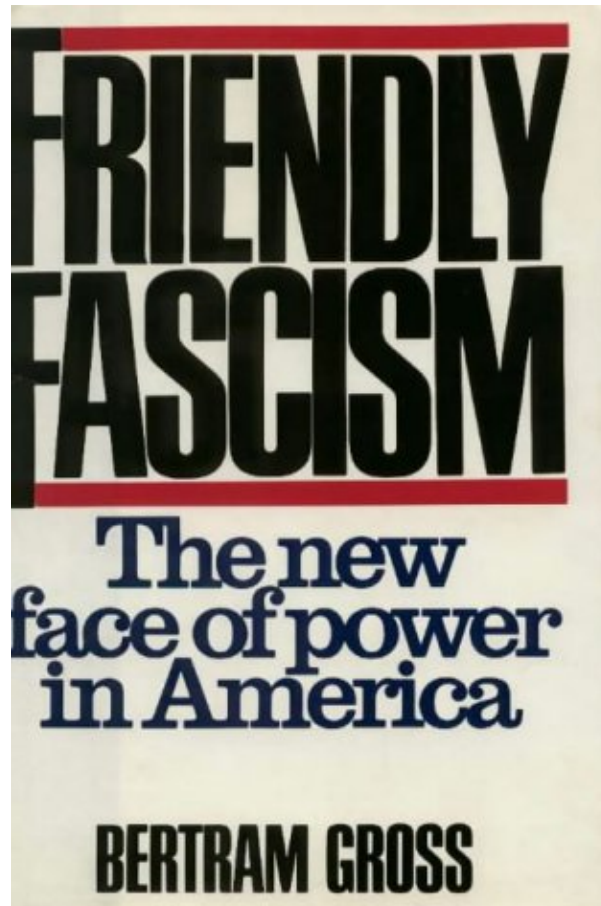
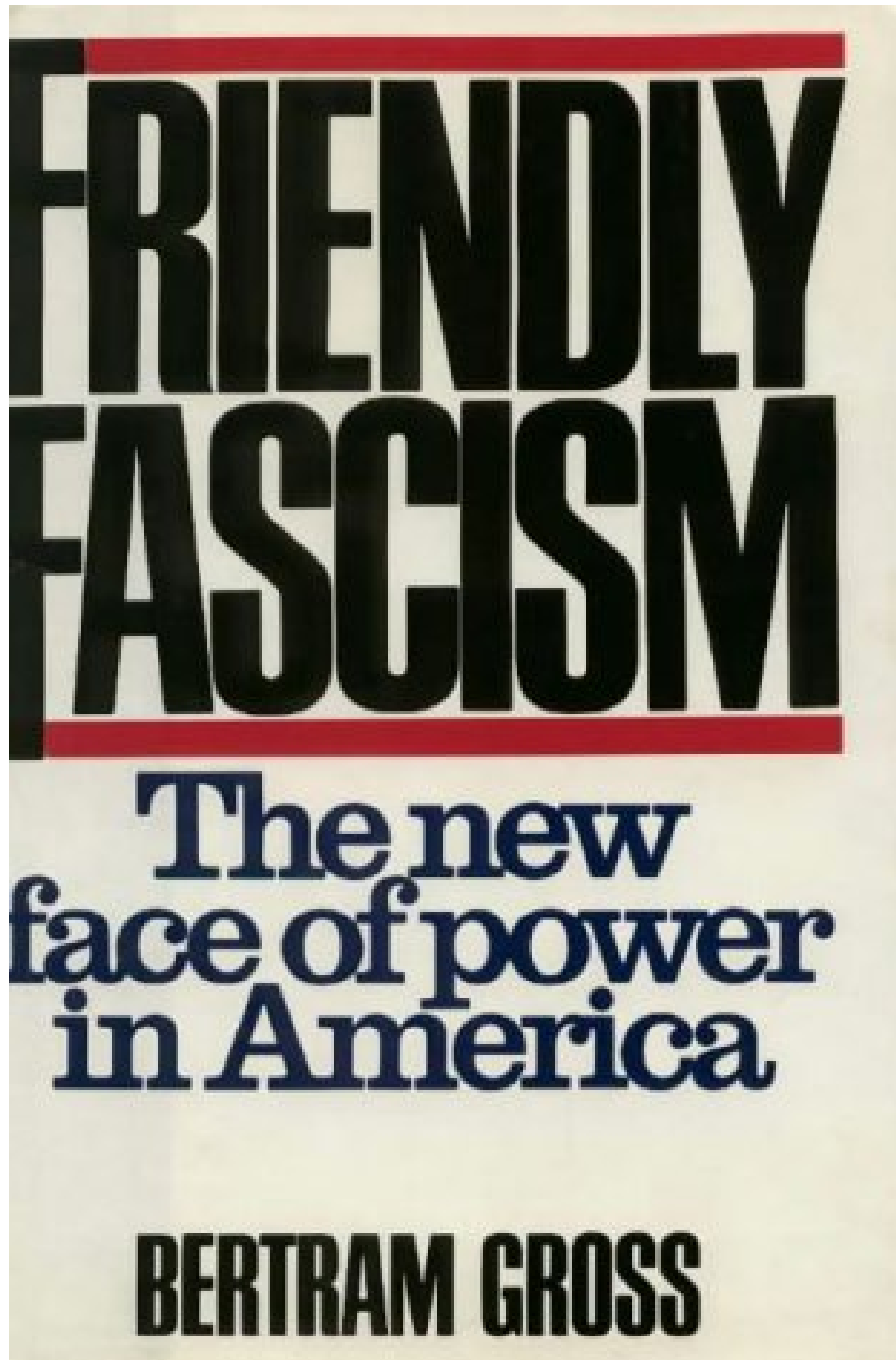


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Illuminates the increasing collusion between Big Government and Big Business to "manage" our society in the interests of the elite.

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Get this book while you can

By daibhidh

I ran across this book when I was 17; it spooked me then. I decided to pick it up again and see how far we've come, and I am amazed at how on the mark Bertram Gross was in his analysis of elite control of America.

These days, even reading a book like this likely gets you branded a "conspiracy theorist" but Gross points out several times he's not referring to conspiracies -- the Big Government/Big Business combine that is the fueling engine of fascism is alive and well. Indeed, stronger than ever in this country.

This book is a deep, frightening account of elite power structures in America. Friendly fascism is fascism with a friendly face -- not so much jackboots, mass rallies, and so forth that comprise the popular stereotype of fascism, but rather an insidious, public-relations savvy manipulation of power for profit.

What impresses me most is how thorough and cogent Gross's analysis is, and I am sad more people haven't read this book. While it came out in 1980, anybody who is politically aware today will see that, rather than being dated, Gross was definitely ahead of his time in his thinking. This is a big book (@400 pages), and densely packed with information, but it is definitely worth your time.

113 of 118 people found the following review helpful.

Prophetic Book Considers Effects Of Rise Of The Power Elite!

By Barron Laycock

I lost my trusty old 'dogged-eared' copy of this wonderful classic in a house fire a couple of years ago, and only recently found a used hardcover copy at the wonderful independent bookstore in Peterborough; The Toadstool Bookstore. Considering how relevant the book is to events transpiring in this country now, it was a fortuitous discovery. This is a relatively short but extremely cogent and well-argued treatise on the rise of a form of fascistic thought and social politics in late 20th century America. Author Bertram Gross' thesis is quite straightforward; the power elite that comprises the corporate, governmental and military superstructure

of the country is increasingly inclined to employ every element in their formidable arsenal of 'friendly persuasion' to win the hearts and minds of ordinary Americans through what Gross refers to as "friendly fascism".

For anyone familiar with modern social theory, it is apparent that the author's thesis is a quite clever and accurate extension of sociologist C. Wright Mills' well known notions of what came to be known as the 'mass society' theory. This was an essential aspect of Mills' famous theory of the power elite as forwarded in a book with the same title. Like social theorist G. William Domhoff ("The Higher Circles"), Professor Gross shows how the deceptively friendly and engaging style of the powers that be actually constitute an increasingly dangerous threat to the democratic process and to the long-term survival of our precious civil liberties. Of course, for Americans used to the association between the term 'fascism' and the image of angry totalitarian states such as Nazi Germany and the Italy of the same period of time, it is perhaps difficult to associate with the notion that clever and systematic manipulation of the general population through use of the mass media is a form of fascistic influence. Yet, as Gross argues so persuasively, that is exactly what it is.

The term that pops to mind is that process that M.I.T. scholar Noam Chomsky would refer to as "manufacturing consent", a dangerous propensity which dangerously influences the perceptions of individual citizens by continually immersing the populace in an electronic stream of messages, both blatant and subliminal, that serves to condition them to a particular way of experiencing, participating, and perceiving the world around them. We find ourselves constantly bombarded by powerful and suggestive images, message-laden icons which deliver consistent themes regarding the nature of the environment we are living in, one we come to employ more and more exclusively as our preferred method of interacting in both the civil and legal aspects of contemporary society.

As Professor Gross so prophetically forecasted, the mergers of all commercial news sources, both electronic and other, have come under the ownership and control of corporate America, one of the leading edges of the power elite. Amazingly, all of this also rings a responsive chord with the single most prophetic work of fiction in the 20th century, Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World". Lost in our petty diversions and self-absorbed in a pool of trivial pursuits, we become increasingly more vulnerable to the solid wall of subliminal and other messages all conveying a message regarding the nature of the world and our social, economic, and political place in it.

As our experience with the several successful Presidents ranging from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush, the artful use of personal charisma to cover a mean-spirited political agenda has worked amazingly well. In the twenty years since the book was originally published, many aspects of our collective socioeconomic well-being have been profoundly changed, almost exclusively to the favor of the rich and well placed and to the increasing detriment of the average man and woman on the street. The statistics available are overwhelming in detailing the levels to which ordinary citizens have been stripped of most of the socioeconomic gains of the last century. In every area of contemporary life, from the cost and extent of health coverage to the responsibility for a variety of aspects such as providing for individual retirements, the vastly expanding future tax liability, and the use of the federal treasury to provide for subsidies to corporate America, the story is the same.

Increasingly we are being manipulated into surrendering our voice in the democratic process and to playing a more limited role as consumers, which the elite evidently sees as our only crucial civic responsibility. As George W. Bush said with a booming voice and a congenial charismatic smile, post 9/11 Americans just had to get out to do their patriotic duty by once again buying things, to get the economy going once more. Indeed, it is becoming a brave new world. This is a wonderful book, and one that is a great, thought-

provoking read. Enjoy!

49 of 51 people found the following review helpful.

This book is one of the best books on elite corruption.

By A Customer

Friendly Fascism, by Bertram Gross, is an excellent, gripping, knowledgeable and illuminating book by a man who served as an insider in the system (the White House) and evolved to the point that he felt the system itself was the problem, and both needed exposing (as to its anatomy and tactics, never discussed publically in the mass media or in our educational institutions) and its need for change. His book was a warning as to the seeds of a new brand of fascism he clearly saw evolving in this country (written during the Reagan administration), which was also warned against, prophetically, in Romano Guardini's early books, *The End of the Modern World*, *The World and the Person*, *Power and Responsibility*, *Letters from Lake Como*, and *The Virtues* (some of which are still out of print). He brilliantly analyzes the hierarchy of the system, where real power lies, how it is maintained, the role of the public in all this, perhaps - most importantly - the issue of wealth and control of information. When I read this book I felt great joy - because he succeeded in getting it into print and because what he had to say was so desperately needed. I even feel this more strongly now - my only complaint is that what he said was beginning was, I feel, understated - it has evolved and progressed farther than that and many of his warnings (as surveillance) are now "accepted" ways of conducting high-level business, are, in fact, the foundation of it in many ways. Whole industries (as mass media) are becoming built upon this, hidden behind Gross's brilliant explanation of "triple speak" (truth, only whispered at elite gatherings, myth, and jargon - the latter two fed to the public to confuse and distract.) It is an exciting, brilliant and very necessary book, right on the mark, and highly recommended.

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