same malice toward the photographer, the same all-around creepiness," the reader wrote. "Perle isn't the first government official to use deceit and fear mongering to force an extremist, irrational, and ultimately violent view on an entire nation or globe." A letter like that — with rhetoric that could have come straight from Counterpunch — is usually tossed in the trash at major magazines, but Vanity Fair's editors found the argument so compelling that they published the