



Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America (Forbidden Bookshelf)

By Bertram Gross

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A look at corporate authoritarianism that William Shirer called “the best thing I’ve ever seen on how America might go fascist democratically.”

In 1980, US capitalist politics wore a “nice-guy mask,” a troubling disguise to cover up a creeping despotism in which the ultra-rich and corporate overseers were merging with a centralized state power in order to manage the populace. This immanent corporate authoritarianism threatened to subvert constitutional democracy. But unlike the violent and sudden usurpations that led to fascism in the days of Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese empire builders, this new “smiling” American breed of fascism was gaining ground through gradual and silent infringements on the freedoms of the American people.

First published over three decades ago, *Friendly Fascism* is uncannily predictive of the threats and realities of current political and economic power trends. Author Bertram Gross, a presidential adviser during the New Deal era, traces the history and logic of declining democracy in First World countries and pinpoints capitalist transnational growth and inappropriate responses to global crises as the sources of late twentieth-century despotism in America. Gross issues ever-urgent warnings about what happens when big business and big government become bedfellows—chronic inflation, recurring recession, overt and hidden unemployment, the poisoning of the environment—and simultaneously proffers a practical shift of perspective that could help US citizens build a truer democracy. He imagines an America in which heroes are no longer needed and the leadership is a group of non-elitists who “recognize the ignorance of the wise as well as the wisdom of the ignorant.”

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- Sales Rank: #221210 in eBooks
- Published on: 2016-03-08
- Released on: 2016-03-08
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review

“This is the best thing I’ve ever seen on how America might go fascist democratically. *Friendly Fascism* offers a very clear exposition of where America is, and how we got there.” —William Shirer

“At a time of escalating political uncertainty, when the forces of totalitarianism threaten once more to crawl out of the American woodwork, *Friendly Fascism* is a powerful tool—better yet, a weapon—that can help us avert a distinctly unfriendly future.” —Alvin Toffler

“First-rate . . . A fascinating, provocative job. Bertram Gross has written an important book, and it deserves the widest possible audiences.” —Michael Harrington

About the Author

Bertram Gross (1912–1997) was a social scientist, federal bureaucrat, and professor of public policy and political science. During the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, he served as an advisor in the areas of public housing, wartime price controls, small business, and post-war planning. He was the major architect of the original full-employment bills of 1944 and 1945, and of the Employment Act of 1946. The Campaign to Abolish Poverty/Full Employment Coalition now presents the annual Bertram Gross Award in his honor. While working on legislation in Congress and the president’s office, he wrote *The Legislative Struggle: A Study of Social Combat*, which won the American Political Science Association’s Woodrow Wilson Prize. Gross contributed to a variety of publications, including the *New York Times* and *Social Policy*, where his first piece on Friendly Fascism appeared.

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