

1940 after Hitler and Stalin signed their nonaggression pact. During 1940 and 1941 it became increasingly evident that the United States would be drawn into the war against the Axis powers. The imprisonment of the Bund's leader, Fritz Kuhn, a German-born chemist employed by the Ford Motor Company, also contributed to the decline. He was convicted of stealing funds from the Bund.

While pro-Nazi sentiment among some Bund adherents undoubtedly persisted throughout the war years, their organization disappeared, not to appear again after the conclusion of the war. There was no declared Nazi movement in the United States until the emergence of George Lincoln Rockwell more than a decade after the end of the war.

Rockwell was tall and handsome and had a commanding presence. He also had a sense of drama and he knew how to exploit the shock and dread that his public appearances provoked. Rockwell obtained especially generous helpings of publicity on the frequent occasions when he would apply for permits for street rallies. Public officials habitually would turn him down and, in the process, denounce him. New York City's Mayor Robert F. Wagner rejected one such request for a permit, an application to hold a demonstration in Union Square Park on July 4, 1960, saying it was "an invitation to riot and disorder from a halfpenny Hitler." The courts eventually ordered the New York City parks department to give Rockwell his permit. Each step of the proceedings provided publicity for Rockwell.

In his travels around the country to picket showings of the movie *Exodus*, Rockwell never could gather more than a handful of fellow pickets. Yet the calculated outrage was always effective in winning headlines. Nazis showed up at a Republican Party meeting with signs saying "Save Ike from the Kikes," and a lone Nazi paraded in blackface at a Democratic convention with a sign reading "It's the Mississippi delegate."

Rockwell understood instinctively the theories Marshall

McLuhan would propound a few years later in *Understanding Media*. A couple of Nazis in full regalia would get far more attention from the media of visual communications than a large and well-organized national movement provided that they chose the targets for their demonstrations shrewdly.

During the ten or eleven years during which Rockwell led the Nazi movement in the United States, he created the impression that he led a sizable organization. At its peak in the early sixties, however, there were never more than about 400 or 500 members or contributors to his American Nazi Party throughout the country. A few rival Nazi groups, such as the National Renaissance Party in New York, had some 200 to 300 members among them.

The leader of the National Renaissance Party was James Madole, a cadaverous-looking middle-aged man who lived with his mother and was accompanied by her wherever he went. Madole and Rockwell both were summoned to appear at a hearing in early 1967 of a New York State legislative committee investigating right-wing political activities in the New York City police department. While there was no evidence that either Rockwell or Madole had followers in the department, their appearance at the hearing ensured that the legislators themselves would get publicity. To aid their own political careers by portraying themselves as anti-Nazi, the legislators who arranged the hearing were entirely willing to give the Nazis the visibility they also craved.

Rockwell and Madole both called the New York Civil Liberties Union for assistance, and I went to the hearing flanked by the two rival "führers." Neither Madole nor Rockwell said a word to the other. As I stood between them, they stared at each other right past me with an intensity it is difficult to forget.

At the time of Rockwell's death his organization, which he had renamed the National Socialist White People's Party, was in decline. Rumor had it that Rockwell and his storm