



'We Can Do This Again!'

May 9—U.S. war veteran Col. Frank Cohn (ret.), now 97 years old, is an optimist on a mission. He fought against the Nazis in World War II and met Soviet soldiers at Torgau on the Elbe River on April 25, 1945, when the two armies met. On the occasion of the victory in Europe over the Nazis, Cohn says: "While it is probably a false hope, I am an optimist, and I hang onto the time when things looked bright for all of us—back in May 1945. Yes, there was terrible devastation all around us, but the spirit was correct. We were going to go forward and repair the world, we were allies, we were friends.... Now, I go and participate to bring back that moment. It is not an easy thing to do at my age, but I must do it as long as I can, because someone young might catch that simmering glow of a short-lived peaceful world surrounded with friendship, and in remembrance, perhaps years far in the future, say with the political power that he or she might have attained: "We can do this again!"

Today, on the anniversary of the surrender of Nazi Germany, Russian President Vladimir Putin, in presiding over the "Victory Day" parade and ceremonies, reminded his citizens of the "better angel" of people in the West: "The memory of defenders of the Fatherland is sacred for us in Russia, and we cherish it in our hearts. We give credit to members of the Resistance who bravely fought Nazism as well as the troops of the allied armies of the United States, Great Britain and other countries. We remember and honor the feat of Chinese soldiers in the fight against Japanese militarism." Such a joint effort in history should not be forgotten. "I strongly believe that the experience of solidarity and partnership during the years of fighting a common threat is our invaluable heritage and a secure foothold now when the unstoppable movement is gaining momentum towards a more just multipolar world, a world based on the principles of trust and indivisible security, of equal opportunities for a genuine and free development of all nations and

peoples." While Putin certainly excoriated the greed, selfishness, and hypocrisy of Western leaders behind the "permanent war" gang, he did not fail to include this attempt to "touch the mystic chords of memory."

In 2023, the United States has had a mass shooting, on average, every 16 hours. And last week the average shot up to 1 every 8 hours, with 112 people killed or wounded. That doesn't count attempted mass shootings in which the shooter only hits less than four people. Nor does it include yesterday's deadly attack in Brownsville, Texas, in which a driver apparently aimed his vehicle at a crowd waiting at a bus stop, killing eight and wounding ten more. Who will deny that there is an epidemic afoot?

It's one thing to have more and more people whose lives haven't worked out. But combine that with a rich fantasy life of rage and vengeance. Add violent video games to reinforce the rage, embolden the actor, and the message becomes: "Leave your mark on this world by taking out your rage in one last explosive show."

Was there a time when people found a way to leave a mark in this world by making their society better? Frank Cohn remembers that time: "Yes, there was terrible devastation all around us, but the spirit was correct. We were going to go forward and repair the world...."

Such memories are the stuff of culture—the lack of which brings on financial gambling, debt bubbles, geopolitical confrontations, and, yes, zombie killers striking every 16 hours. Perhaps it is time to join Frank Cohn in his optimistic mission, which includes showing our scared leaders how to stop faking, and to actually lead. Glass-Steagall financial regulation, China's Belt and Road, the U.S.'s NAWAPA massive water and power projects, and the rebuilding of Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, and every other country that has been needlessly devastated in recent decades. Cohn's version of touching mystic chords of memory is: "We can do this again!"

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