

Theodor W.
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Aspects of
the New
Right-Wing
Extremism

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Aspects of the New Right- Wing Extremism

Theodor W. Adorno

With an Afterword by Volker Weiss

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Originally published in German as *Aspekte des neuen Rechtsradikalismus* © SuhrkampVerlag Berlin, 2019. All rights reserved by and controlled through SuhrkampVerlag Berlin.

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Polity Press
65 Bridge Street
Cambridge CB2 1UR, UK

Polity Press
101 Station Landing
Suite 300
Medford, MA 02155, USA

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ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-4146-1

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism

So, ladies and gentlemen,

I will not attempt to present a theory of right-wing extremism with any claim to comprehensiveness but, rather, I will highlight with some informal observations a few things of which you may not all be aware. It is thus not my intention to invalidate other theoretical interpretations, simply to add a little to what is generally thought and known about these matters.

In 1959 I gave a lecture entitled 'The Meaning of Working through the Past', in which I developed the thesis that the reason for right-wing extremism, or the potential for such a right-wing extremism, which was not yet truly visible at the time, is that the social conditions for fascism continue to exist. So I will work on the assumption, ladies and gentlemen, that, despite the collapse of fascism itself, the conditions for fascist movements are still socially, if not politically, present. Here I am thinking especially of the still prevailing tendency towards concentration of capital, which one can calculate away with all manner of statistical arts but which cannot seriously be doubted. At the same time, this tendency towards concentration still creates the possibility of constantly downgrading strata of society that were clearly bourgeois in terms of their subjective class consciousness and want to cling to, and possibly reinforce, their privileges and social status. These groups still tend towards a hatred of socialism, or what they call socialism; that is, they lay the blame for their own potential downgrading not on the apparatus that causes it, but on those who were critical towards the system in which they